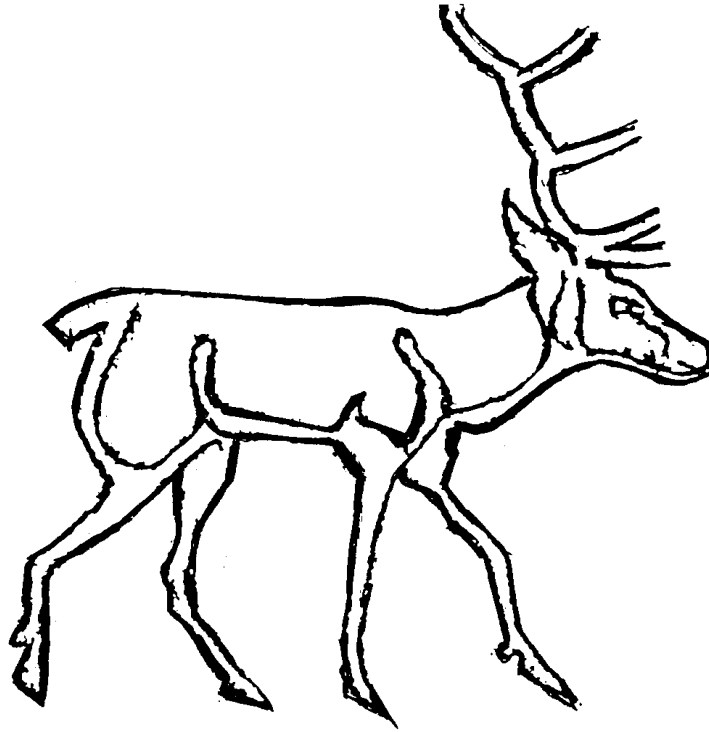


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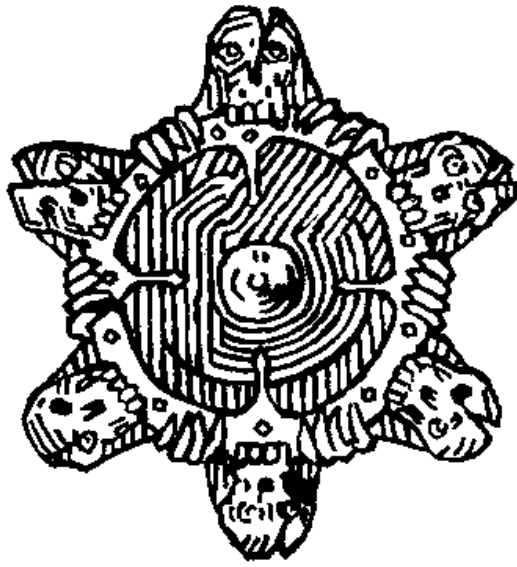
A GLOSSARY OF GAELIC MAGIC

ruair mac aoidh

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INTRODUCTION

The Celts were a language, rather than a racial, group. The Celtic tongue is a branch of the Indo-European family of speech which includes English and German and certain Slavonic languages among its surviving members. The dead Indo-European tongues include ancient Persian, Latin and Greek.

The Celtic group now comprises five living languages, Cornish having expired in the 18th century. These six were divided into two dialects which shared a common vocabulary but had dissimilar speech patterns; one was the Brittonic or Brythonic branch, the other the Gadhaelic. The former speakers were located in Wales, Cornwall and Briton (or England), the latter on the Isle of Man and in Ireland and Scotland. These peoples were not the first settlers of the islands now called Great Britain but they were there well before the Anglo-Saxons who gave rise to the English race and language after their arrival from the Continent in 449.

Druidheachd was literally the business of the druids, who were the chief men and women of the community next to the “ard righ” or “high king” of each realm. Because their activities were little understood by the common folk most of what they did was taken in the same context as Anglo-Saxon witchcraft and the arts which the Anglo-Normans termed

magic. Since the druids kept no written records, druidheachd is largely remembered in the etymology of Gaelic (one of the few surviving Celtic languages) and in folklore. While the druidic schools were extinguished at an early date, an exception has been noted in the Hebrides where the Sages of the White Mountains continued to teach druidism until comparatively recent times. The North Uist sennachies organized in the 1620s to prevent the utter loss of Scottish Gaelic culture have allowed rare glimpses of these past practises through Angus J. Macdonald the last of survivor of their group.

Glossary and dictionary are words of Anglo-Norman origin, the former having a close cousin in the Gaelic *faclairachd*.¹ We have opted for “glossary” in entitling this book, but even that descriptive term is no longer universally understood among English-speaking people. The dictionary is all-embracing, defining the “dictums,” or common word of the language. Like dictionary, glossary is a two-part word, the ending of both deriving from the Middle English “arai”, the source of our word “array.” The old word “gloss” is from the New Latin “glossa,” (tongue) and came into English by way of the French “glossa,” (a difficult word). Interestingly, there is a Gaelic attachment in all this, since the ending “arai” or “ary” is thought to be based on a Celtic model, a word perhaps resembling the modern Gaelic *riadh* (drawn up in rows, as for battle). An array is thus “anything disposed in regular lines;” organized print on a page.

A glossary is a repository for unusual words requiring commentary and explanation beyond a simple definition. The first glosses were interlinear translations made upon medieval manuscripts by men attempting to explain the peculiarities of different written languages. The independent glossary is very much a Celtic knot for the mind, the parts being individually accessible, the whole being strangely wandering and difficult to comprehend.

“I will not find, for when I find I know, I shall have claspt the wandering wind and built a house of snow”

Rod C. Mackay

1.Literally, the “keeper of worthy words.”

PREFACE

The Breton linguist Mikael Madeg has found the Welsh language “very straightforward,” but noted that Scottish Gaelic is “quite another cup of tea:” “I gathered that the spelling of Scottish Gaelic simply came the way the language did, that is from Ireland. As in most countries, I suppose, the spoken language transformed itself and a variety of dialects emerged, whereas the spelling, which was one of the signs of the learned minority, was far more conservative and soon fairly outdated. If we look at Scottish Gaelic (as it persists in Europe) then the language’s effective stronghold is in the Western isles with almost half of the speakers there speaking Lewis Gaelic which has a strong Scandanavian flavour. The dialects that correponded more closely to the written classical renderings just aren’t spoken any longer to any significant extent.”

This author has noted certain dialectic “divergences” that crop up regionally. In the northwest the word for a story-teller is *sgeulachdan*, while in the southeast he is a *sgialachdan*. He says that these differences are nothing compared with the general lack of standard spellings. “Gaelic doesn’t compare favourably in this respect with English, which is a terrible mess of archaeological remnants from French and other languages.” Madeg says that if there have been attempts to rationalize or simplify Gaelic spelling he has not heard of them. “There don’t seem to be an impressive number of people, even among intellectuals, who seem quite sure of their spelling.” This is understandable in view of the fact that the Gaelic traditions were oral. In 1983 Madeg noted that lteracy was never an important part of the Gaelic tradition: “In the Gaidhealtacht, as in Brittany, the majority of native speakers never have been taught to write and read their native language. And this definitely would be more of a problem if religious education hadn’t taught some to read to some extent.”

The lack of uniformity and law in spelling explains why some entries show alternates. We give the preferred the North American (i.e. Cape Breton, N.S.) form and pronunciation, where it was known to us; otherwise, we have substituted Scottish or Irish spellings in that order of preference. Words linguistically related to the word being defined appear in **broad letters** , those related only in context are seen in *italics*. Foreign words are iltalicized where they are obsolete or are unlikely to be seen in current English usage.



ABBREVIATIONS

AS., Anglo-Saxon, speech of Germ. invaders of England in the 5th century.
Br., Breton, speech of Celts of Brittany (France) from the 5th century.
Bry., Brythonic, speech of the Celts of residing in what is now England.
conf., confluent, developed from a common language base.
Cor., Cornish, speech of residents in what is now Cornwall.
cf. confers with, is basically the same as...
Cy., Cymric. the ancient Celtic language of Wales and Northumbria.
Dan., Danish, variant of the Old Norse tongue spoken in Denmark.
Dial., dialectic speech peculiar to a district.
E., early, prefixed as EIr., Early Irish; EE., Early English, etc.
EIr., the vernacular from 1000 to 1200 A.D. Also called Early Middle Irish.
Eng., English, current tongue of England based on the Anglo-Saxon speech.
Fr., French, speech of present-day residents of France.
G., Gaelic, modern Gaelic as spoken in N.W. Scotland and the Isles.
Gaul., Gaulish, Celtic tongue formerly in use in France.
gen. the genitive case of the word.
Germ., German, a present-day variant of the old Teutonic speech.
Goth., Gothic, a Teutonic language of the Middle Ages.
Gr., Greek, the classical language of Greece.
H., high, a combining form as in HGerm., High German, etc.
Ir., Irish, Gaelic as spoken in Ireland. Also known as Modern or New Irish.
Ital., Italian, the language of Italy.
L., late, a combining form as in LL., Late Latin.
Lat., Latin, the defunct language of the Roman Empire.
M., middle as in MEng., Middle English.
MG. Middle Gaelic, the Scottish or Erse variant spoken ca. the 16th century.
MIR. Middle Irish, the vernacular spoken from 1200 to 1550 A.D.
OIr., Old Irish, the vernacular from ca. 800 to 100 A.D.
ON. Old Norse, the antique language generally used in N.W. Europe.
O., old as in OIr., Old Irish.
OG., Old Gaelic, the Scottish or Erse dialect of the 11th and 12th century.
OHG., Old High German.
p., page number...

pl., plural form of the word.

pp., subsequent pages...

Scot. Scottish, the English dialect spoken in S. and E. Scotland.

sing. singular form of the word.

Skr., Sanskrit, the Indo-European tongue at the roots of Gaelic.

Sp., Spanish.

Sw., Swedish, the current language of Sweden.



*Imthigh a Dhuilleachin gu dán,
Le Dán glan diagha duisg iad thall;
Cuir failte ar Fonn fial na bFionn
Ar Gharbh chriocha 's Indeseadh gall.*

From the Preface to a Metrical Version
of the Book of Psalms in Gaelic, by
Robert Kirk, Minister of the Gospel
at Balquidderr; printed in 1684.



*Do not fall on a bed of sloth
Let not intoxication overcome
you,
Begin a voyage across the sea.*

Sidh-maiden to Bran. 🍏

* For my wife, the late E. Anne Torey-Mackay.

A, ailm, fir. The first letter in the Ogham alphabet. The totem bird for this letter is the *airdhircleog*, the lapwing; the colour is *ahad*, piebald. Considered the letter of the winter solstice. Magically equated with the number 1.



ABACC, obs., dwarf, Cy. **afanc**, said based on **abh**, the bark of a dog, the modern **abhag**, a terrier. The **efync** of Welsh mythology, a dweller in the morasses of ancient Britain. This **henn-efync** or “mother of all horrors,” was supposedly dredged from the depths of a Welsh lake by the god-hero *Hu* after he decimated all of her kind. This creature is sometimes equated with the alligator, an ancient resident of Britain. See **Aod**. Note that two dogs were the constant companions of the death-god named *Cromm*.

ABAICH, ripe, to term in season, **happiness**, the EIr. **apaig**, OIr. **apchugud**, autumn, **ad-bog**, with the Celtic root in **bug** as in **bog**, the equivalent of **boy** and **god**, G. **ad-bach** is the root of the Eng. **bake**. ON, **happ** or **hepp**, often translated as “good luck,” but more correctly, “**happy**,” A person who managed this suffix was considered to have had the favour of the gods and was considered to have lived a full life. See G. *luach*, worth, value.

ABARTA, **abair**, to say, the talkative one. Also called the *GiollaDecair*, and the “Gruff Gillie.” A servant of the Otherworld he conscripted members of the *Féinn* by magically attaching them to a horse, which galloped off with them across the western ocean. *Fionn mac Cumhail* followed in an attempt to rescue his men but was first led into fighting the enemies of Fand, queen of the Land Undersea.

ABARTACH, “Talkative” or “Bold,” an alternate name for the god of the western ocean. Corresponds with **Abarta** who was also known as *Manann mac Ler*. *Fionn mac Cumhail* was supposedly encamped with his men at

the Hill of Howth, in *Alba*, where they saw a boat emerging from the west “with all the blackness of a shower.” While they watched the ship was drawn ashore to seven times its length and a sheiling built at the sea-side. Observing that the building which was put up was of a much finer craftsmanship than was general for Ireland, *Fionn* went down to see what was afoot, and was surprised to find three Fomorian sea-giants. When he asked about their mission in Ireland they explained that the King of the West had sent them to do open combat with the leader of the *Féinn*. *Fionn mac Cumhail* was surprised to hear this, since he had befriended these people when he travelled upon the western ocean. When the giants asked if *Fionn* was nearby, he said “Probably not!” and retired leaving the big fellows pinned down by an enchantment. Thinking it best to check matters with **Abartach** the “king of the west,” *Fionn* launched his one-man coracle on the sea and hoisted “the spotted towering sails” to the wind. After landing in the far country, *Fionn*, being a man of normal stature, was picked up by a traveller who was questing after a dwarf for the king. At court, *Fionn* and his dog *Bran* made spectacular entertainment, but came to be most appreciated by the king for overcoming “a great Monster who wants my daughter and half my kingdom to himself.” The creature he defeated was very like the Anglo-Saxon *Grendel*, but in this version of the tale, it was the dog and his “venomous boots,” that did in the sea-creature: “he struck the monster on his breast bone and took the heart and lungs out of him.” The father of this creature showed up for battle on a subsequent night, and this time *Bran* was a more reluctant assassin, but he did accomplish what *Fionn* was unable to do in single combat. On a third night the “mother of all evil”¹ appeared looking for satisfaction, but he managed this hag using poison. The king recognizing the fact that he hosted a great eastern hero asked the name of his guest and was pleased to hear that he entertained the renowned *Fionn mac Cumhal*. For his part *Fionn* was surprised that no mention was made of any vendetta against him, and when he asked why he was being pursued by three Fomorian warriors, the king of the west explained that these “heroes” were not his men, but those of three *sigh* ladies (the *Bas-finne*) from another place. Although the “king of the big men” could not recall the names of these warriors (which would have given him magical powers over them) he was able to tell *Fionn* that the three ladies in question had given their lovers shirts which gave them the strength of a hundred men, and suggested it would be advisable to approach them at night when their shirts were removed. *Fionn* was now given every honour and allowed to depart. Just as he was pulling away, three *sigh* men seeking work appeared at the quay, and they were hired

to relieve the problems in managing an ocean-going coracle single-handed. Back in Ireland, *Fionn* was able to make immediate use of the individual skills of these men, for the soothsayer was able to tell him that the Fomorian giants were bedded down for the night, while the thief was able to relieve them of their magic-shirts by being taken up to the roof by the third man who was a professional climber. There the thief slid down through the chimney opening and stole away before the light of day. At first light *Fionn* appeared at the door of the giants beating on his shield for attention. Seeing that they were not outfitted to beat down their opponent, the Fomorians admitted their general weakness, their connection with the *Mhorrigan* and their wish for forgiveness. *Fionn* swore them to the *Feinn* and they proved faithful to his cause from that time forward.

ABHALLANN , **abhall** , Mr. **aball** , **apple** , also an orchard. Alternately seen as **ubhal** , the Cor. **auallen** , the Br. **avallen** from which the English place-name **Avalon** . Note also the related G. **ubh** or **ugh** , an egg, the equivalent of **egg** or the ON. **Ygg** , this last is a pseudonym for *Odin* . Also correspondent with the Gaelic god **Uigh** or **Lugh** . Macbain says "the phonetics are somewhat difficult but the connection is indisputable." Thomas Keightley felt that **Avalon** "was perhaps the Island of the Blest, famed in Celtic mythology, and also the abode of the *Fees*, through the Breton *Korrigan*." If the former, **Avalon** was located in the western Atlantic. At the same time, Keightley admitted that a majority of writers thought it was more likely to be a much smaller island at Glastonbury, England. "At least it is called isle, being made nearly such by the "river's embracement." "It was named **Avalon** from the British word **aval** , an **apple** , as it abounded with orchards." Keightley thought that the Saxon *Glasthney*, thus Glastonbury or "Glassy Isle," was perhaps from the hue of the water surrounding it. One expert has said that the medieval **isle of apples** was located "*sur en lysle du Zeellande*." In the romance entitled *Hugis d'Avgrement* we are told that here lived the "*faee qui estoit appelee Morgane*." Golden apples are basic to many world myths. They were the chief crop of this ancient island, one of the places cited as a western paradise. Notice that silver apple branches were the passports carried by men who wished to enter these western realms. While **apples** are considered to have originated in the region between the Black and the Caspian Seas, they were a common commodity in medieval Europe, and there is no certainty that there were not species in North America before historic times. In the old mythology it was more than a simple matter of "**an apple a day** ," for it was rumoured that the gods managed their

apparent youth and longevity by eating **apples** from the Garden of Light. In Gaelic mythology frequent reference is made to "the golden apples of the sun," as representing the god of light. In Norse tales, the keeper of this orchard was *Idun*, the "dusky woman," or "outdoors woman," a earth-mother like the *Samh* of the Gaelic mythology. It was said that she was not born of men or the gods, and was thus the only true immortal to walk the earth. As the gods depended upon the "**apple-woman**" for their appearance and health, they kept her close at hand, the remaining races being eager to possess the fruit. The scalds of Norway said that *Idun* was once promised to the giants by *Lokki* when he was their captive. Returning to *Asgardr* he artfully led her to distant fields, supposedly to look at a new species of the fruit growing in the wild. There, she was abducted by a giant in the form of a storm-eagle. Before long the gods became aware of wrinkles and crow's feet, and seeking *Idun*, finally deduced that her absence was somehow due to *Lokki's* duplicity. He was given instructions to immediately restore the lady to them on pain of death. With the matter put that way, *Lokki* borrowed *Freya's* falcon plumage, and in shape-changed form flew to the castle of the frost-giant, where he managed a daring rescue. This story is not unlike that told of the three Gaelic Sons of Turenn. To gain the **golden apples** they assumed the forms of hawks, "and flew like arrows out of the sun, each grabbing an apple in his talons. Though the daughter and the king in the Land of Light shape-changed themselves into bigger hawks and followed them far out over the sea, they did not regain the apples and so the brothers accomplished their first task." **Apples** and hazel nuts were used in divination rites, formerly performed "with the utmost solemnity and dread." There were two main rites employing the **apple**: ordeal by water and ordeal by fire. Magical **apples** were obtained for the druidic rites by passage through water. It is thought that this real or symbolic act represented the passage of the elder gods across the western ocean in their travels between the world of men and the lands of the immortals. In the Border ballad, it will be seen that Thomas the Rhymer met the Fairie Queen at the Eildon Tree. After entering her mystic hill, the pair passed "by noise of flood" to the land of the fairies. That land was in fact **Avalon** since it was described as "rich in **apple** trees." The ordeal by water survives in the Hallowe'en entertainment now called "**Ducking for Apples**." The ideal setting for this rite was the flagged floor of a farm-kitchen. A large wooden tub half filled with water was placed in the centre of this room and into it was tumbled a brood of highly polished apples. The master of the "porridge stick" kept the **apples** in constant motion in the

tub while each participant kneeled and tried to seize an apple in his mouth. If an individual missed in three attempts he had to take the sideline until the others had had a turn. The fruit could be eaten but was often kept for divination rites. The ordeal by fire was more dangerous: It involved impaling an **apple** on one end of a stick and balancing it against a lighted candle on the other. The wooden cross arm was suspended horizontally from the ceiling with a cord, and the rod set whirling about. Each member of the assembled company was expected to take a leap to catch the **apple** in his mouth, hoping to avoid setting his hair afire. In these degenerate days the **apple** swings alone from a single cord. In divination the **apple**, thus obtained, was cut into nine pieces at the stroke of midnight. Standing with his back to a mirror the supplicant would eat eight pieces and toss the ninth over his/or her left shoulder. Upon turning that person expected to see a future lover in the glass. The **apple** could also be used to divine the name of some future mate. In this case, the skin was pared away in a single spiral which was swung three times around the head and then flung over the left shoulder. It was noted that if the paring broke all thoughts of a successful union had to be abandoned. The shape assumed on the floor revealed the initials of a future partner. If the parings were placed above the lintel of the door the first man or woman to enter was considered to bear a Christian name which would be that of the spouse.

ABARDAIR , a dictionary. from **abair**, to say. The magical processing of words was considered a dark art. See **abheister** .

ABAR BUADHNET , confluence of healing waters. In Kincardinshire parish, Scotland. Willion the Lion took his surname from his estate of **Arbuthnnot** , and that name is virtually confined to that area of the country.

ABHACAS , sport, irony, humour. Physical and mental skills such as these were thought gifted on men by the gods through their invisible guardians.

ABHAINN , river, Ir. **abhann** , OIr. **abann** , Skr. **ambhas** , water. In Gaelic mythology rivers are important for their traditional associations with fertility and the deities of fertility, eg. tribal matriarchs, sacred bulls and sacred horses. There is a great deal of folklore centering on river worship and water-spirits. Two rivers in Ireland, the Boyne and the Shannon, allegedly owe their names and origin to the actions of goddesses (*Boann*

and *Sinann*). The first is said to have defied the magic powers of the Well of Segais, the second those of the Well of Coelrind. In each case it is said that the waters arose in anger, and turning into a mighty river, rushed seaward, killing the ladies. Again the connection between a river and a fertility-goddess is seen in the ritual mating of the raven-goddess, *Mhorrigan*, with the father-god *Dagda* an act consummated while the two deities had their feet on either bank of the river Boyne.

ABHAIST , custom, the traditional way of doing things; **ad+beus** , conduct, habit. Once considered an imposition of the gods.

ABHARSAIR , Satan, Elr. **adbirseoir** , from the Latin **adversarius** . The Eng. **Abbott** of Misrule. See **abheister** . Related to **abharr** , a silly jest, inappropriate behaviour. Note **abharr** , a silly jest. This character harks back to the alter-ego of the sun-god *Lugh*, alternately identified as *Bil* or as *Cromm*.

ABHUINN DUBH A BHAIS , the “Black River of Death,” the Atlantic Ocean. Souls of the dead were believed to be transported across this water in the ship of Manann mac Ler. This was also called **cuan mor na duibhre** , “the Great Ocean of Darkness.” The dead lands were considered to lay in the northwest, thus the southwest Atlantic was termed the “Green Ocean” but the implications of this name are hardly less dangerous.

ABLACH , a mangled body, a carcase, from the root **bal** or **bel**, to die, after the death-god **Bil**. Elr. **gel**, from which the Eng. **quell**. Confers with Ir. **abailt** , death.

ABRAON , April, said founded in the Lat. **Aprilis** , but folk-etymology confers with **braon** , rain, hence “shower- month.” One of the months within the keeping of the “Winter Hag” known as the *Cailleach bheurr*.

ACA MAC CEASG , the saint named **Kessog** , the “long-haired one,” Scotland’s patron before it embraced St. Andrew. The name invariably invoked by Highlanders heading for battle if they happened to be Christian. AS. **Aca son of Kenneth** , an Irish prince who, as a boy, lost two friends by drowning. He restored both to life and was thus absorbed into the clergy as a useful Christian magician. As a missionary he wandered through pagan Scotland, where he established himself on the Monk’s Island in Loch Lomond. The bell which he once carried is still a

principal tourist attraction at Lennox.

ACASTAIR , axle-tree; borrowed from Scand. **ax-tree** , with similar meaning. Used in kindling ritual quarter-day and need-fires. The woods used in the axle tree were those having totemic meaning. In the simplest situation wood shavings of fir and oak were torched by creating embers from the friction between two pieces of dried wood. The method of producing fire varied between the regions but a common method was to drive poles into the ground about a foot and a half apart. Each pole had in the face toward the other a socket into which a cross-piece, or roller, was fitted. the sockets were stuffed with raw linen and to make things more combustible the axle-tree was often coated with pitch or tar. A rope was round about this centre fixture and the free ends on the two sides were gripped by groups of people, who pulled the rope first in one direction then in the other. In the process the linen in the sockets took fire and peppered the ground with sparks. Directly below, men placed heaps of oakum and these, having caught a spark, were whirled by hand in the air until they burst into flame. This was applied to straw and that was re-applied to wooden sticks making a bonfire. Often a wheel was added to the axle-tree in the centre between the uprights, in which case the fire-maker was turned by hand or by a system of ropes attached to the wheel. In Mull it was required that the wheel should be turned from west to east, and in other places it was preferred that the rope used should first have been used at a hanging. There were all kinds of additional prohibitions having to do with the people who turned the wheel that made the fire: Sometimes it was required that the rope-pullers should be brothers, or people sharing the same name. Often it was specified that chaste young men were needed. In the western isles up to eighty-one married men played at this peculiar tug-of-war, working in relays of nine men. In North Uist, the communal fire had to be started by first-born sons. In Caithness it was considered necessary for all those participating to rid their bodies of all metals, especially iron, before starting the procedure. If after long rubbing, no fire was elicited it was thought that some of the old fire from the previous season was still active and men would search it out and extinguish it. If nothing came in spite of every attempt this was considered the worst possible omen for the future of the place in the coming season.

ACEIN , **OCHAIN** , **OCHÒIN** , anciently, **EADHON** , “alas this, to wit, viz.” The “Moaner.” The *Dagda*’s Horse. Also the enchanted shield of *Conchobharmac*

Nessa.

A CHAILLEACH , Winter; **a**, belonging to, possessed by; **cailleach** , old woman, hag, husk, old wife, veiled individual, a nun. the time of the **Cailleach Bheurr** or “Winter Hag” who was the personification of that season. Her gentler half was the perpetually virginal *Samh*, whose name translates as “Summer.” The **Cailleach’s** particular “holiday” was the week centring about March 25, this day being **Latha na Cailleach** , the “Old Wife’s Day.” The **Cailleach’s** Week coincides with the so-called equinoxial gales or line storms, sometimes entitled Sheila’s storms. See *Mhorrigan*, *Trionaid* and associated references.

ACHAIN , prayer, a dialectic form of **achuinge** , supplication, EIr. **athchuingid** , the equivalent of the now obs. Eng. **thig**, possibly from ON. **thiggja** , to beg, which is akin to AS. **thicgan** , to take or receive, to ask alms. Obs. Scot. **thigger** , a beggar, a suppliant.

ACHARRADH , dwarf, sprite, a nature spirit. "Field dwellers;" note **achadh** , a field. One of the *Daoine sidh*.

ACHLASAN CHALLUM , Columba’s “spiritual match.” (*Hypericum pulchrum*) St. John’s wort which according to tradition was St Columba’s favourite flower. Reputed to have been used in the north of Scotland for divination at Midsummer’s Eve, it was sought to ward off fevers. Cherished for its power to block the second sight, the evil eye, enchantments and death itself, it was also said brought home “to ensure peace and plenty in the house, increase and prosperity in the fold, and growth and fruition in the field.” The plant was worn beneath the left armpit of the bodices of women and in a similar place in the underwear of men. The only stipulation for use was that the plant could not be actively sought but had to be stumbled on by accident.

ACHUINGE , supplication aimed at a god, prayer. A dialectic form is **achain** .

ADHAN , proverb. Properly **aghan** , the root **agh**. Skr. **ah**, to say. A huge number of books have been produced dealing with Scottish proverbial sayings, many based in the Gaelic culture. Proverbs appended as examples are from Scottish Proverbs by David Fergusson (1641):

Reavers should not be rewers. Those who lust after a thing should not be surprised or repentant if they get their heart's desire.

There's mae midnes nor makines. Girls are more plentiful than rabbits.

Ye bried of the gouk (cuckoo) ye have not a rhyme but ane. Applied to tiresome folk who harp on a particular subject.

All Stuarts are nae sib (relatives) to the King.

It's ill getting the breeks off a Highland man.

The de'il's nae sae ill as he's caaed. Most folks have some redeeming good points.

The de'il's bairns (children) hae de'il luck. Spoken in envy when ill folk prosper.

A Scots mist weel wet an Englishman to the skin.

A Yule feast may be done at Pasch (Easter, or any other holiday).

Folly is a bonny dog.

He rides the riggin' o' the kirk. Said of religious zealots.

A willful man should be uncou wise.

ADHARC , horn, OIr. **adharc** , i.e. **ad-arc** , the root **arq** , to defend, as seen in **teasairq** . The Lat. **arceo** . The object which human-kind stole from the centre of the undersea kingdom of *An Domhain* was variously described as a kettle, a cauldron, a magical pillar-stone or as a cornucopia or **horn** . In pagan theology it was the source of all life forces, but in Christian times it became an instrument of the Devil and his devils. "all animals with curved horns were sacred to the moon-diet (*Samh* or *Summer*) on account of the affinity of shape with the crescent moon. (The Silver Bough, vol. 1, p. 59). Anne Ross says that "The cult of the **horned god** is perhaps second only in importance to the cult of the head." **Horned animals** were important to the Celtic economy and cult imagery and there are many variants on these themes including representations of anthropomorphic deities, both male

and female. Three-horned gods and goddesses are seen as well as those having horns terminating in a knob or bulb. It is possible that the latter may represent the Iron Age practise of sheathing animal horns to make beasts more domestic. Again these could be sun or moon symbols, or “apples” of silver and gold, all having magico-religious implications. In the Celtic realm there are also examples of horned animals which do not occur in nature. Thus we see images of ram-horned serpents, horned birds and even bird-stags. Cult animals, having a naturalistic look, are sometimes featured next to horned gods. The chief stag-god was *Cernu*, who is mentioned elsewhere.

ADHBHAL, vast, **awful**, OIr. **adbul**, i.e. **ad+bol**, the root being **bhel**, to swell. The English word **bloom**, Skr. **bala**, full of strength. From this **bailceach**, **bail**, and **buil** all having reference to the redoubtable god named **Bil**, the ruler of the “dead-lands.”

ADHAMH, EIr. **Adam**, OIr. **Adim**, from the Hebrew **Adam**, red. Hence **Mac-adam**, **M’Caw** and from dial. G. **‘Adaidh** (a diminutive) and **M’Adaidh** corresponding with the anglicized **M’Cadie**. May confer with the day-god **Aoidh**. **Adamnan**, gen. **Adhmhnan** (pro. Yownan or Yonan). An earlier form was **Adhamhnan** or **Oghamhan**. EIr. **Adamnú**, the Lat. **Adamnanus**, “little Adam,” a diminution from **Adhamh**. From this family name the personal name **Gilleownan** and the **Mac-lennans**. All having reference to the god **Ogma**, the supposed inventor of **oghamic** speech and writing. He was one of the sons of *Dagda*, the chief of the gods. See **Ogma** and **Aod**. The Christian saint named **Adamnan** said that “Three stately birds stand ever in the chair of the Lord, in the presence of the King, and their mind turns to him forever.

AED, see **Aod**. The prime day-god of the Gaels. Note above entry. Cited by Dunkling as “A Gaelic name meaning “fire.”” The Latin form is **Aidus**, better known in the diminutive **Aidan**. The later Gaelic spelling was **Aodh**, which is equated with the charter-Latin **Odo**. **Hugh** or **Hugo**. **Hugh** is the English equivalent. The surnames **Mackay**, **Mackie**, **Maccoy**, etc. all indicate the “son of **Aodh**.” Another name for the sun-god *Lugh*.

AEDH MAC BREIC, a saint of the early Church, an illiterate farmer bilked of his inheritance by his brothers. Seeking revenge he kidnapped a maid of their household and fled from northern Ireland into the south. There he was persuaded by a local bishop to take on the religious life. Many

miracles were afterwards attributed to him including the restoration of slit throats and an ability to fly from place-to-place. His signature feat was the taking of Saint Brigit's chronic migraine headache as his own. At the time of his death he invited some of the monks of his church to join him in leave-taking, but they refused ritual suicide, and he had to satisfy himself with the company of a poor but compliant peasant.

AES DAOINE , **aes** or **ais**, wise + **daoine** , men. From **aes side** , the "gifted-ones" of the side-hills. After **Aed** or **Aod** , also represented as **Aes** , the continental **Æsus** , the Germanic **Heus** or **Hess** , the Welsh sun-god **Hu** . The Gaelic feminine is **Æsga** , the moon. Earlier, the OIr. **ésca** , **ésce** or **æsea** , from the root **eid** as in the Latin **idus** , in the "full light," i.e. the full moon. Sankrist **as** , "to be." See next entry. The guild of craftsmen who stood next to the king in power. All were considered magicians: At the top of hierarchy were the *ollam* or "professors" of the arts and sciences. The individual crafts were each headed by groups of these *ollam* . Top dogs were the *filids* or "poets," who were distinguished as the satirists, those who composed poetry so virulent it might lead to psychosomatic illness, and the bards, who usually contented themselves with reciting epic poetry based on past events. The Gaelic *seanachies* , or "historians," have their beginnings in this latter class. Below the poets were those who involved with the magic of song and instrumental music. The harpist definitely ranked with the gentry, and was socially superior to the landed classes and thus seated nearer the king at his table. The bag-pipe players, jugglers, sleight-of-hand men, ventriloquists, hypnotists and similar fellow were still of the **aes daoine** , but were seated near the door with the "inferior professions", the metal-workers, potters, wicker-workers and mercenary soldiers. See *Aod* and *Lugh* . See next entry.

AES SIDE , "the wise side-hill people." Sometimes simply identified as the **aes** or **oes** . Same as above. The people of the hollow-hills, also entitled the *dei terreni* , or "gods of the earth." The *Tuatha daoine* , defeated and exiled by the Milesians. They were superior to their conquerors in all arts except that of making sharp iron weapons of war. Originally a bronze age people who had their centre at Tara. See previous entry.

AIBHEIS , the sea, the deep, the **abyss** ; Elr. **aibeis** , OIr. **abis** , cf. L. **abyssus** and Cy. **affwys** , a bottomless pit. **Aibheil** , huge; **adhbhal** , vast, awful. **Aibheis** , boasting; **aibhaich** , exaggeration; **aibhist** , an old ruin; **abheistear** , the Devil. Also termed *An Domhain* (in Gaelic), and *Annwn* (in

the Welsh language), this place was the equivalent of the *Ginnungugap* (Beginning Gap) of Norse mythology, and was considered the first work of *an-t-athair*, the creator-god. The **abyss** was said to have been located within, or beyond the western ocean (the Atlantic). It was often visualized as a circular rotating island hidden by fog and perhaps resting in the water enclosed within a bubble of air. At its centre was a fountain, or cauldron, or meteoric stone which was considered the source of all poetry and inspiration and this was guarded by the Fomors, or undersea people, led by their immortal god *Ler*. This elder race left their oceanic home and peopled the shores of western Europe. There, they were opposed by men and "the gods" and were ultimately defeated in a final battle on the Plains of *Sligo* in western Ireland. Retreating to their western strongholds, the losers were followed by *Dagda*, the "father of the gods," along with two of his sons. Using magic, the trio placed the Fomorians in a trance-state, despoiled their countryside and stole samples from the waters of the fountain. At home they were able to reconstitute this "living-water" as the drink which is now called *uisge* or "whisky". The **abyss** was afterwards protected from such intrusions by magical barriers and became a place of punishment for human evil-doers at death. The carrier of the dead in after years was the "Wave-Sweeper" a phantom ship piloted by *Manan mac Ler*. This fire-ship is still reportedly seen once in seven years moving westward through the seas between the Isle of man and the Hebrides. It has also been routinely seen on the eastern coast of North America where it presumably has a harbour. It is said that souls of the dead are taken aboard during the *Nollaig* or "Yule-tide."

AIBHISTEAR , **ABISTER** , **ABHEISTER** , **ab+ beus** , the English **abbott** ; confers with **abhaist** , custom, habit, conduct and with the Latin **adversarius** . The Devil or a devil of the Devil. Note also the related Gaelic **abhair** , to say; **adhbhal** , vast (as the sea), awful, from the roots **ad+bol** . The ultimate OIr. root. is **bhel** , to swell, the English **bloom** , the Skr. **bala** , strength. From this the Gaelic **bailceach** and **bail** . Note also the elemental-god **Bil** , **Bile** or **Buel** . the "Dweller in the **Abyss** ," i.e. *Manann mac Ler*, the collector of souls of the dead; in these latter days, the Devil. The related word **aibheis** also indicates a braggart or boaster. Men purloined the secret of whisky from the undersea people and found that consuming it led not only to "poetry and inspiration" but to a exaggeration. Also, **aibhist** , an old building, a ruin; and **aibhse** , a spectre or devil of the Devil. Another form of this word is **taibhse** (which, see). The prime word is said to be another form of **abharsair** , which is related to the Latin,

adversarius , our English, **adversary** . Like the creator-god, the three elemental gods had their own interests and have little history among men. Thus, *Ler* (who corresponds with the Cymric *Llyr* and the Old Norse god *Hler*), is represented in folklore in the person of his son, the mortal sea-god named *Manann*. *Manann mac Ler*. He had holdings on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea, but was recognized as lord of all the western seas, his remote base being *Tir-nan-Og*, the land of perpetual youth, the final residence of heroes and all who were virtuous. The abyss, the residence of the unvirtuous dead, was also his keep. This land was sometimes said to be an independent entity within the deepest part of the ocean. Others claimed it was an underworld located at the roots of *Tir-nan-Og*. The living were not allowed in either land, and *Manann* often rode the sea about the island on his ocean-steed (his shape-changed wife) *Aonbarr*, brandishing the sword known as the "Answerer", which no human armour could resist. The white-crested waves, who were his daughters, "the horses of Manan" also drove off unwelcome visitors. As a sea-spirit, this god could raise all the forces of fog, wind and storm to protect his interests, and when he was especially aroused he even acted against the shores of western Europe. When this happened, shore-dwellers reported seeing huge "tidal-waves" surging out of the west. Although the god was not usually seen in full, some men reported observing his naked legs seemingly rotating in the waves as they rushed ashore, ravaging the coast. It was this illusion that led to the representation of the triad of legs seen on the standard of the Isle of Man.

AIBHSE , a spectre. The word is a diminished form of **taibhse** . See this and the above entry.

AIFA , **AIFE** , **AOIFE** , the Amazonian princess of the "Land of the Dead;" warred against by her sister, *Sgatheach* of the Isle of Skye. She fought *Cúchullain* and conditionally spared his life after she was overcome by trickery. **Aifa** bore him a son, *Conla*, who she placed under a taboo not to name his father. As a result *Conla* fought, and was killed, by his sire.

AIGEANN , the Deep, Elr. **oician** , from the Lat. **oceanus** ; the Eng. **ocean** . Compare with *aibheis* and *domhain*. Note also the side-form **aigéal** . **Aigeannach** , full of spirit, meditative. Also known as **An Domhain** , the Atlantic, home to the voracious sea-giants.

AILBE . His mother was a serving wench, his father an Irish chieftain. The

father threw the infant to the wolves, but instead of killing the child one of the she-wolves suckled him, until he was adopted by a hunter. Later this man-wolf became a disciple to Patrick and was made a bishop. He was reunited with his foster-mother in her old age keeping the wolf always in his hall. **Saint Ailbe** conjured 100 horses from a cloud to gift the King of Munster, and afterwards persuaded the monarch to grant his monks the Aran Islands when he perceived them in a dream. This was no loss to the king of Munster as he was not aware they were within his domain until he was told of them.

AILBENN , the “Rock-hard Sentence,” the “Great Crime.” Sometimes given as **Oilbine** . *Ruad mac Rigdond* of Munster had an appointment with the Scots and sailed for *Alba* with three ships and a total of ninety men. In the middle of the ocean the ships were magically becalmed, and could not gain their release through the usual ploy of throwing gold and jewels overboard. The crew cast lots, and the king got the short straw and leaped into the sea to enquire about the wishes of the *Daoine mara*.. He “stopped” with mermaids for nine nights and during that time his vessel was frozen in the waters above him. As he departed one of the sea-people said she was pregnant with his son and that he must return to see the lad. *Ruad* rejoined his fellow humans and went on his way for seven years. As it chanced the ships he commanded never passed over that spot in the ocean. Later, his mariners entered an Irish bay and came upon the sea-women singing songs from their own “brazen ship.” These women came to shore and put the young sea-born son of *Ruad* ashore near the encampment. The harbour was rocky in that place and the lad missed his footing, slipped, and fell to a premature death. From this the place was called in Eng. **Ailbine** .

AILEAN , Ir. **Ailin** , **Allen** , EIr. **Ailéne** from **al**, a rock. The Norman **Alan** gives the Scot. **Allan**. OBry. **Alamnus**, Germ. **Alemannus**, “all men,” a tribal name in the northwest of Europe. Hence **Mac-allen** . See **Ailleán** below. The popularity of this name in Scotland led to its recreation as a surname, e.g. **Callan** , **Callen** , **MacAllan** , **MacAllen** . The feminine form is **Alana** or **Allana** . Corresponds with **Ellen**, the three-headed monster which periodically emerged from the cavern at *Cruachan* in western Ireland. See **Aillea** .

AILECH , “I will it so,” OIr. **aile** , a fence, a boundary. The royal residence of the patriarchal Tuathan god-hero *Dagda* in Inishowen, Ireland. It

supposedly became invisible with the Milesian conquest. It was here that *mac Cuill*, *mac Cecht*, *mac Greine* and their wives met to divide Ireland between them. In much later times a dwelling place was erected at this place by the builder named *Frigrind*, who had eloped with *Ailech*, the daughter of a king of *Alba*. That mansion was described as, "of a red hue, carved and emblazoned with gold and bronze, and so thick-set with gems that day and night were equally bright within it." In the second century the Egyptian cartographer Ptolmey correctly located this residence upon one of his maps of the west. The ruins still stand in County Donegal five miles north-west of Derry. The circular stone wall was once 77 feet in internal diameter and 13 feet thick at the base. This was a royal residence of the kings of Ulster and later the kings of Ireland until the fourth century A.D.

AILIS , blemish, from **ail**, a mark or impression. The only cause for dismissing a high king was physical deformation, the loss of an arm or leg, facial acne or any lesser physical imperfection.

AILILL . a brother of King *Eochaid*, the high-king of Ireland. He fell in love with his brother's wife *Etain Echraide* and succumbed to a wasting disease out of longing for her. Eventually *Etain* agreed to a tryst with him but at the appointed time was met instead by the god *Midir*. When **Ailill** emerged from sleep he was cured of his "unnatural" desire. **Ailill** is sometimes represented as the father of *Etain* and it is said that *Aonghas Og* courted her on behalf of *Midir* of Bri Leith. **Ailill** set him three tasks: the clearing of twelve plains; the drainage of them through the construction of rivers; and a tribute in gold and silver equal to his daughter's weight. *Aonghas* was able to comply with the help of his father, the *Dagda*, and *Midir* married *Etain*.

AILILL MAC MATA , king of *Connacht* and a husband to Queen *Mebd*. He was depicted as a powerful man who was taunted into going to war with Ulster. That war was lost. Eventually he was slain by *Conall* while bathing in a lake with his wife.

AILILL OLUM , king of Munster. The man who supposedly ravished the goddess *Mhorrigan* and was killed by her magic arts. He appears to be a version of **Aillil mac Mata** the unfortunate consort of the mortal-goddess *Mebd*, who is herself a side-form of the goddess.

AILLEA , sometimes **AILLEAN** , **AILLEN** , **ALLEN** . “scenting the air”. similar to Br. **awel**, wind. The son of *Midhna*, a malevolent Otherworld monster who emerged without warning from the hill at *Cruachan* in Connaught and afterwards reappeared at each feast of *Samhainn*. He regularly burnt down the royal residence at Tara after lulling the defenders to sleep with magic music. *Fionn mac Cumhail* resisted the music by placing his magic spear blade upon his forehead. He then drove off the beast and beheaded it. There are many variants of this story and *Fionn* is not invariably the hero. A Gaelic version of Beowulf. In some versions of this legend, the poet *Amergin* is given as the slayer.

AILLINN . The daughter of *Loaghaire mac Fergus Fairge* and a granddaughter of the king of Leinster. She loved *Baile*, son of *Buain*, heir to the kingdom of Ulster, but the gods of the two places objected to their union. At one assignation a “stranger” told *Baile* that the warriors of Leinster had heard of the love match and prevented *Aillinn* from coming to him. Sick with grief, the two lovers died. *Baile* was buried at *Traigh mBaile* (Baile’s Strand), and a yew tree grew from his grave. An apple tree sprouted from **Aillinn’s** burial site. The poets of Ulster and Leinster cut branches from the two trees and made ogham wands. Two hundred years later, when *Art* the Lonely was high-king, the wands from the two kingdoms were all taken to the library at Tara for safe-keeping. On the shelves the wands sprang together and became so intimately associated they were inseparable.

AILLNA MIRENN , the Rock of Madness, more literally, the “Rock of the Bits of Flesh,” sometimes referred to as the “Great Stone of Divisions.” One can only guess at the implications of the first name, but the last has to do with the fact that it is sited at the joining of the four ancient provinces of Ireland. It is often said that old political division was fourfold, reflecting the points of the compass: there was Ulster in the north, Munster in the south, Leinster in the east and Connacht in the west. As with the country itself, three of these provinces have Scandinavian terminations, reflecting the invasions of Old Norse neighbours. Only *Connacht*, sometimes written “Connaught,” still has its old Gaelic name. Originally the other three were *Ulaidh*, Place of the Tombs (pronounced Oola); *Mumhan* (Muan) and *Leighean* (Lehan). At the time when this stone was set, the division of Ireland was possibly five-fold (their word “province” actually means a “fifth”), and even earlier, there were seven divisions. It should not be forgotten that the peninsula of *Dalriada* in Scotland was then part of the

northern holdings, and that the present-day provinces are not consistent with those of the past. This spiritual centre of pagan Ireland was near Rathconrath, County Westmeath. *Tuathal Teachtmhair* built one of four great palaces at this location, and it was said that the penultimate Beltane festival was practised here.

AILLSE , diminutive creature, one of the little people, an elf, a fairy; **ailseag** , a caterpillar. **aille** , beauty, **aill** , desire, cf. Lat. **aveo** , and the English words **avidity** and **fair** . See *Daoine sidh* for a complete account. It is written that “their beauty is that of another world. Their skin is soft, their hair long and flowing, their clothes blindingly white.” ²

AILPEIN , **Alpin** , Elr. **Alpin** perhaps from MCy. **Elphin** or **Elfin** which is thought allied with Lat. **Albînus**, from **albus**, white, “the ones dressed in white (linen).” Hence **M’Ailpein** and the englished **Mac-alpine**. See **Alba** and **Albainn** . Essentially, a Scandinavian name associated with the little people the Old Norse who were referred to as the **alfr** . This race supposedly pre-dated that of men, the **elfs** having been inspired by *Odin* from the maggots that infested the corpse of the giant *Ymir* who he had killed. Confers with **alp** .

AIMEND . A sun goddess, the daughter of *Corco Loigde* .

AIMHLEAS , hurt, destruction, fate, ruin. The word is composed of **aimh** + **leas** , lacking + advantage. In the elder world nothing was considered to take place without cause, and events in the lives of men (and the gods) were thought attributable to the *bafinne*, invisible agents, for good or ill, which the Romans called the *fata*, or fates and the Norse the *fylgiar* or *nornr* .

AINBHTHEACH , stormy, Elr. **ainbthech** , supposedly from the root words **an-feth-ech** . **Feth** , a breeze from **vet** . This is the English **weather** , Lat. **ventus** . A distant naming of the god **Woden** who was identified as the controller of the north-wind.

AINBI, **AINBITH** , a form of **an-bith** , “not of this world,” unworldly, odd unusual; **bith** , the world, existence. The immortal and mortal gods, the sea- and land-giants, and the little people were considered to have worlds

²Arrowsmith, Nancy, Field Guide to the Little People, p. 21.

of their own apart from men. In these places magic was the rule rather than the exception. A descriptive for the folk of *Tir nan Og*.

AINCHIS , a curse, rage. According to Scottish tradition the *baobh* who wished *sgaiteach* or “skaith” on a neighbour took her “cursing-bone” to some part of his land between sunset and dawn. The bone, often salvaged from a dead deer, was frequently enclosed within a ring made of oak (an male-female symbol). On the neighbours property the “witch” went to the hen-house or cattle barn and withdrew blood from some farm animal and then passed this liquid through the bone uttering appropriate curses. The effect was local disaster.

AINGIDH , wicked, malicious; **andach** , sin, from **an-gd-d** , not good. Note conference with next entry. See also **Cas Andras** .

AINDREA , dial. **ANDRA** , **Andrew** , allied with **Gilleannndrais** , Andrew’s **gille** or servant. In English **Gillanders**. **MG.Andro** , Elr. **Andrias** , conferring with Lat. **Andreas** from a Greek model meaning “manly.” Hence **Mac-andrew** , **Gillanders** , **Anderson** . A dangerous pagan spirit of the upper air; also a saint of the Christian church, supposedly a follower of John the Baptist. When he met Jesus, **Andrew** left to become a disciple, and enlisted his brother Peter to the cause. He became a missionary to a land of cannibals, and without leave released prisoners intended for the king’s lunch. He was put to death for baptising *Maximilla*, the wife of *Eages*, the Roman governor of *Achaia*. The heathen administrator complained that the Christianized *Maximilla* was no longer interested in sexual intercourse, and thus **Andrew** became the patron saint of spinsters. Luther says that maidens stripped themselves on the feast day of **St. Andrew** (Nov. 30) to insure visions of their future husbands. After **Andrew’s** death, his relics were taken to Scotland by Saint Rule. There, the miraculously revived martyr helped build **St. Andrew’s Church** and established his cult in the West. Notwithstanding, Crusaders stole **Andrew’s** head from Constantinople where it had been interred by King Constantine, and it was given to the Pope. It was returned there in 1972. **Saint Andrew’s** symbol was the X-shaped cross of his execution and this is depicted on the flag of Scotland. Currently one of the ten names preferred for boys in Scotland. Scottish diminutives include **Andie** , **Andy** , **Dand** , **Dandie** , **Dandy** and surnames based on it are **Anderson** , **Andrews** , **Andison** , **Drew** , **Gillanders** , **Macandrew** , etc. **Dandy** was applied to a quarter-day fool, and still identifies a silly or foppish

individual, and note **dandling** , a person spoiled by undue attention.

AINE , **AOINE** , (Anya), **aon** , **one** , the **One** , cf. **Anu** , **Danu** , a love goddess, the daughter of *Owel* or *Eogabail*, a druid to the *Tuatha daoine* and a foster son of *Manann mac Ler*. Source of EIr. **anim** , a flaw, blame. **Aine** confers with the goddess *Mhorrigan*. In some tales she was ravished by *Ailill Olum*, King of Munster and to revenge herself she killed him with her black arts. Later she was subject to a second mortal-lover of Clan Fitzgerald, to whom she bore Gerald, the fourth Earl of Desmond. In some myths it was claimed that the goddess was raped by this man. The earl disobeyed her instructions that their son should never touch water, and when he did, he was shape-changed into a goose. This bird flew to a nearby island and became known as *Ge an Oileain*, the "Goose of the Island." Others claim he became noted as a famous magician and in 1398 retired to live beneath the waters of *Loch Gur*. He may, nevertheless, be seen riding the banks of the loch on his white steed, appearing once in seven years. He was named "Gerald the Poet" for the witty doggerel he composed in Gaelic. Many of the aristocratic families of Munster continue to claim descent from this mythological union. Her name rests on the **Hill of Aine** (Knockainey), which stands above *Loch Gur*. At the bequest of her son, **Aine** supposedly planted all of her hill with pease on a single night. "She was, and is perhaps still is, worshipped on Midsummer Eve by the peasantry, who carried lighted torches of hay and straw, tied on poles, and lighted, round her hill at night. Afterwards they dispersed themselves among their cultivated fields and pastures, waving the torches over the crops and cattle to bring luck and increase for the following year." Irish folklorist D. Fitzgerald said that if the festivities were omitted in a given year, the "**fires of Aine** " blazed unattended without human support. On one occasion when a number of women stayed late on her hill **Aine** is supposed to have put in an appearance. After thanking those assembled for their honours, she advised that they should now leave as her people "wanted the hill to themselves." She let them catch sight of the little people by having them look, in turn, through a ring. Doing so they found the hill "crowded with people before invisible." "There is a mysterious entity called the "**Aoine**." All we know of her is a proverb to the effect that, "When the **Aoine** has got it in her mouth, the raven may as well start off to the hills;" which we took to mean that she was loquacious. However, I incline to think that there is another possible meaning, and one more gruesome. We heard of a man, now deceased, who knew the *rann* of the **Aoine**, and was liable to (i.e compelled to) recite it if he saw a person

bathing. That person would then be instantly drowned. In order to resist the impulse he would turn his back to the bather and fall down on his face." (Celtic Monthly, p. 164). Also known as the *Leanan Sigh* she was not safe to offend. *Oilioll Oluim* killed one of her brothers, and it is claimed that she reacted by making a great yew-tree enchantment beside the River *Maigh* in *Luimnech*. She placed a little man there playing sweet music on a harp. Fancying possession of this rarity *Oilioll's* son and his step-brother quarrelled over the *sigh* and eventually went to the king for a judgement, which he gave in favour of his son. The bad feelings from this led to the battle of *Magh Mucruimhe* at which the king and his seven sons were killed. In Derry and Tyrone, Ireland, this goddess is recalled in wells known as **Tobar Aine**, suggesting that she was originally a water-deity. In some places the Friday, Saturday and Sunday immediately after the Lughnasad are sacred to **Aine**, and it used to be said that she demanded blood-sacrifices on each of these days.

AINEAMH, flaw, Slr. Elr. **anim**, Cy. **anaf**, a blemish, OBr. **anamon**, blame. Possession of a perfect set of arms legs and other physical attributes was considered the mark of a man, or woman, imbued with god-spirit. It used to be considered important that a leader remain without noticeable flaws, since any imperfection was taken as a sign that his god-spirit was diminished. In *Hibernia* (Ireland) and the old Scottish kingdom of *Alba* it was a matter of law that no man could serve as *ard-righ*, or "high-king" if he happened to become "blemished." Thus King *Nuada*, the twin-brother of the god *Lugh* was forced to relinquish the throne when he lost his right hand in battle. He had it replaced it with a mechanical device made of silver but this was not a satisfactory substitute and he was only readmitted to the kingship when his druid grew a new hand from the stump. The glam, or curses, of the druids were often aimed at creating complexion problems, for the least pimple or hairy mole on the face of an important man was enough to remove him from power. Those with physical defects were considered to reflections of the dreaded Fomorian blood-lines which always flowed among men.

AINGEAL, a light, a sparkling fire as opposed to *ainneal*, the common hearth-fire. Similar to Latin **ignis**. Literally, **angel**-fire. This word has particular reference to the "marching-sparks" which formed on hearth-stone creosote, animated "spirits" which the English sometimes called "soot-fairies." In other times, any motion was considered evidence of an incarnate life-force, and the angels of the hearth were said to presage

storm. In eastern Canada this phenomena was sometimes referred to as "the British soldiers" or the "marching soldiers."

AINGEALTAS , perversity, malignancy, based on **aingidh** , wicked, OIr. **angid** , malicious, **andach** , a sin, devolves as **an-dg-id** , the root being **deagh** , good, that which is "not good."

AINM , sing. name, **ANMANN** , plural, names, Cy. **enw** , Lat. **nomen** . The gods and wise men had many nicknames, for it was understood that the person who knew an individual's true name had power over him. "A child should not be named after one who has died young. I heard a mother attribute the early death of a child to its having been named, to please the father, after a girl who had died young." (*Celtic Monthly*, p. 162). Men and women who carried similar names were thought to be destined to similar fates following the principle of sympathetic magic, viz. "Things which resemble one another in any way are structurally the same."

AIRCHEALL , sacrilege. **Air** + **cheall** , against + the **cell** , or church. Taking the name of a god in vain or desecrating his altar are two familiar examples of sacrilege in both the pagan and the Christian world. In the former case men who made facetious promises, naming a god as they did so, were thought likely to be struck down. It was considered particularly poor taste to imitate the sounds made by the passage of the god or goddess of the "Winter Hunt". Those who did so were often swept off into the endless hunt for souls of the dead even though their fated time had not come. At least, they had a black dog gifted upon them, which was difficult to exorcise and remained at their side, whining, cringing and snivelling for a year and a day. This animal disappeared at the second coming of the Host.

AIRCTHECH , **airc** , an **ark** , distress; **teach** , a house, tiled, roofed over, corresponding with **tuatha** , which, see. A mythic western "island" visited by *Bran* and his voyagers. A "floating island," corresponding with *Hy Breasil* or *Tir-nan-Og*. A place of the dead in the western ocean.

AIREAN , a ploughman, a herdsman, Ir. **oireamh** , this is the mythic **Eremon** whose name is sometimes anglicized as **Heremon** . Also seen in Irish as **Airem(on)** , anciently **Arjamon** , Skr. **Arjaman** . This is the source of the Eng. **Aryan** , the Indo-European root-word being **ar** , plough. He was the eldest surviving Milesian decreed to rule Ireland by the druid named

Amergin . His brother *Eber* refused the judgement, and to keep the peace, the older brother allowed the partition of the country. Eventually the younger brother wanted to expand his territories and **Eremón** slew him afterwards establishing the high-kingship at Tara. In modern times the name **Aryan** has been used improperly to describe an ethnic type, but it was first used by linguists to identify the tongue of Indo-Iranians. In the last century A.H. Keane said that the so-called **Aryan** people were actually an amalgam of Caucasian and Mongoloid folk. Most wordsmiths agreed that the **Aryans** had a common language, and perhaps common institutions and customs but Max Mueller (1916) warned against ethnologists who speak of “an **Aryan** race, **Aryan** blood, **Aryan** eyes, and hair.” He said they were equal to linguistic “sinners” who imagined the existence of “a dolichocephalic dictionary or a brachycephalic grammar.”

AIRECHTA , OIr. **aireach** , a keeper of cattle, the champion or avenger to the king or queen. The chief among paid household troopers, physically the strongest, most powerful man in the kingdom. Physical power was considered a magical gift of the gods.

AIRGEAD, AIRGIOD , OIr. **arget** , Br. **arc'hant** , silver, money; **airgiod** , OIr, **arget** , Latin **argentum** . **Argento-coux** , a Caledonian prince; **Nuada lamh airgead** , the mythic Irish god-king whose hand was stricken off in battle and replaced with a mechanical prosthesis made of silver. He was, for a time, barred from the high-kinship by this “blemish,” but was restored when the magical metal became flesh through the magic of his personal druid. “Silver has magical properties. It is usually dipped in water, but occasionally a silver coin serves as a charm.” “The “sortes numismaticae” are resorted to in choosing the site of a house. If heads turn up twice in three times, the spot is lucky (otherwise not). A silver coin is buried under the cornerstone for luck.” (Celtic Monthly, p. 163). “A woman in Eriskay related that one day she was taking home a load of seaweed (sea-weed) in a cart, when a person who had the Evil Eye came by and the horse fell down and could not rise for a long time, and even then was quite weak and could take no food. When she got home her neighbour filled a bowl with water taken from a boundary stream and put silver into it, and immediately threw it over the horse’s back, and it immediately got better.” (Celtic Monthly, p. 219). “All agreed that the *eolas* (spell) could not be right if it were not paid for in some manner. I do not know the rate of payment but can personally testify that when silver is put in a bowl of water to work a spell, the wise woman keeps the silver.” The theory is

that when the water is thrown over the patient the silver must stick to the bowl or no good is done.” (*Celtic Monthly*, p. 219).

In the Hallowe'en rituals a silver coin was frequently put in a tub of water. Anyone able to life it using his lips, but not his teeth, was reckoned lucky in money matters, and was, incidentally, allowed to keep the coin.

AIRGEACH , herdsman (of the goddess *Brid*). The word is similar to *àireach*, a keeper of cattle, OIr. *aire*.

AIRGTHEACH , The White House, one of the islands of earthly paradise in the western ocean discovered by *Bran*.

AIRIDH , **AIRIGH** , a hill pasture, a lone sheiling, EIr. **airge** , a cow-keep, a herd of dairy cows, probably based on **airgeach** , the cow-women (of the goddess *Brid*), Lat. **armentum** .

AIRMID . Sometimes **AIRMED** . A daughter of *Diancecht*, the god of medicine. A physician like her brother *Miach* she sewed a cat's eye into the empty socket of a porter at *Nuada's* palace. When *Miach* proved a more facile medicine man than his father, the latter slew him in a jealous rage. **Airmid** gathered the herbs that sprouted from her brother's grave, and found that each of the 365 species had a healing power. Observing this, *Diancecht* drove his daughter away and mixed the herbs in her study so that they could not be re-classified.

AIRNACC GIUNNAE , “the honourable fenced ones.” The druidic tonsure, cut in the mystic pattern that left the front crown of the head bald from ear to ear. The Celtic Christian monks took up this hair-cut as a means of identifying themselves as holy men. The Roman form of tonsure, consisting of a bald pate, superseded the druidic look.

AIRNE MHOIRE , the Virgin's Nut, **airne** , a sloe, the fruit of the blackthorn; the North American hawthorn, *prunus spinosa*, or the tree itself. The fruit bears the sign of a cross and was said transported to Britain on the Gulf Stream. Being rare there, it was highly prized. In the Roman Catholic isles it was blessed by the priest. In every congregation this was the preferred charm to ease the pains of childbirth.

AIRTECH . A supernatural creature which emerged from the cavern at Cruachan, one of the numerous Irish entrances to the Otherworld. He had

three daughters capable of assuming the shapes of wolves. These raiders of the countryside were stopped by *CasCorach* whose music enchanted them. When they took human form to better enjoy the his playing he threw a spear that impaled them all at once. Beheaded, they were no longer a menace.

AIR MHIRE CHATHA , battle-fury, berserker-rage. **Air** , super; **mhire** , flesh; **cath** , battle. A drug-induced state caused by the drinking of *crogan*. This was the famous "berserker-rage" noted among Old Norse warriors. The ability to assume this fighting mode was considered a mark that the individual was favoured by the gods. *Cúchullain* was a northern Irish warrior who prepared himself for battle by undergoing this shape change, which the English called the "warp-spasm:" "His body then made a furious twist beneath the surface of his skin, so this feet and knees seemed to switch to the rear and his heels and calves to the front of his body. On his head the temple sinews knotted and stretched to the nape of his neck. One eye was sucked deeply into his head, the other fell out on his cheek. His facial flesh peeled back from his jaws until his gullet could be seen, and his lungs and liver flapped from his mouth. The hair on his head became a twisted red thornbush. Then tall and thick and monstrous, there rose from his skull a black bloody smoke spouting from the centre of his skull." On one occasion where the blood-lust seized him, *Cúchullain* captured a wild stag and harnessed it to his chariot. Carrying the heads of three enemies in hand, he returned home and circled the dun of his own king completely unaware of where he was or what he intended. He charged about the royal fort in "the insulting left-handed manner" loudly demanding that those with in send out a champion. The king calmly responded by sending out the queen and the maidens in a naked state, knowing that body-lust tended to counter the effects of the warp-spasm. Surrounding him, the women coerced him into a vat filled with cold water, hoping to calm both passions. *Cúchullain* was in such a super-heated state, he boiled away the water and burst the vat, so that they were forced to transfer him to a second container. In a third vat, his body heat became equal to that of the water and he emerged to have Queen *Mugain* wrap him in a hooded blue cloak.

AI SLING , a vision or dream, SIr. & OIr. **aisndis** , I relate. A compound word, possibly **ais** , back, backwards + **leum** , to jump. One able to jump backwards and perceive times past; "to jump out of one's self, ecstasy." - Macbain. Dreams were considered entrances to parallel worlds. It was

thought that each man and woman was gifted by the gods with a runner, or cowalker, which acted to protect his interests. These shadow-followers were typically unseen and only the "gifted" were able to communicate with them in a direct and useful way. They could, however, run into the past, in which case they were referred to as "back-runners," or "hind-runners." If they found information there which they felt might benefit the "primary-soul", they usually attempted to communicate it. The gifted individual might be the recipient of a direct message or a vision, but common folk usually received little other than "static" and perhaps a vague premonition of some action that should be taken. This being the case, most runners attempted to communicate through dreams, although often that effect was equally garbled and useless. When men slept it used to be thought that their primary soul united with the secondary soul and travelled in other dimensions. In the dream-world adventures took place and sometimes men wrestled with "evil" spirits, a fact shown by their emergence from sleep in a state of fear to find their bodies drenched in perspiration. In dreams it was thought possible to side-step time, to "jump back" while in a dream-state. The god-hero *Aonghas Og* saw the maiden he desired in a dream, and sought the help of his mother, the goddess *Boann*, to find her. The maiden was identified as *Caer* and *Aonghas* went to her mound on the River Boyne, and after overcoming difficulties, mated with her and established his *Brugh na Boyne* at that place.

AITHECH , ATHACH , AITHEACH , FATHACH , aiteam , a people, a tribe, a giant, from the root **pat**, drawn out, extended; **ath**, a ford, people living "beyond the water;" **athach** , modest, to flinch; **faiteach** , retiring, shy; **f+ad+tech** , a "home-keeper;" **fath**, remote vistas; **fathamas** , a forewarning, awe, a degree of fear. This creature is often identified as the **amhas** , an obvious contraction of the above word. The English **Fomor** , "undersea dweller." Ellis says that **aithech** was "the Old Irish term for a giant." It was later applied, more generally, to the folk in temporary control of a region. See following entries.

AITHECHDHA , **aithech Da** , the "Giant-Day" The son of *Magog* and progenitor of all the races which eventually inhabited the British Isles after the World Flood. Confers with the Milesian **Dagdha** or **Dagda** .

AITHEACH TUATHA . The "rent-paying folk," whose progenitor, or protector, was the **Aithechdha** . A pre-Milesian people who staged a successful revolt against their oppressors, but were ultimately put down

by their enemies. Note two entries above. See *Daoine sidh*.

AITHEHDA . Elopements. A class of tale, the best known being “The Pursuit of *Diarmuid* and *Grainne*.”

AITIONN , juniper, EIr. **ak**, sharp; Latin, **acidus** , the Eng. **acid** . Also **aiteal** , the “sharp bush or tree.” Confers with the Ir. **teine** , furze, fire, the “fire-plant.” Always burned within dwellings to purge evil spirits at the time of the Quarter-Days.

AL , brood, Ir. **ál** , hence **ool** , Cy. **ael** , cf. Lat. **propogato** , Eng. **propagate** . Hence, a brood-mare, Germ. **adel** , the nobility. See **Oolaithir** , the **Allfather** , the ultimate creator-god. See also **alg** , space and **allaidh** , fierce, wild.

ALASDAIR , **Allexr** , **Alistear** , **Alastair** , the latter two after the modern pronunciation, Eng. **Alexander** . MIr. **Alaxandair** from the Latin, ultimately from the Greek, “defending warrior.” A “defender of men.” Hence **M’Alasdair** , **Mac-alister** , and the more remote **Mac-Andie** , which is based on the contraction ‘**Sandy** . This name became attached to royalty in twelfth century Scotland, and at the middle of the twentieth century was the fourth most frequently used name for Scottish male children.

ALB . obs. Tradition says that the Milesians arrived in Ireland about the year 1000 B.C. About this time the entire population, male and female, newcomers and old, rich and poor, wore the high-necked, long-sleeved garment which the Romans termed an **albus** . They selected this word, which means “white,” because this belted shift was made of linen, which is naturally brown in colour but bleaches in the sun to dazzling whiteness. From this, the Latin **Albion** , a name for all of Britain, and from it the Gaelic **Alba** , which now applies to Scotland alone. In some parts the chieftains distinguished themselves by wearing the orange kilts, which are still seen in parades of modern Irishmen. In later times wool supplanted linen as the material of choice for the nobility. The *Tuatha daoine*, who were in power when the Milesians arrived in Ireland never surrendered the traditional white linen **albus** and this was also true of the conservative druidic class that managed religious rites. When Christian missionaries came to Britain they had the smarts to make themselves indistinguishable from the *vates* by wearing white linen, and many Christian priests still

wear this basic uniform beneath their black surplice. The “white men” of the Old Norse western Atlantic *Hvitrtamanalande* or “White-man’s land,” may have been named for their wearing apparel rather than their complexions. The Christian missionaries to Britain wore the **albus** as a symbol of their “rebirth” or regeneration following baptism. At one time, the faithful were required to wear this white costume for a week following their initiation and lay-preachers often wore this symbol of their humility and power when they travelled as missionaries. The garb was taken up by many of the Christian cults including the Knights Templar, who decorated this white uniform with a blood-red cross.

ALBA, **ALBAINN**, **ALBANN**, from the Greek, **Alba**, which identified all of Britain in the eyes of the classical writers. "the white land"; Latin **albus**, white, OHG, **albīs**, a swan. May correspond with **alp** and the ON **elf**. EIr. **Alban**, **Alban**, Also Lat., **albus**, the white unisexural, long-sleeved, high-necked tunic of white linen worn by the Celts of old Britain. Thus, any "white-land", perhaps making double reference to the land-fall at Dover. OHG. **albīs**, a swan. The southern Irish were the first to limit this description to present-day Scotland. **Albannach**, a Scot, a resident of Scotland. It will be noted that the **albus** was worn by the early Christian missionaries in an attempt at making common ground with the natives of Britain. It is still worn in many of the Churches beneath the dark outer robes. This was usually de-rigueur garb for the druids and is one of the colours still ascribed to practitioners of witchcraft.

ALG, space, corresponding with the Old Norse *Ginnungugap*, the place of beginnings; chaos, the state of all matter before its reincarnation at the will of the **Oolathair**, or **Allfather**. Often regarded as lying somewhere beyond the western Atlantic Ocean in the general vicinity of the Labrador Sea. This place has been equated with the island of Newfoundland in Canadian Indian mythology.

ALLA, the intrinsic physical and spiritual characteristics of a person, formerly credited to the direction given the individual by his birth-*bafinn*. The forces implicit in character. In the old Gaelic world it was felt that men could not escape their fate, their character, for good or ill, being a birth-right.

ALLA-BHI-ALLA-BHUIDHE, the noble yellow plant, which is also called the Hail of Columba, the Charm of Columba, the Jewl of Columba, the Glory

of Columba, the Noble Plant of Mary. The latter are all post-Christian addendums. St. John's wort is till the plant most favoured as a ward against all evil, second-sight, witchcraft, enchantment, the evil-eye and death and decomposition. It brings growth, increase, fruition, plenty and prosperity and is sometimes called "the armpit package," because this is where it is often carried, hidden under the left armpit. The plant has to be accidently found to be effective and is especially prized when uncovered in the fold of flocks, for this is certain to be a prosperous herd.

ALLAIDH , fierce, wild, Ir. **allta** , from **all**, over, other, beyond, "foreign, barbarous, overly-spirited." Resembling **allmharach** , a foreigner, one living across the ocean, EIr. **allmharach** , i.e. **all** + **muir** , from "beyond the ocean." "transmarine." Note **allaban** , wandering.

ALMA , civilization, enlightenment, the culture of peoples and states. The degree of enlightenment was thought a reflection of a favour of the God, or gods. See **al**, brood and the next entry.

ALMADH , sexual intercourse, coitus, **al**, brood. With the exception of the higher classes, the men of the ancient agricultural world led long, dreary lives of grinding poverty and heavy work. It has been guessed that men were not always as interested in procreation as they are in our more leisurely world. The pagan religions were fertility cults, a necessity in those more sterile times. The high king cohabited publicly with a virgin representative of *Samh*, the "earth goddess" at the Samhain and the Beltane, or if not, arranged that a representative do duty for him. This was an act of sympathetic magic, supposed to arouse procreative fires in his subjects as well within creatures of lesser spirit. It was considered that the essential life-force of the monarch entered his mate with this act, thus leaving his corporeal body abandoned of spirit, little more than a shell. Since the god-king-spirit was scheduled for rebirth, it was customary to ritually load the evil-spirits plaguing the community on this unfortunate husk. This collective evil, incarnate, was then burned, and its ashes scattered on the fields, where it was noted that they had the benign function of reinvigorating the crops. Remember that the life expectancy of men was rarely greater than thirty years at this time. In the early kingdoms, the king sometimes had his rule regulated by law to seven years. Once this "lucky" term expired, he was expected to be willing to "go to earth." Later, more astute and longer-lived rulers, managed an arrangement where a king-by-proxy took their place. After the ceremony,

the priests spread the news that the king-spirit had become reincarnate in a body that looked suspiciously like the old. In the pagan world casual sex was regarded as a necessary urge and promiscuity was expected at the times of the fire-feasts. No legal contracts of marriage were made in May, during the month following the Beltane, especially where paternity needed to be proved. While sex was unimportant as an act, formal sexual alliances represented a major means by which a clan might aspire to power. Our ancestors spent their entire lives seeking power; they looked for god-spirit to add to their gene-pool, and one means to power was through the bond of marriage. Such alliances brought moments of great anxiety, for the groom's family needed to be reassured that the bride would represent an addition to their communal power, rather than a drain on it. The dowry was intended to compensate the bride's tribe for their loss of spiritual force. On a personal level, it was observed that the sex act usually "drained" the energies of the less robust partner, so some attempt was made to pair people of similar physical and intellectual abilities.

ALNACHAS . burial customs. The old Gaelic "wake" had features that are, perhaps, best preserved in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia: At the death of a relative the "best room" in his house was cleared of furnishings, with the exception of a table which held a lamp to provide light during the night-hours. Saw-horses were set up along one wall to receive "the boards", solid pine planks on which the body was transported. The "stand" was draped with white sheets, as was the nearest wall. If there were mirrors, or framed pictures, too large for easy removal, these were also covered with sheets. The body was then brought in and "laid out" on the boards with a small plate of common salt placed on the chest. It was also traditional to cover the face of the corpse with a square of white linen. Those who wished to "visit" with the corpse were expected to lift a corner of "the handkerchief" for a brief look. Joe Neil MacNeil says: "It seems that many people had the custom, when they had been to a wake house and were leaving, of putting their hand on the hand of the person who was dead, or on the person's forehead. It didn't matter whether they put their hand on forehead or hand -the hands (of the corpse) used to be folded on the breast. And the reason that people had was that if the spirit of the man should meet you again, you would not fear him in a way that would create any difficulty..." (Tales Until Dawn, p. 215) In these days it is standard behaviour to embalm the dead and "lay them to rest" in a "store-bought" coffin, but during the last century neither practise was followed. Since the "untended" dead changed form with surprising rapidity, the formalities of the wake had to be undertaken as quickly as possible, particularly when

the death took place during the summer months. Those who attended wakes in the first half of this century noted that fat people, and youngsters, were quick to show evidence that they were "truly dead." Thin elderly individuals were seen to corrupt much less quickly, and a Cape Bretoner admitted she hated to part with one eighty-five year old corpse because, "she was so pretty. We put a little colour to her and everything. We kept her for two full days; from the morning, all day and night and the next day and all that night, and she was only buried on the third day...She went on so long... With a young person it wouldn't be so." In every community there were men who traditionally built rudimentary coffins. Those for adults were painted black and lined with black cloth; very young children were always placed in white coffins. Meanwhile women of the community were at work with black cotton fashioning a liner for the coffin. The "bib and tucker" which covered the chest, and framed the face, of the corpse was made of white silk. There was never a charge for the construction of a coffin although it required a full-day's work to construct one. The coffin was not carried into the wake-room until the last day before burial, and then it was placed near a second wall, supported upon two chairs. The immediate family was not allowed a part in any of the work that led to the wake, the funeral and the interment, these jobs being taken up by close relatives or the nearest neighbours. Some of these people dug the grave, while others tended to the "outside chore", such as chopping wood or tending the animals. In the house, the women brought in food, and took over all the household chores including a basement to attic cleaning of the rooms, In the process all the blinds were drawn and the doors tightly shut. The children were usually expelled to the barn, or the yard, where they joined unoccupied adults in playing games of quoits or horseshoes. The women who were indoors prepared an eight o'clock "tea" to provide for the mourners, who often had to travel long distances to pay their respects. At particularly large gatherings, the visitors succeeded one another in the dining-room until all had been served. Supper was usually at an end by eleven o'clock, when all present assembled in the wake-room for the recitation of prayers. "On entering this room one was struck by the sight of plates of tobacco and pipes set along the boards near the corpse, so that any man who fancied a smoke was free to help himself." Near midnight the prayers were finished and most of the casual company left for home. Friends chosen by the family remained behind to guard the corpse throughout the night. A lunch was provided for these people and they whiled away the time by telling tales about the dead, interspersing their accounts with the latest community

news and gossip. In the "wee hours" they tired of this and fell back on the telling of traditional tales, not hesitating to burst out with poetry or song if the myth required it. When almost all had succumbed to tiredness, at least one person remained to "wake" the dead. As time stretched out "the blessed dead would be left almost unattended, except for those who were of nearest kin, or those who were too old to want anything more exciting." On the day that followed, food was again served, and drink offered, to all who called at the house. It was considered discourteous to the dead to leave without taking what was offered. In fact, a "gate-watcher" stood by with the office of seeing that no one was overlooked. "As the grief of the family lessened a little with the passing of time, the tension of the crowd was lessened with the passing of "the bottle," a goodly supply of which was brought by friends...In the latter stages of the wake it was not uncommon for fights and arguments to break out. In the best households these took place outside, and were in fact, nothing more than a restirring of old grudges." On the day of the funeral, the first order was the opening of doors "to let the spirit away to a better world." Then came the "Chesting of the Dead," in which the enshrouded body was lifted from its boards upon broad linen "tapes" to be moved to the coffin or kist. To add to this dark ceremony, the minister read appropriate verse, and to "relieve the mind" in this sobering moment, drink was surreptitiously passed behind the cleric's back. The coffin was taken from the room on the shoulders of six able-bodied men, and was thus conveyed to the burial ground. Where the distance to be covered was long, there were alternate ranks of pallbearers, who took turns bearing this "dead-weight." It was considered an act of disrespect to bear the body of the deceased at the rear of an animal, thus the Gaels had no horse-drawn hearses. A piper set the pace for the funeral corsage, playing a suitable lament to spur on the wailers who came immediately behind. A piper marched just before the coffin, carrying a jar of liquor intended to be opened after the grave-side formalities. Where this bottle was cracked prematurely, the procession sometimes bogged down in drunken brawls, and more than one Cape Breton procession ended in extensive litigation. If the food and drink was preserved until its proper time and place, it was dispensed just after the burial. See entry under *Aog* for an explanation of some of the above customs.

ALLAIDH-UP (pron. alley oop), combining **allaidh** , fierce, wild, with **up**, push. In English the equivalent is **Up-Helly-Aa** , a descriptive for a Norse Yule celebration still held in communities in the Shetland Islands on the last Tuesday of January, annually. It is noteworthy that **allaidh** derives

from the Irish **allta**, “the idea being “foreign, barbarous, fierce. The word is similar to the Cy. **all**, other. The Scandinavian Yule may have been dedicated to the old god *Tyrr*, or *Tues*, since it is still celebrated on Tuesday. When he was displaced by *Thor*, the Yule (literally “yell”) month (which began December 25 by modern reckoning) became his month, although he was finally forced to share it with *Odin*, *Bragi* and *Frey*. Among non-Celtic races, the Yule was considered the most significant celebration of the year, combining a fire-festival with feasting, dancing, and pledging causes to the gods in drink. In honour of *Frey*, the boar’s flesh was eaten (this being his totem animal). Today, the **Up-Helly-Aa** is celebrated on the most northern islands of the Shetland group but not on Mainland (the largest island) which has a larger Gaelic population. One might suppose that the festival is a remnant of authentic old Norse custom, a reminder of their occupation of these islands, but the systematic practise of parading in period costumes started in 1889. At that time, working class men of Lerwick were in the habit of filling tubs with combustibles and dragging them on sledges into the main street to liven up what used to be considered the end of Yule and the beginning of a new year. Since accidents happened, the “guizers” usually disguised themselves, afterwards ending the night in jail or in making the “rounds” of the houses of friends. Because of the fire-hazard, these junketings were disliked by the forces for law-and-order, especially since the pranks tended to deteriorate into hooliganism, running fights, and drunken brawls that resulted in property damage. Ultimately things got so out of hand that tar-barrelling was prohibited by law in 1874. In spite of this prohibition the fire-makers were in the streets two years later and a pair of revellers were sent to prison. In the winter of 1881 the authorities decided to give in to the popular desire of the residents to have a mid-winter bash. That year, the village arranged a parade of sixty torchbearers. The following year, an inspired marcher suggested piling the remnant torches to create a giant bonfire and in 1889, the residents create a pseudo-Viking ship and torched the old year out by firing the replica. From these simple beginnings the **Up-hally-Aa** has developed into a huge undertaking with a permanent planning committee. Although the present fire-festival is a tourist attraction, its antique origins are certain. The original Yule, commencing on Mother Night (Dec. 24) was a blow-out of epic dimensions involving a least three weeks of the “month of the wheel.” Mother Night was observed to follow the shortest day of the year and the return of the sun to the winter sky was seen as a reason for rejoicing. The Festival was termed Yule (wheel) from the fact that the sun was perceived as a fiery “wheel” in

the sky. This supposed resemblance gave rise to attempts to inspire the pallid winter sun to better output by trimming wooden wheels with straw, which were then lighted and rolled down mountainsides. The progress of the “year-wheel” was observed, its flickerings being thought to predict periods of sunshine and shade in the coming year. Fire is still a central theme in the **Up-Helly-Aa** and it is certain that bonfires were lit in the Shetlands to herald the returning sun in ancient times. In the recent past, it is noted that hill-fires preceded tar-barrel fires. In an article for the Scotsman (May 1974), Maurice Fleming interviewed Peter Moar (born in 1825). He said that the fires were originally lit on the night of December 24 and that “men afterwards went guizing and had a dance.” Significantly, the present celebration starts with the hoisting of the raven banner at the town hall. There are twelve squads of disguisers, the chief being the “viking” warriors, whose leader is elected annually to the role. Other squads dress entirely as birds and animals, as “Red Indians,” or as Eskimos, crofters or clowns. As things now stand, a day-time parade by the warriors deposits the wheeled viking ship at quay-side. That evening the Guizer Jarl leads all the ranks in a torchlight parade to the water, where the torches are flung aboard to the strains of a brass band and the word of “The Galley Song.” After the firing of the ship, the twelve “guild halls” are thrown open to receive the guizers. The host at these receptions are men who feel that their age prohibits exercise and ladies renowned for their cooking and brewing arts. It is required that guizers must visit and sample the offering of each hall. At the hall, every visiting squad is required to exchange “a stunt” for their food and drink, usually an impromptu dance, a mime, a song routine or a brief comic sketch. Alcoholic drinks are not provided “on tap,” but observers have noticed there is always plenty available to “warm the route.” There is no longer evidence of the vandalism that used to characterize **Up-Hally-Aa** .

Notice the twelve squads? These recall the twelve mortal-gods at *Odin/Uller’s* winter banquets. In the elder days, men were required to pledge each, in drink, by name. The first Christian missionaries to the isles, noticing the extreme popularity of this feast, suggested substituting the names of the twelve apostles, and drinking to the health of “The Lord God.” rather than the Allfather *Odin*.

ALP, AILP, EALP. ingrafted, closely joined; a tinker’s joint, a tinker’s work, a hill, a huge mass (e.g. the mountains known as the “**alps**”), Scot. **imper**, a graft on a tree, a scion. Also a night-mare spirit similar to the Latin *incubus* or *succubus*. These invisible creatures were thought to be of

the *Daoinesidh*, or wee-folk. Some said that they acted at the demand of magicians; others thought they were the second-soul of the individual practitioner of the black arts. Typically they entered dwellings in the dead of the night by de-materializing and passing through a small entry-way such as a key-hole. Inside they re-materialized, sought out their victim, and crouched on his upper chest. Sometimes they were seen as visible totem animals, which grasped the hair of the sleeper and "hag-rode" him as if he were a horse. Often they attempted to impede the breathing of their victim by stuffing his nose and mouth with hair or feathers, and in some cases they were accused of sexual assaults (which sometimes led to pregnancy of female victims). During these attacks, the victim was unaware except for the perception of bad-dreams. Most people found themselves incapable of arousal even where they sensed danger, and when they were released from sleep it was into a worried, sweat-drenched body. In Atlantic Canada, humans and animals that suffered from the attention of the **alp** were referred to as **alp-**, witch-, or hag-ridden. Helen Creighton described a typical incident at Preston, near Dartmouth, Nova Scotia: "(The man) went in his barn and found his horse wet and foaming at the mouth as though it had been ridden hard. He decided it had been witch-ridden, so he went to the store and got ten new needles and ten new pins and put them in a bottle. Then he went to a lake, filled the bottle with water, so it would sink, and then dropped the bottle in the lake. After that the horse was not ridden by witches any more."³ The protective device mentioned above was a "witch-bottle". A step seems to have been omitted from this "counter-charm", since it was usual to include urine, hair or fecal matter from the afflicted animal in the bottle. It was assumed that the **alp-spirit** supplanted that of the horse-spirit, perhaps chasing it from the body of the animal. Any part being representative of the whole, "drowning" a portion of the body of the horse was expected to reflect upon the resident familiar-spirit, and from it upon the prime soul, located at a distance. in the body of the witch. She was expected to drown in fact, as her spirit went to the bottom by proxy. Once this invading spirit was destroyed the animal-spirit could return, or regain control over, its body. As a rule most of these night-visitors remained invisible, only appearing to individuals in their dreams, but an exception was noted at East Petpeswick, Nova Scotia, where Mr and Mrs Jim B. were visited by the alpean of Mrs. L., "who was supposed to be a witch." Jim was in the habit of getting breakfasts for himself and his wife, and usually cut the meat needed for that meal before

3. Creighton, Helen, Bluenose Magic, Toronto (1968), p. 27.

going to bed. One night he he concluded this operation by driving his "sheathing-knife" into a back-board above the pantry shelf. He then joined his wife in bed, and the two lay awake talking, and finally rested quietly in the darkness although neither was asleep. The door-latch lifted and footsteps sounded across the floor. The couple did not move, but both watched in amazement as an ethereal figure, which had the appearance of a young girl, climbed onto the foot of their bed. At first Jim made no moves against her but when she was close, he reached out and grasped her by one arm. While he struggled with her, he cried out to his wife to get his knife. He suspected he was dealing with a witch-familiar, and intended to cut of the night-visitor's arm, thus injuring the distant **alpean** through her cowalker. While Mrs. Jim sought the knife, the little girl struggled so hard she twisted her arm off in the man's hands; after that the visitor dematerialized along with its separated arm. The pair searched the house in vain for any remnant of the familiar or the knife. They had no further dealings with Mrs. L., and the knife was back in the wood-work when the couple awoke in the morning.⁴ This story is interesting in the fact that Mrs. L. was described at the end as "a tall thin woman" rather than as a diminutive girl. While cowalkers frequently took the form of adults, they did not age after the fashion of humans, and frequently showed themselves in the adolescent form of the individual who was their host and double. The **alpean** had the ability to sense the intent of those who opposed them, and to cast spells that made objects temporarily invisible to men. Any damage done to a familiar was bound to reflect upon the *boabh*, or witch, by the next rising of the sun. Mr. Richard Hartlin occupied a house at South-East Passage, Nova Scotia, a place constructed from the wood of wrecks washed up on the nearby beach. The spirits of these unhappy ships became those of the house, and the inhabitants were finally forced to abandon it for a number of smaller outbuildings. Before that happened Richard had a meeting with one of the **alpean**. Hartlin said: "The only time I actually saw anything was one Sunday afternoon. After I ate my dinner I lay down and fell into a doze of sleep (or so) I thought. After I got to sleep there was somethin' pressing me and I couldn't wake or couldn't turn over about half an hour and, when I woke, I seen this person go from me to the windy and she was a woman with a black and white spotted dress on and I was a lather of sweat with the water pouring

4. Creighton, Helen, Bluenose Magic, Toronto (1968), p. 53.

off me as big as marbles. Whatever it was, a witch or not, God knows."⁵ Consulting with his relatives Hartlin came to the conclusion that this was a visiting witch rather than a resident spirit. They exorcized it by taking nine letters randomly selected from a Bible, reversing these, and printing them on a pine board. This was placed over the entryway to the house where it blocked further "troubling". The Bible was considered the prime source of Christain "God spells", just as the various grimoires were thought to embody the "gisreags", or "fire-spells" of the **alpean**. Even those who could not release spells from the printed pages, through the magic of reading, could employ the letters, which were elements of these spells, as countercharms. Witches were known to reverse the language of the Bible in their sabattical rites, thus the letters were reversed to have their most potent influence on those they were directed against. At Head Harbour, in 1965, Helen Creighton interviewed Alma J. who told her, "About three years ago I went to bed one night and lay with my face to the wall and after the light was out I turned around and when I did, there was a cat jumped right up on the pillow and came down here on my right shoulder, and when it got on my chest I grabbed it and threw it back on the bed. The witch fell the next day and cracked three of her ribs. If you hurt a witch at night, whatever happens to them will come in the daylight. That is why she didn't fall at night."⁶ Occasionally men got the better of these night-travellers by sheer force of will. At East River Point, Nova Scotia: "There was a woman who used to come to a man at night and turn him into a horse and ride him. The next morning he would be tired out, so a friend offered to take his place. When the witch took him out to put the bridle on, he put it on her instead, and she never came back there again."⁷ In this case the hag-rider may be thought to represent sexual ascendancy, events in a dream, real happenings, or some combination thereof. Again, the **alpean** might be thought of as familiars, independent evil-spirits, or spiritual projections upon completely innocent animals. This last possibility explains why Maritimers are still loathe to allow cats to sleep in the same room with an infant. It was a general fear that children exposed to spiritual invasions by proxy might become permanently "spell-bound", or die from "crib-death". The latter was most often credited to the

5. Creighton, Helen, Bluenose Ghosts, Toronto (1976) p. 275.

6. Creighton, Bluenose Magic, Toronto (1968), p. 52.

7. Creighton, Helen, Folklore of Lunenburg County, Toronto (1956), p. 53.

smothering actions of some **alp**. In the Victorian era, men could not explain instances of "infantile paralysis" and sudden death, but they thought to better it by naming the condition "narcolepsy". A medical "magician" of that age declared that this was "a benumbed state, stupor or torpor, very like that induced by a narcotic, characterized by brief eliptiform attacks of deep sleep." It might have been just as effective to know the true name of the offending night mare, for it was once confidently said that "the only way to scare the Night-Elf away is to pronounce his real name aloud." Spontaneous black-outs of the breathing centres of the lower-brain, followed by oxygen starvation, are now known to produce "narcolepsy", but the root cause of these interactions is still unclear. Before any medical intervention was possible, the first line of defense was prevention: In the middle ages the century plant, St. John's wort, verbena, and the Palma Christi were hung about as prophylactics against night-visitors. In this century, these have been abandoned, but we are only moderately enlightened, substituting the local rowan and its berries for the plants mentioned above. Admittedly, few local sleepers have attempted to escape notice by wearing amulets consisting of spirited-stones or dried wolf's hide, but there are still those who tie a red cloth or thread about the throats of animals or people thought to be at hazard. This is undoubtedly an attempt at sympathetic magic. According to Scottish legend, red was the colour of the gods and the *sidh*, and red berries were the "fruit of the gods" once guarded by the dragon of Loch Awe. *Odin's* folk depended on the *Idun's* apples for their extended life-span, just as the *sidh* resorted to eating the *feis goibniu* or "feast against aging". A Scottish mortal purloined this fruit for his mother, but it poisoned her, thus our ancestors became suspicious of red berries, equating it with debunked, but still powerful, god-spirits. Hanging these branches was spiritually harmless to men, but it did confuse night mares, who interpreted this as evidence that a god-spirit or some allied *sidh* lived within. *Idun's* apples are still represented in crab-apples, which until recently were left standing about to dissuade night-elves. Similar results could be obtained by inscribing a pentagram or an image of a pig's head on the door, but it was generally agreed that this might be misunderstood by neighbours. It was usually considered more discrete to hang mistletoe, or hop-vine complete with leaves, over one's bed, both plants being associated with the elder gods. Flax, or hemp, used in the weaving of linen cloth, had certain psychedelic properties when smoked and were thought useful in confusing the *sidh*. When flax seed was strewn before the door, or in a room, it was said that the night-elf would spend the entire evening

gathering the individual kernels. Any of the actions usually taken to subvert witchcraft also functioned against the **alp**, thus our immediate ancestors used to drive a knife, or a nail, or a fish-hook into each window ledge and door-jamb, knowing that the *sidh* and unbound human-spirits were turned aside by steel and iron, metals anciently used in the defeat of the old gods of Europe. An iron horseshoe inverted above a doorway always caught the gaze, and spirit, of the **alpean** whose ghosts supposedly bounced back and forth between the tines until released at the first light of day. To deter this kind of spirit, a Blandford, Nova Scotia, woman suggested: "Sleep with a prayer book under the pillow for a witch charm. I knew a woman who couldn't sleep and she would see a black cat come into her room and she would get nightmares. She used to put the prayer book under her pillows and sleep with her legs crossed."⁸ Some men suggest crossing the arms as well as the legs before going to sleep while others claimed it was imperative to erect rowan-crosses before the doors and windows of the house. Still others said that a few sprigs pulled from a broom placed under the pillow, or an entire broom laid across and entryway, kept these evil-spirits confused and at a distance. Where practical, these remedies were extended to animals, thus a Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, horse-owner put a bag of salt about his animal's neck explaining, "If I didn't put that bag of salt there the witches would ride that horse so hard tonight that tomorrow I wouldn't be able to get any further than Dartmouth, it'd be that tired out." If all these attempts at sympathetic magic failed, rites of expulsion were sometimes effective. Catholics declared that the **alpean** were scared off if Jesus' name, or the names of the Trinity, happened to be declared in a loud voice. The outward sign of the cross cancelled their power, but if a man lay frozen in a nightmare, the condition could be broken by signalling this same cross with the tongue. The **alpe** dematerialized to enter rooms through minute cracks and crevices, so if all but one entry was barred, it was possible to contain one of them by driving a pre-prepared cork or wooden bung into the remaining opening while the spirit was within the room. This done, they would typically pass through a number of shape-changes to escape capture, but could be cornered if wounded or seized by the hair of the head. In some families **alp-gloves** were actually passed down from one generation to the next, and these were certain magic against the spells of the shape-shifters. A curious method of containing the **alp** was to pound a cork into the neck of a bottle. Showing some cupidity, and not a little

8. Creighton, Helen, Bluenose Magic, Toronto (1968), p. 38.

stupidity, the night mare often unstoppered and entered the bottle, where he paused to urinate. At this, a wise man would quickly drive the stopper back into place, afterwards sinking the bottled spirit in the deepest sink-hole, or lake, of the land. At this writing I have been widowed from my wife of nearly four decades for a period of six months. Soon after she died I made unverbilized complaints to the empty air that I had no idea how I should remember her. It was not long before she made her appearance in a dream in the form of a beautiful young girl with dark curly hair. She cocked her head in her characteristic manner and said: "This isn't easy to do, I hope you're satisfied!" Much later, we had visitors in the house in connection with my youngest's daughter's wedding. There were enough beds to accomodate everyone but finding myself short a pillow, I covered a square feather-filled Edwardian cushion with a pillowcase. This artifact had been in my wife's family for many years. It had an Art-Nouveux pattern on one side, incorporating sweet clover. I might not have pressed this cushion into use it if I had recalled that Anne had used it to support herself in her last days of life. As she was slowly suffocating from pulmonory edema she found that standard pillows would not raise her head high enough for her to breathe so that she could sleep. I was very tired at the time of my daughters's wedding. and so placed the cushion on my own bed and went to sleep in an unusual face-up position. Near dawn I was pulled into a dream by feelings of suffocation and sexual arousal. In the dream I opened my eyes and found my "wife" lying upon me. My comment was, "This is impossible, you're dead!" Her reaction, "I don't think so!" Shortly, I was fully awake and left with mixed feelings and the usual after-effects of an encounter with an **alp**. There have been no dreams of her since.

ALTACHADH CADAIL , sleep prayer, The "night-prayers" of people reflected their needs, and were variously named: "couch-blessing, bench-blessing, bolster-blessing, pillow-blessing" or "couch-shrining." The "soul-shrine" was a rune particularly sung as people retired to rest.

AM, time. Perhaps from the root word meaning year; possibly allied with the Latin **annus**. A property visited on matter by the creator-god. Time was considered finite, to be terminated at the will of the one god.

AMADAN , fool; **am** + **ment** , not + with a mind. Similar to the Latin **mentis** , mind. In Irish mythology the most powerful spirit among the little people (next to Queen *Mebd*) was **Amadan na briona** , the "fiery

fool." He is known as **Amadan dubh** in parts of Scotland, where it is said that the sounds of his pipes heard at dusk impart madness and mental oblivion. This side-hill dweller may be equated with the death-god *Cromm*, also known as *Aog*, the taker of souls at the *Nollaig*, or Yule. Yule festivities, among men, used to include the appointment of a **amadan**, whose duties included the organization of entertainments and food for the Yule-tide. His position was often awarded as the result of a draw in which he was "black-balled." During the twelve days of this festival, the human **amadan** (assumed to be a reincarnate **Amadan na briona**) took the responsibilities and liberties of kingship, and for a brief spell had the powers of life and death over his "subjects." When his term was up, the **amadan** was summarily killed, and burned, and his ashes spread on the fields to inspire the crops with his "fiery-spirit" in the coming growing season. Preserved in eastern Canadian folklore as **amadon**, also spelled **omadhaun**, **amaden**, **omadan**, **omadawn**, **omadhawn**, **omidown**, **omigon**, The word continues in present day Gaelic as **omadhaun**, with a meaning similar to that in dialectic Maritime speech. In Pratt's Dictionary of Prince Edward Island English, **omadon** is said the equivalent of "gomme, kittardy, nosic, oshick, hick" and "stouk." The original **Omadon** was described as one of the *sidh*, the most powerful of his kind, second in magic to Queen Maeve or the *Mhorrigan*. He had the character of Robin Hood in his form as a jester, and relates to the Scottish "Auld Donald." This last had his name from his Old Norse ancestors, who occupied the Western Isles of Scotland and created the Clan Macdonald. The Gaelic *Domhnall* (Donald), is literally, the master of the Yule, and corresponds with *Uller*, the winter-time usurper of *Odin's* throne and power at the dark season. In other ages the god-kings needed stand-ins to "go to earth" in their place at the conclusion of the twelve days of Yule. These men, selected by lot, were a special breed of fool, whose end was indeed fiery! In the harsh past before Christianity introduced the idea of a final single salvation, life was considered a hard journey and men went to death a little less grudgingly, facing the possibility of many subsequent, possibly better, reincarnations. At that, they had to be cajoled with special treatment, thus the **omadon** was granted the temporary advantages of kingship, which he often took with as much jaundice and whimsy as he could muster. In later years the European "master of the feast", or "master of trickery," was still at large although he was no longer burned at the end of his "reign" When Henry the Eighth, dressed as the Lord of Yule, led a party of sixteen masked revellers against Cardinal Wolsey's Christmas supper-party in 1528, he did so under seasonal, as well

as regal license. No man could stand against the will of the "fools" and even the Sherriff of York once expressed his resignation in a proclamation saying "This season, all manner of whores and thieves, dice-players, carders, and all other unthrifty folke, be welcome to the towne, whether they come late or early, at the reverance of the high feast of "Youle", till the twelve days be past." This *Uller-Odin* was variously entitled the Lord of Misrule, the Abbott of Unreason, the Archbishop of Fools, the Precentor of Fools, the Tommy, Beelzebub, Little Devil Doubt, or the Old Goose. One "tommy" was described as wearing "a fox skin to cover his head with a tail hanging down in the rear." This was the same creature as the "dyhinker" that led the belsnickers in Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. In 1862 Samuel Breck wrote that, "while they have ceased to do it now, I remember (the mummers) from 1782 (in Boston)...a set of the lowest blackguards in filthy clothes with disguised faces, obtruding themselves everywhere. The only way to get rid of them was to give them money..." The Irish form is **amadan na bruiona** , **bruion** being a word for rath or hill-forth. Thus "a fool of the fort."

AMASGUIDH , **AIMSGITH** , profane, impure; from **measg** , mixed, in the middle. Having special reference to the "crime" of miscegenation. The first gods were said to be immortal but they cohabited with the mortal giants and with men producing the diluted blood of the "mortal-gods." Particularly said of gods whose blood included that of the **amhas** , which see.

AMERGIN , **AMAIRGEN** , **AMORGIN** , **EMERGIN** (am-org-in), the premiere Milesian bard, a son of the mythic King Mileus, Miled or *Mil*. He is equated with *Ollav Fola*, the first "professor of political science" in Ireland, and is supposed to have been the first of the druids to take an interest in law-making and judicial assemblies. When the Milesians sailed to Ireland seeking a land promised them in dreams, they found the place inhabited by the warrior-magicians known as the *Tuatha daoine*. Thirty of their ships laid anchor at Kenmare Bay, on the southwestern coast. Their emissaries went ashore and approached the Tuathans with the customary Celtic demand for an immediate surrender or battle. In the interest of absolute fairness, the druid **Amergin** advised that his own forces would withdraw to a distance "nine waves from the shore" while the antagonists made up their minds about where the war would be engaged. The Tuathans may not have heard of the concept of "just balances" which was the basis of Celtic thinking. They used the postponement of hostilities to

gather their own druids, who immediately raised the *ceol-side* or “magic wind.” This wind could blow no higher than a ship's mast but was sufficient to break anchor-ties and scatter the fleet of the Milesians. In the midst of this trouble, **Amergin** sent a man aloft to determine if the wind was stirred by magic. Hearing the words, "There is no storm aloft!" the Milesian magician commenced to chant a counter-charm, at which the storm died. Unfortunately *Eber Donn*, expressing his brutal rage at the duplicity of the Tuathans, rejoiced too much at the prospect of revenge. As a result, the tempest sprung up once more and all but four ships of the southern fleet of thirty were sunk. At last, battles opened on two fronts, one at *Teltin* (Telltown) in the north and another on the southwestern coast. In the end, the forces of the invader joined in Meath, killing three queens of the *Tuatha daoine*, and dispersing the remaining princes and warriors of the old realm. Remembering the trouble that came from his first judgement of the *Tuatha daoine*, **Amergin** was more harsh with his second. When asked how they should be treated in defeat, he deeded his own people all lands beneath the sun. In an example of rough-and-ready technical justice, the bard then deeded the *Tuatha daoine* all lands below the topsoil as well as the islands beyond the western sun. Thus, he guaranteed their disappearance from the world and affairs of "men." *Eber* and *Eremon*, the two remaining sons of *Mil* almost immediately got into a struggle of their own over the high-kingship of the new land. *Eremon* was the elder, and under a judgement from **Amergin**, was supposed to hold the crown for his lifetime, passing it to *Eber* at death. *Eber*, however, refused to submit to this award, and demanded the partition of Ireland. A war was fought, and the elder brother afterwards ruled from Tara (ca 1,000 B.C.). **Amergin** continued as his advisor and it was he who suggested the subdivision of Ireland into provinces governed by chieftains. He founded the great triennial fair at Tara, where men assembled for religious fire-feasts, to study genealogy, enact laws, dispute the fine points of justice, settle successions, arrange marriages, and entertain themselves. It was the first law of the *feis* that all quarrels had to be set aside for the time given the assembly at Tara. In the end, similar provincial gatherings were set up to service the needs of the principalities. **Amergin** is supposedly buried at Loughcrew in Westmeath.

AMHARTAN, luck from Fr. **aventure**, the Eng. **adventure**. A short busy life was considered a gift from the gods and much preferred to one of subservience and boredom. Such good luck was considered a birth-right of some men, a gift of the gods through their protective *bafinne*, or fates.

AMHAS, AMHUAG , wild-man, beast-man, from EIr. **amos**, **amsach** , a mercenary soldier. Related to **amh** + **uaigh** , raw + of eye, evil-eyed. A man thought possessed by an evil spirit or befind. A Fomorian sea-beast. See **aithech** for further information.

AMHLAIR, AMHEACHD , *beurla*, Englishmen; barbarians, huns, vandals. **Anadas** , barbarism. In Welsh myth the most dangerous mythological deity was **Cas Anadas** or **Cas Andras** (literally, the bisexual one) the Celtic personification of any hated race. One possessed by evil spirits. See next entry.

ANA-DRAOI , **ana**, similar to the German, **inu**, without, lacking credulity, a negative prefix. **Draoi**, magician, druid. Possibly a foreign druid or *scald*. The Middle Gaelic, **Andro** . The Early Irish god-spirit **Cas Andrias** , “Andrew of the Gnashing Teeth.” The ultimate Celtic meaning of **cas** is impetuous or sudden. Other forms include **Ainnrias** and the Latin **Andreas** . Originally a double-stemmed name one half of which confers with **neart**, strength from the root **ner**, man. Note also **ànder**, a virgin. The Latin **umbra**, shadowed, dark, foliage, tree-man. Said to have a feminine in the Gaelic goddess **Anu Dhu** , the Black **Annis** of English mythology, the Old Norse goddess **Nerthus** , the Icelandic **Njoorthr** . From this name the clans **Macandrew** , **Gillanders** and **Anderson** . His day is **Latha Andraoi** , sometimes given as **Andyr’s Day** or, laterally as **Sanct Andra’s Day** or **Andermas** . His date is November 30 and is largely celebrated by expatriated Scots. **Saint Andrews** is, with the exception of St. James of Spain, the only New Testament figure represented as a patron saint of a country. The “Acts of the Apostles” claim that Peter and **Andrew** set out from Jerusalem on their first mission. At Sinope, on the Black Sea, the two brothers split, Peter turning toward the west and **Andrew** to the east. The sphere of **Andrew’s** effort was Greece and southern Russia (where Greek orthodoxy now rules Christianity). At Patras, **Andrew** made the mistake of using Christian “magic” to save the wife of the local governor at *Aegates*. Unfortunately for **Andrew** the politician was not grateful and reacted by demanding that he renounce the new God or suffer crucifixion, The aging saint chose martyrdom and supposedly expired in 60 A.D. The more gracious Lady *Maximilia* placed **Andrew’s** remains in her own tomb. In 1210 the Crusaders invaded Constantinople and took away his skull to *Amalfi*, where it is still held. The remaining bones might have remained there, but an angel appeared

telling the warder he should take all but the skull to the West, establishing a Church wherever God might lead him. Accompanied by three holy virgins and several interested monks, the guardian named Regulus set sail and was eventually cast ashore on *Alba*, the place now called Scotland. There he erected the **Cathedral of St. Andrews** , and a village of this name grew up around it. That was the state of affairs when *Aonghas*, King of the Picts, faced battle against the Scots in 747. Anxious to please, the Christian missionaries brought the bones out of their sanctuary and showed them to the king. That evening a white **Saint Andrew's** cross, similar to that on which the saint had perished, was seen emblazoned on the dark blue sky. Fired by this omen, the Picts went forth to victory, Christianity became a fact among them and was eventually passed on to their Scottish conquerors. All of this may be monkish myth as the cross desussate was not recognized as a national symbol until 1290. At a guess we would think that the much-feared **Cas Andrias** had more to do with an Old Norse enemy: The dwarf king **Andvari** comes to mind! Better known in Britain as **Oberon** , he dwelt in a magnificent subterranean palace in the northern lands, where his people mined gems. The possessor of a *tarnkappe*, which allowed invisibility, he also owned a magic ring, a belt of power (like that held by *Thor*) and an invincible sword. The smithy to *Odin's* gods he was known in England as the Wayland Smithy. In Old Scotia it was once common to do the "rounds" "**Sanct Andra-ing** ," just as men went "Santa Claus-ing" in North America at a later date. This custom was particularly favoured by labourers and hired hands, who were given time on that day to trap small animals for a convivial day of drinking and feasting. The singed sheep's head was traditional fare in larger households. Since the Reformation, the **Anermas** has ceased to have much weight as a religious festival although the day remained on the Roman calendar. See **Aindrea** .

ANA-CREIDEACH , unbeliever, a disbeliever, infidel, foreigner. An individual possessed by evil spirits and thus incapable of seeing the truth. Strangers were suspected of practising black arts. To guard against the baneful influence of foreigners, they were often selected as king-substitutes, fodder for the Quarter-Day fires. They were only permitted to intermingle with inhabitants of a village after they had been exorcized of demons and thus disarmed of their magical powers. It was considered a bad policy to wander in foreign parts since those who returned were often seen to be physically or mentally damaged after they were invaded by evil spirits.

ANAM, soul, OIr. **anim**, Cor. **enef**, Cr. **ene**, all from Celtic root-word **animon**; the Latin **animus**, from a Greek word indicating the wind. Similar to the Skr. **anila**, the wind and the Gaelic **anail**, to breathe. The source of the English words **animal** and **animate**. The driving force; the life-force empowering men to movements and the use of the five senses. It was long held that the souls of men were liberated from trees, or that they were invested in trees which were reformed and made animate. At the beginning of time the elemental fire-god reputedly gifted man with blood and a red-hot temper. The water-god is generally credited with giving him his five senses and the ability to move. The gift of a directing soul was that of the elemental spirit of the wind. When ancient men thought of such things, they generally concluded that the internal soul was a miniature replica which stood behind the eyes directing the movements and impulses of the body. This creature was obviously a spirit of the wind since it needed inspired and expired air to go on functioning. It was suspected that the soul moved in other dimensions when men slept or fell into the comas that sometimes came with ill-health. The emotions were seen as personified in a similar invisible creature which lived in the heart. This spirit sometimes fought with the soul for control of the body during temper tantrums, or temporary absence, and it gained the upper hand this was always to the detriment of the human creature as a whole.

ANAMA-CHARA, a “soul-friend.” One willing to struggle against the “earth-spirits” to sanctify a soul of the dead. His death blessings were sometimes called “soul-leadings,” or “the soul peace.”

ANASTA, ancient writings on parchment as opposed to *ogham*, which usually inscribed on wood or stone. Writing was considered a magical practise since it was observed as the embedment of sounds on paper for later retrieval.

ANGUINUM, from the Latin, **anguis**, a snake, a serpent, hidden danger; a dragon or water-serpent. Confers with Gaelic, **aoneagan**, wallowing, from **uan**, foam. A snake ball. “In the summer, numberless snakes entwine themselves in a ball, held together by secretions in their body and a spittle in the air, and that must be caught in a cloak, and not allowed to touch the ground; and one must instantly take flight with it on horseback as the serpents will pursue until some stream cuts them off. They say these eggs can only be had at certain phases of the moon...I myself have seen a

sample; it was round and about the size of a small apple; the shell was cartilaginous and pocked like the arms of a polyp. The druids esteem it highly for its magical properties. (Pliny, Natural History, Vol XXIX, p. 52). *Conal Cernach's* relationship with a treasure-guarding "serpent" is of fundamental cult importance in the Gaelic world. Notice that the chariotter *Laeg* saw two-headed serpents on his visit to the Otherworld. There were also the three poisonous snakes retrieved from the heart of *Macha* as well as the numerous supernatural water-serpents observed in almost all the lakes, rivers and estuaries of ancient Celtic Britain. Although the dragon is of greater importance in Welsh than in Irish mythology, this fantastic beast was not unknown in Gaelic lands. See *dragon*, *nathair*, *clach na nathraichean*.

ANIND. A son of **Nemed** said buried at Loch Ennell, County Westmeath, Ireland. Water burst from his grave while he was being interred. He is said to have erected *Dun na Sgiath*, a circular fort on the west bank.

ANNIR, a virgin, **EIr**. ander, Cy. **anner**, heifer, MBr. **annoer**. The virginal condition was considered essential to the magical acts of weathercraft and prognostication as practised by the *bafinne*.

ANU, **ANNE**, after the matriarchal goddess **Aine** or **Danu**, English forms include **Ann** and all resemble the Hebrew **Hannah**. **Annie** was the preferred Eng. form in the nineteenth century. The Latinized **Anna** has long been used by Scottish parents to name their girls. The French diminutive **Annette** had brief mid-century popularity in Britain, but has since faded away. The Span. **Anita** has had a similar history. **Anne** is most often used as a middle name, and is said to be the commonest female middle name in England, the United States and Canada. See next.

ANU DUBH, IrG., **anuas** (enu-es), one down from above; **dubh** (duv) black. The **Black Annis** or **Black Anne** of southern England. Also seen as **Ana** or **Annan**. The Gaelic goddess **Aine** or **Aoine**. The word confers with **anam**, soul and with **anasta**, stormy, and with **ancachd**, adversary. The male form is **Ana-draoi**, as noted above. Confers with **annrath**, distress, and **annrach**, a wandering stranger. This deity was an earth-goddess, recognized as the mate of the god *Dagda* and the ancestress of the *Tuatha daoine* later known as the *Daoine sihh* (which, see). **Anu** was thought of as a protector of this race, a spirit of light and wisdom, who helped her people overcome the Fomorian giants. In later mythology, she was considered a minor spirit of the fens and bogs, a boogie-woman with cannibalistic

tastes. **Annan** in Dumfriesshire, Scotland derives from this goddess. A mortal earth-spirit of the Gaels, probably correspondent with the matriarchal-goddess **Aoine**, **Anu**, **Danu** or **Dana**, the mate of *Dagda*.

AOD, **AOBH**, **AODH**, **AOIBH**, **AOIDH**, **AED**, **AEDH**, of Scandinavian or Teutonic origin. (y or ae, rhyming with "day," kee in Ireland), fire, the sun; the Sun personified; an open face. having a civil look, pleasant, full of good humour. Possibly from OIr. **oiph**, beautiful in appearance, or from OIr. **aed**, fire. Latin **aedes**, a hearth-fire, OHG **eit**, a pyre or fire, hence the Gaul. **Aedus**, and the English **Adam**. Latin **Odo**. Old French, **Queux**, head cook. Feminine G. **Ina**. Similar to the Norse **Loki**, and the English words **key**, **quay**, and **cay**. Heraldry experts have identified this as a family name which may be traced to the pagan god **Aod**, "a fire deity." Where not a proper name **aidh** has been seen used as the equivalent of the English word "day." Corresponds with **aidh**, a guest. The **Clan Mac aod**, or **Mac kay** is represented in charter-Latin as **Mac Odo** or as **Mac Y**. Ascoli assigns the root word as **eibheall**, a live coal, which conjures the idea of a transitory surface alive with a sheen of changing light. As Macbain notes, this makes the original word confer with **taitinn**, please and **taitneach**, pleasant. The word also matches the Cy. **huan**, the sun and **hu**, god, as well as **Hu**, a pagan god whose name has been stolen by the Christian God in the Welsh language. Numerous attempts have been made to phonetically represent the "peculiarly Gaelic construction" of this word and the results, in short form are: **Kay**, **Kai**, **Key**, **Caw**, **Gaw**, **Graw**, **Que**, **Hugh**, **Gee**, **Gay**, **Ey**, **Eye**, **Eth**, **Ed**, **Quay**, **Ghee**, **Y**, **Coy**, **Quoy**, **Quoid**. Taken together the various forms of this name represent the ninth most common family designation in Scotland and the forty-fifth in North America. The personal form in Gaelic is **Huisdean**, or **'Uisdean** (old **Huis**) usually translated as **Hugh**. The name is said derived from **Huis** + **duinn**, a man devoted to **Huis**. It has been suggested the name might have come into Gaelic from the Old Norse **Eysteinn** (eye-stone) which it is said to resemble. The old god was doubly honoured in the Gaelic name **Uisdean mac Aoidh**, or **Hugh Mackay**. It may be noted that the old Teutons honoured a god named **Heus**, and from him we still have the province of **Hesse** and various individuals carrying that name. It appears that this is a dialectic form for the Anglo-Saxon god **Tues**, whose name appears in **Tuesday** and who corresponds with the Scandinavian **Tyrr**, a god of war and agriculture. This god was pre-eminent in northwestern Europe before he was supplanted by **Thor** (actually the two names may be dialects of one another), who was in turn subjugated by worshippers of

Odin. Macbain says that **Aod** confers with **Uisdean** and adds the fact that both are of Teutonic origin, perhaps from the root-word **hug**, thought. Note finally that *Odin's* chief spies in the world of men were two black ravens names **Hugin** (Thought) and **Munin** (Memory). In supplanting old gods, *Odin* routinely admitted them into his council, know as the *Aesir*. In Argyleshire **Huisdean** is represented as **Eoghan** or **Eogan**, which translates as **Ewan**. This confers with **avi**, friendly, good. In the Gaullish tongue the name was **Esugenus**, sprung from the god **Esus**, which is obviously **Heus**. Note also the related Gaelic name **Eochaid** or **Eachunn** from **Ego-donno-s**, the Horse Lord. The creator-god named *Don* was often termed **Eochaidoolathair**. F. Marion McNeil says that **OldHugh** is more often represented as the Ox Lord. Confers with *Athair*, *Oolathair*, *Eochaid oolathair*, *An Dagda*, and *Lugh* among others, In folklore **Kay** is recalled as the seneshal or high steward to King Arthur. He was able to exist for nine days under water without the need to breathe air and could travel unimpeded for nine days without sleep. When it rained this sun-god evaporated all drops that came within a hair's-breadth of his body. Like *Lokki* he could kindle a fire with the snap of his thumb and first fingers, and often served as the source of radiant heat for cold comrades. These characteristics are rarely remembered in the medieval romances where he became a humorous side-kick to Arthur, a man-god remembered chiefly for his crabbed tongue and numerous humiliations in battle. In the genealogy of the gods, **Aed** is sometimes included in the house of *Ler* (Lear). The elder god married (or at least successfully coupled with) several ladies including one of the daughters of the land goddess *Danu*. By that union there arose *Manan mac Ler*, patron of the Isle of Man. His half-brothers and sisters were *Fionguala*, the twins *Conn* and *Fiachra* and "**Aed** or **Hugh**." These beautiful children were intensely disliked by their jealous step-mother *Aoife* who changed them into birds of the air. It may seem strange that a sun god would be allied with gods of the sea, but remember that **Aod** was observed to enter the Land of the Dead in the Western Ocean each evening and to arise from the eastern portion of the ocean-sea every morning. *Tyrr* is usually represented as the son of *Odin*. either by his wife *Frigga* or by a giantess, who is a personification of the ocean. He was once considered the god of courage in adversity and was called upon when ever victory in battle was in doubt. *Tyrr* was, in the latter days, ranked next to *Thor* and *Odin* in the toasting of the gods. *Tyrr* had charge of the female *valkyra*, the personal guard of *Odin*, and was the god who chose the "virtuous dead" destined to spend an eternity in *Valhalla*. He was left-handed, and one armed as a result of an unfortunate

altercation with the *Fenris* wolf, a giant animal which had once been his almost constant companion. He bound this animal in *Nifhelheim* where it remains awaiting the end of time and "the twilight of the gods." Under the name **Ziu** he was the principal divinity of the **Zuibians**, his principal shrine being at **Zuisburg**, now known as **Augsburg**. Among the Anglo-Saxons this god was *Saxnot*, from *sax*, a sword, although the Angles were apt to identify him as *Irmin*. He has been, additionally, identified with *Er*, *Cheru*, or *Heru* of the *Cheruski* tribesmen, who worshipped him as a sun/agricultural deity. Relationships have also been suggested with *Heimsdall*, *Hallinskide* and *Frey*, all gods of northwestern Europe. The common feature of all these gods is the place of a magical sword in their worship. It was traditional for ancient warriors to place the runes representing this god along the hilt of their own swords. Further, they engaged in single and line dances with swords placed beneath them on the ground, and were in the habit of eviscerating captives with a sharp sword. In the case of *Tyrr*, the sword was named *Tyrfing*, and this weapon was said to fight of its own accord and be capable of hewing through iron and stone. In other places, and with other gods, this sword was *Angantyr*, *Skidbladr*, *Caliburnus* or *Excalibur*. *Tyrr*'s sword was said to have been manufactured by the dwarf named *Ivald*, the same craftsman who fashioned the point for *Odin*'s magic spear. It was hung in a temple grove where its blade caught the first light of dawn. When the shrine was inaugurated, one of the *vala*, or prophetesses, explained that whoever held *Tyrfing* might expect to rule the world, but cautioned that it would always turn on its possessor bringing him death. Not long after it was stolen by the Scots, who afterwards danced sword dances. It is not recorded what its history was in Britain, but back on the continent it was claimed by a Roman prefect named *Vitellus*, who used it to become emperor of Rome. He was incautious about guarding it and it came next into the possession of a German mercenary, who killed *Vitellus*, and being aware of its reputation, buried it to escape a similar fate. It was unearthed by a peasant farmer who gave it to *Atilla* the Hun, with predictable results. *Atilla* was killed by *Tyrfing* in the hands of a Burgundian princess on the night when she was to wed this barbarian from the east. The sword then passed into the hands of the Duke of Alva, a general to Charles the Great. He used it to the advantage of the Franks and afterwards it was hung as a memento at the yearly martial games. When the Franks were totally Christianized the sword was given to the Church, and the Fathers claimed it had been presented to the archangel Saint Michael "for safe-keeping." The name **Aedh** was taken by many supposedly reincarnate man-gods,

especially: 1. The father of *Macha Mong Ruadh*, high-king of Ireland in the fourth century; 2. one of the sons of *Fionn mac Cumhail*; 3. the king of Oriel who carried *Dubhghiolla*; 4. the hero renamed *Goll mac Morna*, a leader of the Fianna who slew *Fionn mac Cumhail*'s father, starting a long feud; 5. the dwarf of Fergus of Ulster who accompanied the poet *Eisirt* to the Otherworld known as *Faylinn*; 6. a son of *Boabd Derg*; 7. one of the four children of *Ler* changed into a swan by his jealous stepmother; 8. a son of *Miodhchaoin*. He and his brothers were slain in a feud with the *Tuireann* family; 9. a Fomor betrothed to *Bebhionn* of the Isle of Maidens. Unhappy with the match she sought aid from *Fionn mac Cumhail*. When **Aedh** killed the lady the Fianna gave chase but failed to catch him. At her death *Bebhionn* distributed Otherworld jewels to the *Fianna* who buried her in Ireland at the Ridge of the Dead Giantess; 10. **Aedh Dubh**, who slew King *Diarmuid mac Cearbal* in accordance with the prophecy of a druid. See *Diarmuid*. George Borrow says that this god was an immigrant from "summer country", which was "perhaps the Crimea." According to him, it was **Hu Gadarn** (the Mighty) who taught the Cymry (the Welsh) the "arts of civilized life." "When the summer country became overpopulated he led an immense multitude of his countrymen across many lands to Britain, a country of forests in which bears, wolves and bisons wandered, and of morasses and pools filled with dreadful efyns (dragons, crocodiles?) This was then a country inhabited only by a few savage Gauls (a Celtic people). Shortly after the arrival of **Hu** and his people this became a smiling region, forests thinned, efync annihilated, bulls and bisons tamed, corn planted and pleasant cottages erected. After his death he was worshipped by the Gauls (and apparently also by his own people) as the God of agriculture and war." According to Borrow the Welsh regarded the development of their country by **Hu** as "a remarkable historical event," whose climax came near the gorge of *Llan Dwedy Brefi*. "Here according to old tradition they died the humped oxen of **Hu Gadarn**. Distracted at having lost its comrade which perished from the dreadful efforts which it made along with others in drawing the avanc hen or old crocodile from the lake of lakes, it fled from its master, and wandered about until coming to this glen. At Brefi it fell down and perished after excessive bellowing, from which noise the place derived its name of Brefi, for Bref in Cymric signifies a mighty bellowing or lowing. Horns of enormous size, said to have belonged to this humped ox or bison, were for many ages preserved in the church (at that place). The word *efync* may confer with the Gaelic *nios*, "that which rises up from below." As for *Brefi* he is sometimes represented as being **Aod** or **Hu**. Mr. Lewis Spence has

said that, "At Martimas (November 11) St, Martin is said to have been cut up and eaten in the form of an ox. This is clear evidence that the saint merely took the place (in Christian mythology) of the god **Hu**, who was formerly symbolized by that animal." The eating of the god was seen to parallel the regular disappearance of the "Day" into the Western Ocean as well as his retreat into the southern realms in winter. Like the sun, the sacrificial ox was never lost for all time, but was soon reincarnated with as much power as before. In this myth there are reminders of the Norse feast of the heroes: "The meat upon which the *Einheriar* feasted was the flesh of the divine boar *Saehrimnir*, a marvellous beast daily slain by the cook *Andhrimnir*, and boiled in the great cauldron *Eldhrimnir*; but although *Odin's* guests had true Northern appetites and gorged themselves to the full, there was always plenty of meat for all (as there was at the Gaelic Cauldron of Regeneration). Moreover, the supply was exhaustless, for the boar always came to life again before the next morn." The Christian replacement for **Aod** was St, Martin of Tours, a fourth century continental bishop of the Roman Church. Among his adherents was St, Ninian, the first missionary to Scotland, who named his monastery at Wigton after the saint. The festival of *Martinmas* has deliberate ties with the Gaelic *mairt*, an ox and with the Scottish *mart*, an animal killed and salted for family use during the winter months. The English word *market* confers and this was traditionally the time of year when goods and produce was either sold or exchanged at central gathering places in Scotland. MacNeil says that Saint Martin's Day was the beginning of a season of want and "right up to our own time (1961) it was customary to kill a mart to salt for winter store. In consequence Martimas has always been the great haggis season in Scotland." MacNeil also says that the festival is patently older than any events of St. Martin's time and considers *Latha Aoidh*, **Hu's Day**, to have been an attachment of the larger *Samhuinn* celebration. Like many other holidays it was skewed out of time when the calendar was reformed. In other days, the *Bodach*, or Day-bull, was seen as the male equivalent of the *Boabh*, or Earth-Cow. It was the annual duty of the **Aod** to be killed at the beginning of winter. When the bull went to earth its blood fed the regenerative spirit, the earth-mother through the "days of the weak sun." At the *Imbolg* (February 2) the male "ground-hog" revived in time to impregnate the earth-goddess on the eve of the Beltane (May 1). In the pagan world the *mairt*, symbolized the day-god and white bulls used to be kept for annual rites on **Hugh's Day** or **Tues Day**. The last bulls ritually killed in Scotland went down in Gairloch parish, Ross-shire in 1678. In the Hebrides the wheels of commerce did not turn, nor did women spin, on the

Martinmas. From the distant pass, this day was the *touta*, the “flitting” time when day-labourers were paid their annual wage, and when quarter-day rents were settled. It was also the “moving day” for the *Tuathean*, a word which takes in the fay-people as well as tenants and labourers. Note that the adjectival form of *touta* is *touto-s*, “left-handed,” which once implied “good” or “good-omened.” On the evening before the great “flitting” a simple entertainment was held for departing labourers in the farm foreman’s kitchen. An unmarried ploughman went away on **Hugh’s Day** with two items of luggage, his clothing-chest and his meal-stand, the latter a padlocked barrel filled with oatmeal. See *tarbh*, “bull.”

AOD-AN-ATHAIR , the “Father of Day,” a son of the “king of Norway.” He supposedly visited Ireland during the reign of King *Brian Boru* (ca. 950 A.D.). This visitor was on an *imramma* attempting to recover his mother and a sister “who had been swept away on a tuft of mist (i.e. captured by the sea-giants).” Following the captors onto the ocean he had been “overtaken” by an even greater mist. “And I came at last to an island and in harbours about which I saw many ships at anchor. I went ashore and came upon a big woman reaping rushes.” She warned him to leave the place before he was discovered by the resident Fomor who lived in a cavern overlooking the major harbour. Captured by him **Aod-an-athair** was in danger of being cannibalized when he discovered the giant’s dart and used it to decapitate him. This trophy-head pleased the giantess, who used her powers of foresight to tell the traveller that the ladies he sought were held further west in the Kingdom of the Red Shield. She was also able to tell **Aod** that the king of that realm intended to marry his captive mother and that the town was surrounded by a circular canal. “On the canal there is a drawbridge, guarded by two monsters which ordinary weapons cannot kill (*Cromm*’s dogs?), and they are scale covered but for two spots near the neck, and these spots are vulnerable. At night these creatures sleep, but beyond that there is a high palisade which encloses the king’s keep.” Taking to the sea again the traveller came to the land of the Red Shield where he used the giant’s magic dart to bring down the guardian dogs; and using this same implement, penetrated the walls of the palisade. Impressed by this entry the lord of the Red Shield held back his troops and entertained the visitor in great style. The wedding of the king and **Aod’s** widowed mother was discussed but the Norseman insisted that the wedding had to take place in his home country. On the return journey from the west, the voyagers passed near fleets and land armies at war. Asked what transpired, the Red Shield bearer explained that a battle was

being fought for the daughter of *Donn (Mhorrigan)* “the most beautiful woman in the world,” who would make herself available to “the best hero.” Thinking this a worthy diversion **Aod** had himself put ashore and at the Tower of the Maiden abducted the lady carrying her to the seaside where he was picked up by the Knight of the Red Shield. Unfortunately, the Fomorian took an immediate liking to the woman and a fight ensued in which the Outlander was killed. Thus a Lochlander became the husband to the “daughter of the King of the Universe,” and had his first son by her in the land of his own birth. The kin of Red Shield eventually appeared seeking compensation, and they were accompanied by a hostile force representing those who sought a dowry in exchange for the hand of their summer-queen. The viking prince sought to outrun his enemies in his longship, and eventually lost them in fog. He came at length to an unknown island, which they called the Isle of the Wet Mantle, and here a second son was born. The children were almost full grown when a Fomorian arrived and carried off the tower-maiden. When the sons were full grown **Aod** voyaged once more, hoping to regain his lost mate. In this instance, each man took a ship of his own and travelled in different directions upon the Atlantic. In the west **Aod** chanced to cruise a coast where a battle was in progress. Being under personal *geis* never to pass a fray, but to enter it on the weaker side, the mariner put in and commenced to fight. Exhausted after a long tour of duty he lay down to rest amidst piles of corpses. As he lay there he saw, from half closed eyes, a ship being dragged through the water by a one-eyed Fomorian (*Mannann mac Ler*). “The ocean for him was no higher than his knees and he had with him a big fishing rod and line with a very big hook at the end.” As *Aod* watched he saw that the big fellow was angling for the bodies of men, hooking them from the shore and lifting them onto his boat, until it was heavy with bodies. As *Aod* was prone and unmoving, the giant hooked his clothes and would have lifted him in to his craft, but seeing that he was too large to be moved in this manner carried him to the ship in his arms. The giant then hopped aboard and sailed into the west until he came to a precipitous island backed by a large cave. From a narrow inlet he unloaded the corpses and took them up the long hill to his domain. At the entrance, a woman was checking to see that those who passed into the cavern were dead, and the giant advised her to hold **Aod’s** body apart from the others as it alone would satisfy his appetite at breakfast. **Aod**, realizing he was not about to be eaten that day, continued his pretence of being dead. The woman was not fooled, and after dark she arrived at his side saying that she was a king’s daughter stolen into bondage, protected

by magic from his avarice and rapine nature. **Aod** asked if there might not be a way of eliminating the Fomor and she suggested that they might heat the roasting spit and plunged it into his eye. By this plan the Norseman succeeded in blinding the monster, but the “sea-demon” was not killed and spent the night and part of the next day randomly pursuing the Lochlander about the cave. To divert the giant’s attentions, **Aod** seized a huge stone and threw it out through the mouth of the cave into the ocean. Hearing the splash, the creature suspected that his prey might have escaped and followed with the spit still sticking from his eye. At the entrance the bar struck against a side post “and knocked off his brain cap.” The pair of humans then spent seven years and seven days throwing the parts of the sea-creature into the ocean. With this new paramour, **Aod** fathered another boy-child, and after seven years in the Dead Lands gave her a gold ring with his name on it and commanded her to send the boy east after him when he was of age. Back aboard ship, he then sailed on a day’s distance and found “a pretty bay” where he erected a hut and bivouacked for the night. The next day he saw a huge ship zeroing in on his landfall and a champion emerged from it saying he was seeking the daughter of *Donn* on behalf of his father, the son of the king of Lochlann. At this **Aod** identified himself and told of his adventures. The next day a second ship appeared bearing his “Son of the Wet Mantle,” and on a third day the ring-bearing son joined them. In the morning the reunited family met a soothsayer on another island who said that the daughter of *Donn* was held by *mac Bran*, the “Son of the Blackbirds.” At his fortress, the heroes of the east went calling against a gathering of one hundred warriors, and defeated them all. When there were no other champions left *mac Bran* himself appeared and was cut down, and thus the daughter of the summer-season was restored to her men-folk. The involved *imramma* mentioned above is referred to in English as “The Leeching of Kay’s Leg.” Campbell of Islay collected the fullest version of this celebrated story which is now in manuscript form in Edinburgh. The original story consisted of twenty-four tales, or episodes, of which nineteen are given in the Campbell version. This story is a gordian knot of plots, sub-plots and interweavings, preserved most anciently in a fifteenth century manuscript. Antiquarians have traced it “in its present form” to the twelfth century.

AODHAS, society, social economy. From the root **aoibh**, well--mannered, of good conduct; from **eibhall**, a live coal. Confers with **aoibhinn**, pleasant, joyful, of sunny disposition, glowing with inner spirit, enspirited. See **Aod** directly above and **Aod Ruadh**, immediately below.

AOD RUADH , "the ruddy sun," suggesting a battle-god, after **Aod**, the prime sun god, see above entries; **ruadh**, the Eng. **red**, **ruddy** of complexion, confers with AS. **read**. A mythic Milesian god-king who supposedly held power in one of the centuries (perhaps that of Alexander the Great) before the Christian era. He was one of triumvirate, the others being *Dithorba* and *Cimbaoth*, each taking seven year turns at Tara. **Aod Ruadh** was said drowned at **Eas-Aod-Ruad** (Assaroe, Ireland) now Ballyshanny. When his seven year tour of duty came round, his daughter *Macha Mong Ruadh* (the red-haired) arrived at the capitol to claim the crown. She found herself fighting her father's partners and killed *Dithorba*.. *Cimbaoth* she defeated on the marriage bed. For some historians the reign of *Cimbaoth*, under sponsorship of Queen *Macha*, marks the beginning of reliable Irish history. When *Cimbaoth* died, *Macha* ruled alone, the first Milesian queen of the land. Her stronghold was *Emain Macha*, which for six hundred years, served as the chief city of Ulster. See *Macha*. who is equated with an ancient triumvirate of Celtic goddesses.

AOG, (ugh) death, or Death personified; also written **EUG**, from the OIr. **ec**. Confers with the Cy. & OBr. **ancou** and the Latin **nex**. Perhaps from Skr. **nac**, to perish. This word is used as a negative prefix, thus it is combined with other words to produce **eugail**, disease and **eugais**, want. Confluent with **aoigh**, Ir. **aoidhe**, pl. **aoighheadha** . OIr. **oegi**, a **guest**. which confers with the Possibly a contraction of the Gaelic god **Aonghas Og** and/or his "brother" **Ogma**. The alter-ego, or destructive side of the sun-god **Aod**, see entry under this heading. Canadian folklorist Mary L. Fraser says that the **Aog** was an expected visitor at the wake of the dead as practised on Cape Breton Island. An agent of the dark forces of *an-t-athair-neimh*, this sometimes invisible host sought to capture spirits of the dead as they emerged from a body orifice, or while they still hovered in the vicinity of a cooling corpse. This death-spirit corresponds with the Scottish *Nathir* (the one who is not father-like), the evil alter-ego of the *Oolathir* (Allfather) who has a female counterpart in the *Cailleach bheurr*. Male and female personifications of death appear in Scandinavia as *Odin* and *Frigga*; in Germany as *Wuotan* and *Frau Gode*; and in Anglo-Saxon England as *Irmin* (iron man) and *Irenasaxa* (iron sword). They are similar to the the Irish spirit named *Bil*, a Celtic chief lost in the Milesian invasion of Ireland, later identified as their death-god. The Cymric equivalent was *Wynn ab Nudd* (wind of night), sometimes identified as the chief of the

Welsh *Tylwyth Teg* (white piglets, or little people), the equivalent of the *sidh*. On the continent, the Celtic death-god was *Dis*, who the Romans identified as *Dispater* (father Dis) the equivalent of *Pluto*, god of their underworld. In Anglo Saxon myth, it was sometimes suggested that the death-god was *Herla*, whose troops comprised the *Herlathing*. *Herla* or *Haarla* (the hard one) probably relates to the Teutonic twin-kings known as the *Harlungen*. *Haarla* almost certainly relates to the goddess *Hel*, the daughter of the fire-god *Loki* and the giantess *Angurboda* (perpetual anger). He is similar in character to the Old French *harlequin* and the feminine *harlequina*. It is noteworthy that the Middle English "harlot" is derived from an old French model, the earliest definition being, "a male mercenary or servant, a juggler, buffon, fool or entertainer." In ancient France, it was suggested that men yielded their final breath of life to *Mesnee d'Hellequin* (the harlequin or overlord of the Hel-queen). By the middle ages, the old pagan Hunt was described as Cain's Hunt or Herod's Hunt, further defaming the character of these Biblical villains. In Central France, the Wild Huntsman came to be called "*le Grand Veneur de Fontainebleau*" (the Great Hunter of Fontainebleau) in memory of another noted bad-guy. It was claimed that his cries were heard all over France just before the outbreak of the French Revolution. The Micmac Indians claimed that their guardian of the dead lands was *Papkutparut*, an individual who had once been a man. He was known to the white-men of Maritime Canada as the woods-whooper, a spirit-name most likely derived from that of the British hooter. In highland Scotland, the Hunt was entitled the *sluag sidh* (the sidh thing), suggesting that **Aog** was one of the "side-hill" folk. This creature was periodically reincarnated to lead the Hunt, a motley crew of living and dead spirits, who lowlanders termed the "unsely (unsilly or serious) court". The *sluagh sidh* travelled counter-clockwise on the northern winds, particularly during the "daft days" (Yuletide). The thunder and lightning of that season were taken as signs of its flight and Christian men crossed themselves to prevent their souls from joining the assembly. They were careful not to "sain" the sky, or mock the sounds that they heard, for fear the Host would carry them bodily away. Those who directed words of the encouragement at the passing army of the dead, or who left fodder in the fields for this army, were sometimes rewarded with a haunch of meat thrown down from the storm clouds. They were advised not to look too closely at the species being offered, but to keep it until dawn, at which it would be converted into gold. Men who chanced to annoy the *sidh*-travellers were gifted with a tiny whining black dog, which refused to leave their hearth for a full year. The spirits who commanded

the dead usually carried a magic spear, wand or staff, which shed snow and cold wherever it travelled, and was the source of searing-energies which could turn men into burnt toast. Mary L. Fraser says that the pioneers of Atlantic Canada kept close watch following a death, "Lest a little white animal resembling a weasel might get into the house without their knowledge. This creature is surpassingly like the local Indian mischief-maker named *Lox* whose totem form was the wolverine, or "Indian devil." If the **Aog** - "a spirit of evil attendant at wakes" -came to the house the residents would take a piece of steel and pass it through the flour, meal, and all the food that was in the pantry. "If this precaution was neglected, these materials would become useless; yeast would have no effect on the flour, etc. This would surely be a great misfortune at a funeral, for all the time the corpse was in the house the table was kept set and meals were served to everybody who came... While the coffin was being made...the body was laid on a funeral couch made of boards and draped with white sheets. A tiny plate containing salt was placed on the chest of the corpse and the blinds closely drawn. This may have been done to exclude the **Aog**."⁹ Speaking of the dead, Mrs. William Deveau of Belle Marche, Cape Breton, added further details: "(The body) would be in the front room. There'd be nothing else, no furniture, maybe a table to put a lamp on...They used to keep the corpse two days...they used to keep them one day like to give people time to make the coffin...they used to put a piece of cloth, like a large handkerchief on their face. And whoever wanted to see them used to lift the handkerchief...And people would come to visit. A full house every night. We used to stay up day and night. You wouldn't leave the body alone. It was the style then; never to leave the corpse alone...After midnight maybe a dozen would stay...The coffin would all be black, except the children's. Children's coffins were always covered with white."¹⁰ The rites of death in old Gaelic Nova Scotia were invariable: The immediate family went immediately into black clothes and mourning, leaving physical details to their nearest and dearest neighbours. The rarely used "living-room" of the house was opened, aired-out, and heated for all great ceremonies, including the wake. The "boards", long, true, heavy and free from knots, were brought out of storage at this time. They were placed upon saw-horses and draped with sheets, which extended up

9. Fraser, Mary L., Folklore of Nova Scotia, np, nd, p. 51.

10. "How We Buried Our Dead", from Down North, ed. Ronald Caplan, Toronto, (1980) p. 232.

the adjoining wall. The windows were either draped with sheets or the blinds pulled. Mirrors and pictures were usually removed from the room, but if they were left they were masked with sheets. As Mrs. Devereaux has noted, coffins could not be purchased from an undertaker's showroom, so the body was dressed and placed directly on the boards, the face being covered as noted above. The body was then given its plate of salt and the mourners began their visitations. Where the relatives were widely separated, the wake extended from two to three days and nights. All the members of the community made brief appearances at the wake, the closest relatives staying the longest time. Some attention had to be given the matter of feeding large numbers of people who were away from their homes. Fraser explained: "All during the day lunch was served to everyone who went to the house. It would be discourteous for anyone to leave without eating. In fact, one trusty friend was charged with the office of seeing that no one was overlooked...for it was believed that every bite served during the wake went towards the release of the soul if it were suffering in purgatory..."¹¹ The "lunch" consisted of pre-prepared cold cuts and oatmeal "nibblers", sometimes offered on a self-serve basis. Through the day, several neighbourhood women laboured over wood-stoves in the kitchen, preparing a "suipeir" which was offered to those still on the premises at eight o'clock. "The best that could be procured was set before the company. The guests succeeded one another at table after table until all were served."¹² The men and boys were not totally inactive during wakes, but they contributed little to the initial rites beyond erection of the boards. Once they had given some attention to the corpse, most of them assembled out-of-doors where the "better-disposed" amused themselves by playing quoits or games of horseshoes. Cape Breton historian A.A. Mackenzie has confided that, "Wakes were on the face of it, rather sober, sedate affairs in comparison to the noisy pagan rituals that shook the roofs of the wakehouses of old Ireland." Nevertheless, he admitted, "the "great time" of many wakes was the clandestine gathering of menfolk around a keg o' rum out in the barn..."¹³ All were called to the supper-table at eight, and were required to appear afterwards for the recitation of prayers in the

11. Fraser, Mary L., Folklore of Nova Scotia, np, nd, p. 151.

12. Fraser, Mary L., Folklore of Nova Scotia, np, nd, p. 111.

13. Mackenzie, A.A., The Irish In Cape Breton, Antigonish (1979), pp. 59-60.

death-chamber. Summarizing that rite, Mackenzie said: "In Cape Breton there was plenty of grub, lashins of tay (tea), Irish twist tobacco and clay pipes for the men. The priest led the company in saying the beads and the litany, and neighbours would stay the night with the corpse."¹⁴ Although the prayers were "quite lengthy" this was partially offset by the pleasanter rite of smoke-making. By the time the prayers had concluded most people were content to take their leave, the corpse being left in the company of "chosen friends of the family, mostly men...They spent the time telling fables (myths and legends). If a song or tune came into any of these...they did not hesitate to sing it."¹⁵ When two or three nights had passed, the day came for committal and burial. In the earliest times the coffin was placed "on the shoulders of six able-bodied men. It was considered a sign of disrespect to have a horse convey the remains to their last resting place. If the distance to the graveyard was considerable, these men were relieved by others along the route. A piper went in advance, playing a lament; appointed wailers followed, wailing out the praises of the dead. Behind these came a man carrying a jar of liquor; then the rest of the procession. Before they left the graveyard, food and liquor were passed to all present."¹⁶ Unfortunately the route to the graveyard was literally "a rocky road to hell" for some funeral parties. Since everyone attended the wakes, this drew together quarreling, if not warring, clans. When they met, under the influence of alcohol, they invariably took "chips" off one another, and shouting matches occasionally led to fistcuffs, which culminated in lawsuits and murder. In the best situations, the path to the graveyard was short, in the worst, the corpse was sometimes forgotten, or joined by others, as Aog found his way among men. In Cape Breton, the presence of this "evil-one" was seen in supernatural events that dogged funeral parties. Men attempting to transport a corpse from Kilkenny Lake to the "shore road" in Cape Breton were fortunate in having some assistance from "angels". While the dark forces gathered in a stream of scudding wind, the party passed through it "with never a blessed candle blowing out in that terrible gale of wind."¹⁷ A.A. Mackenzie thought that

14. Mackenzie, A.A., The Irish in Cape Breton, Antigonish (1979), p. 60.

15. Fraser, Mary L., Folklore of Nova Scotia, np, nd, p. 111.

16. Fraser, Mary L., Folklore of Nova Scotia, np, nd, p. 112.

17. Mackenzie, A.A., The Irish In Cape Breton, Antigonish (1976), p. 61.

this description "strained credulity", but noted it was "an extreme manifestation of the old belief that God controls the power of nature (to further) His own ends." He added that this was another attempt to compromise the old rites by attaching them to similar "Christian myths". The medieval Church made little fuss over pantheism where it did not offend doctrines of morality. Hearses finally took up the burden and fewer quarrels had time to mature as transportation became quicker. "Corpse wagons", or undertaker's vans, were, nevertheless, regarded with some fear: "Indeed a part-time undertaker near Lingan kept the hearse in a barn with other wagons, carts and slovens. After some years of use the hearse had ghosts clustered so thick that he had to shove them aside to get near the other vehicles!"¹⁸ In the last years of the 1970's, Mrs. William Deveau told an interviewer that, "We've only had the funeral home since a few years. Even some today, when they die, they say don't put me in the funeral home. Still, there they get embalmed...When your embalmed you're sure then. But it's not necessary. If you see something change (evidence of decay), you know very well that he's dead...My mother-in-law, my father-in-law and my husband weren't embalmed. They were right here in the front room."¹⁹ The idea that men might be long absent from their bodies without marked deterioration of their shell was basic to the old beliefs. The wake was extended over three days to allow wandering-spirits to return, to give those who had decided to remain dead time for mature consideration as they wandered in the spirit-world. The restless spirits that clustered about hearses were the "bochdan", those unable to retire to the earth because of a death trauma and the need for revenge. Some were thought to remain undead, and even capable of materialization, if they had a need to complete unfinished business such as the repayment of a debt or completion of an unfulfilled oath or promise. As for the **Aog**, his presence was detected behind the surface of mirrors and reflective surfaces. The folklorist, Sir James George Fraser, thought that mirrors were covered after a death because the spirits of the living were at hazard from those of the dead. He said, "It is feared that the soul, projected out of the person in the shaper of his reflection in tyhe mirror, may be carried off by the ghost of the departed, which was commpnly thought to linger about the house till the burial." That last part was

18. Mackenzie, The Irish In Cape Breton, Antigonish (1976), p. 60.

19. "How We Buried Our Dead", as quoted in Down North, ed. Ronald Capalan, Toronto (1980), p. 232.

correct, but friends and relatives of the deceased could hardly be at hazard. The truth is, mirror surfaces were seen as doors to the "left-handed world". New-born children were kept from mirrors because it was known that their weak primary soul-spirits could stolen into the alternate world. One name given the soul-thief was Aog, and the reason that mirrors were removed or covered at wakes was to prevent his entry into the wakehouse. Once within, he could seize the vulnerable soul-spirit of one newly-dead, and make a retreat into mirror-land. The unmoving eyes of a corpse were themselves reflective surfaces, which explains why they were covered unless the face was being viewed. It was generally held that the Aog could only make entry into a room when humans were inattentive. There is a side issue here in the fact that forerunners of death often appeared in mirrors, and were possibly sympathetically attracted by prior deaths. Mirrors left unguarded by cloth might give an unwanted premature glimpse of the next person destined to die. The belief in a soul-thief also explains why men stayed constantly awake guarding the spirit of the dead. This has a parallel in an old superstition that sick people needed to be guarded against the intrusion of some evil spirit. It was once widely held that sick-room mirrors needed to be covered since the soul might be abducted into it. It was also suggested that the very ill should be prevented from sleeping, since the soul was known to wander in that state, and might decide to remain absent from an unwell body. The placing of the corpse upon "planks", "poles". or "boards" relates to the fact that men were anciently considered the kin of tree-spirits. These planks housed spiritual helpers, who might assist the dead if they came into conflict with the unsely court. Salt was considered to have similar protective value, it being noted that the hearts of men pumped a saline fluid. The furniture was cleared from a death-room to give good spirits more freedom of movement in case they happened to materialize. The creation of smoke was a thoroughly pagan means of choking and confusing evil spirits abroad in the air. It was thought probable that there would be a struggle for the soul of a dead man, with ghosts of the living as well as ancestral spirits, animate and inanimate, on one side, and the allies of the **Aog** on the other. It used to be the habit for men to lay hands on the body of the corpse, sometimes touching the breast, the former dwelling-place of the heart; and sometimes the head, the ex-residence of the soul. This was a means of swearing unity with the departed in his struggle to be reincarnated (or resurrected in a Christian paradise). If a man was touched by his murderer, it was confidently believed that blood would flow from any wound on the he had received in the fatal struggle. It has also been

suggested that it was good luck to touch a dead man because his spirit might afterwards serve as an ally at the time of one's own death. At the least, this act was considered an expression of the idea that those who performed the rite bore no ill will to the departed individual in either life or death. The touching ceremony was considered essential for family members: "When a person dies, other members of the family must touch the corpse with the tips of the fingers (some said the backs of the hands), or kiss it, lest there be another death in the family or other bad luck."²⁰ In those days, clan unity was seen as a necessity in both life and death, the **Aog** having the edge where men failed in matters of the spirit.

AOGHAIRE , shepherd, Slr. **aegaire** , OIr. **augaire** , thought to be from Latin **ovi**, a sheep, corresponding with the Gaelic **oisg**, a sheep, a yearling ewe, Skr. **avis** . Confers with **Aog** + **aire** , death + distress, see above entrye Note the **Aog** or death-god was often pictured as a weasel-like animal having the head of a sheep. Possibly derived from the old pagan god **Aonghas Og** . The god cast out and killed in quarter-day ceremonies was frequently represented by a human dressed in a sheep-skin. In rural places shepherds were seen as having the closest contacts with the old magical religions and were thought capable of subtle magic: "It is very dangerous to go near shepherds without greeting them, for they lead offenders astray (as do the *Daoine sidh*), they unleash storms ahead of men and open precipices at their feet."

AOGARAID, "a tamed sheep," sophistry, a fallacy, the death of truth, see **Aog** .

AOIBHILL , **AOIBHELL** , **AIBELL** , **AOIBHINN** , (Evill), from **aoidh** , the sun, a burning coal, after the sun-god **Aod** (who the Welsh called **Hu**) + **aill**, fair, beautiful, willful, similar to **aillise** , a diminutive creature, one of the *Daoine sidh*. The banshee of North Munster, Ireland. Compares with the *Mhorrigan*. The matriarch and were-gild of all bearing the names Morgan, Kay and Mackay. She is the reincarnate spirit of one of three queens of the *Tuatha daoine* who "went to earth" in Munster. Her "sisters" were *Clíodna* (Cleena) and *Aoine*, the last being the supposed matriarch of Clan Gerald. Her dwelling place was *Craig Liath* (the Grey Rock) two miles north of Killaloe , a *side* of North Munster. At the time of the battle of

20. Creighton, Helen, *Bluenose Magic*, Toronto (1978), p. 150.

Cluantarbh she was romantically involved with *Dubhlaing us Artigan* a young man exiled by the high-king of Ireland she thus became the *bean-sigh* or “banshee” of *Dal gCais*, the clan O’Brien. When Ireland was threatened with invasion he returned to his homeland in spite of the entreaties of **Aoibhill**. Seeing no other way to preserve him she “put a druid covering upon him so that none could see him.” In battle *Murchadh*, the king’s son, thought he heard an invisible warrior and soon after *Dubhlaing* laid aside his *sigh*-covering so that he could be seen by his allies. At this juncture **Aoibhill** called both men from the battle predicting they would die if they re-entered the fray. They did so and both were killed. The goddess possessed a golden harp which she gave to *mac Meradha* when he was a boy at the time when his father was killed by a son of *Lochlann* (Scotland). *Meradha*’s son travelled incognito to the northern kingdom and played the harp before the three sons of the king of *Lochlann* and they died of longing and wistfulness. It was this harp that *Cuchulainn* heard upon the air when his enemies gathered about him for the final battle at *Muirthemne*. This *clarsach*, or “harp” was similar in effect to the *Dagda*’s “Harp of the North.” Unfortunately this music was the death-wail of the Clan O’Brien, and those who heard it were not expected to live.

AOIFE (eef-a, eef-ay), “maid of the fair shoulders,” similar to **aoibh**, having a pleasant countenance; the second wife of the immortal *Ler*, god of the sea. The first wife of *Ler* was a sister to *Aoife*. This goddess was childless and intensely jealous of her four step-children. She decided to have them murdered by her attendants, who refused her demand. Unable to kill them by her own hand, she transformed them into swans. At the underground palace of *Bobd Derg* her deed was discovered and *Bobd* reacted by shape-changing her into “a demon of the air.” *Ler* and *Bobd* went seeking the swan-children but were unable to reverse the queen’s black arts. When the elder gods were forgotten after the invasion of Ireland by the Milesians, the children found the land-palace of their father *Ler* in Armagh completely razed to the ground. Doomed to wander for almost a thousand years, they were at last returned to human form by a Christian hermit, but by then they were seen to be withered human derelicts, whose forms crumbled to dust upon baptism.

AOIGH, **AOIDH**, a guest; OIr. **óegi**, conferring with AS. **r-ith** and the Norse **feigr**, “one doomed to die,” a hostage. Note the AS. and the English words **fey**, **fay** and **foe**. Classical models suggest the idea of “a journey-

taker." Related to the day-god **Aod**.

AOIR-CEAIRDE, a word-smith, a "satire-craftsman", OIr. **air**, possibly cf. OIr. **tathdir**, a source of contempt. Satire was considered the height of magic in Celtic folklore. *Dagda*, the chief of the Gaelic gods was described as the "god of story" but his son *Ogma* was the one remembered as being "honey-tongued." It was often said that this mortal-god had "golden chains" that ran from his tongue to the hearts of his listeners. His devotees held the highest rank among the *aes dana*. They were termed the *filids*, or "poets," and the first human of their kind was the druid named *Amergin*, whose chanted songs enabled the Milesian invaders to take Hibernia (ancient Ireland) from the *Tuatha daoine*. The *filid* acquired a great reputation as magicians being men "of poison in satire and splendour in praise." When well-paid they composed sagas, eulogies and light entertainments for the princes of the Celtic kingdoms, but when they were wronged (or felt slighted) they turned to satire in order to debase and bring down their foes. For a few years, overlordship of ancient Ireland was in the hands of King *Breas*, a man of mixed Fomorian-Tuathan blood. Unfortunately he proved parsimonious and failed to treat the bard named *Cairbre* with respect. As a result the poet composed a withering satire which made *Breas* a laughing-stock and finally caused men to rise against him. The result was the war between the "gods" and the "giants", which ended with the complete defeat and banishment of the latter race. It should not be thought that the *glam dicend*, or "satire from the hilltops," was without physical effect. The story of King *Caire* of Connaught illustrates the mystic power of the poet over the material world. *Cair's* wife fell in love with his nephew *Nede*, who happened to belong to the poet's guild. She asked him to sing a satire against the king that would produce a blemish on his face, it being a rule of the time that no king could serve if he had a physical imperfection (see *aineamh*). Under the rules of druidic magic *Nede* could not oblige his lover for to strike with satire he had to ask something of the party he intended to blight and be refused by that person. As it happened King *Caer* was very fond of his adopted son and never refused him any reasonable request. The conniving wife knew that her husband had a taboo against parting with his hunting knife and relayed this information to the poet. According to plan, *Nede* requested the knife and was refused. The next day the king went to his private fountain and in the waters saw an image of his face welted and blistered in patches that were red, green and white. He fled in shame, but *Nede*, who became king in his absence, repented this evil and went seeking his

uncle. He found him hiding in a cavern in the hills but when he tried to console the older man, the poor fellow died of embarrassment at being seen. At this moment the gods balanced the scales by causing the surrounding rock face to "boil up and burst." A splinter, as hard as an arrow, flew into *Nede's* eye and he fell dead. The poet named *Dallon Forgaill* once encamped upon *Mongan*, King of Meath and resided there "from Halloweve until May-day, so great was his lore of past events." While there, the king made the mistake of pointing out an inaccuracy in one of the poet's tales. Responding to this sacrilege, *Dallon* promised he would "sing (spells) upon the water, so that the fish should not be caught in their river." He also said he would satirize the king and "sing against the woods of the land so that no tree would give forth fruit; and again upon the plains so that they should be barren of any produce." Thoroughly cowed by these promises of malevolent magic, *Mongan* recanted and delivered his entire kingdom to the *filid* "excepting only my own liberty and the person of my wife *Breathigrend*."

AONACH, ANOCH , moor, market place, Ir. fair, assembly, OIr. **oinach** . a fair, from **aon**, coming together as one, a reunion. "The great Feis was held at Samain (Hallowday). It lasted for three days before Samain and three days after. But the *anoch*, or great fair, the assembly of the people in general, which was a more important accompaniment of the *feis*, seems to have (started) much earlier." General assemblies coincided with the Quarter-Days of Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane and Lunnastain and had religious, political and commercial functions. It is thought that the fairs originated as adjuncts to serious gatherings of state. The best known fairs in the ancient world were those at *Dun Add* in Scotland and at Tara in Ireland. After that, the most famous assemblies were at *Tlachtga*, *Uisneach*, *Cruachan*, *Emain Macha*, *Colmain* and *Carmen*, all in Ireland. To some degree the various assemblies were devoted to specialized concerns. The ones at *Emain Macha*, *Cruachan*, Tara and *Dun Add* were primarily political and judicial affairs, with the licensing of craftsmen as a secondary purpose. The Fair of *Taillte* in Meath was primarily an athletic contest and marriage market, with other considerations secondary to the games. Another sports event was that held in Ulster on the plain of *Muiremne*, in Louth, at the time of Samhain. In almost all cases people needed to be fed and a *feis* developed as an adjunct of the main purpose of the gathering. This, in turn, created huge markets for the produce and animals of the countryside. James Joyce has said that these Quarter-Day assemblies had three objects, viz., an opportunity for the folk of the land to hear their laws, rights, and

history recited in public; a chance at gaming, athletics and free entertainments, access to a market for buying, selling and exchanging goods and animals. He does not mention a fourth feature of the *anoch* which was the provision of a chance for men to arrange marriages, thus cementing allied clans and giving the possibility of easing tensions between warring peoples.

AONBARR, **AONBHARR**, (ain-barr), **aon** + **barr**, “the one that is pointed,” (a reference to the shape of the sea-serpent’s head); the magical “sea-horse” of *Manan mac Ler*, loaned by him to *Lugh* to forward the cause of the *Tuatha daoine* against the Fomorian sea-giants. In Norse mythology it was said that the sea god *Hler* had nine beautiful daughters, sometimes entitled “the billow maidens” all clad “in transparent blue, white or green veils.” These were “the horses (i.e. sea-serpents) of Manann” in Gaelic tales; white steeds, that were a *geis*, or tabu, for the sun-gods *Aod*, *Lugh* and *Cúchullain*. At each sunset it was noted that the Sun “died” in the western ocean and it was supposed that these horses carried him into the dark realms of the undersea kingdom known as *An Domhain*. The mare/stallion among the waves was **Aonbarr**, a spirit of the sea who could travel as easily upon land as on water. The mythic sea serpents are often described as sheep-, or horse-headed creatures. At Bon Portage Island, Nova Scotia, Helen Creighton interviewed a man who noted, “No sailor wants to dream of horses because they signify high seas.” (Bluenose Magic, p. 127). In a similar vein, she was told, “There is an old whim that if you see something on the water, you musn’t go near it; some fishermen are afraid of it and are too scared to investigate (Bluenose Magic, p. 122).

AONCOS. Literally “one-footed.” An Otherworld island reputed to have its only support in a silver column rising from the ocean. It was observed by the traveller *Maelduin*. Note that the Fomorian residents of the Otherworld were themselves represented as one-eyed, one-armed and one-footed. See *fam hair*.

AONGHAS, Eng. **Angus**, Ir. **Aonghus**, g. **Aonghusa**, Elr. **‘Oengus**, OIr. **‘Oingus**, the Cy. **Ungust**, a compound from **Oino-gustu-s**, “one uniquely chosen (by the gods). The G. **tagh**, the Latin **gustus**, the English *choice*. Hence **M’Aonghuis**, **Mac-innes**, and the contracted **M’Ainsh**. This god-name was formerly popular in Ireland but is now associated almost exclusively with Scotland. The female form **Angusina** is seen in the lowlands.

AONGHAS BOLG , **Angus the Bolg** , the progenitor of the **Firbolg** and Déisi tribesmen of ancient Britain. Confers with **Aonghas Og** .

AONGHASOG , "the chosen one" + **og**, young. "**Angus** the Youthful One," The god of youth and extramarital love. Often confounded with *Lugh* who had a similar interest in wine, women and song. The son of *Dagda* and *Boann* or Boyne he was the father of *Macha*, ancestress of the Red Branch or Irish kings. His personality was so attractive he was always followed by four song-birds. He travelled on cold wet winds and made his home in the *Brugh na Boyne*. He fell in love with the maiden *Caer* when he saw her in his dream-travels. With the help of *Bobd Dearg* he discovered that she lived part time in the body of a swan. Taking a similar shape, he wooed and won her. After the dispersal of the *Tuatha daoine*, **Aonghas** became associated with the western Atlantic island of **Tir nan Og** . Note possible links with **Aod** and the **Aog**; in the latter form he is the death-god.

AORSD , excrement, faeces. It was believed that a portion of the spirit passed from the body with urine and faeces. These were carefully hidden away to prevent their falling into the hands of a *boabh*, who might employ them to create a magical bane.

AOSG, see entry below; accident, bane, disaster. In the Celtic world all evil was attributed to spirits which invaded and harrassed the body of the individual while his own spirit was absent or debilitated.

AOSGAR , **a + osgar** , unlike the hero **Oscar** , an accident-prone individual; an unlucky one, a bad-luck johnny. Similar to **oscar**, the life-force in men, a champion. **Osgar** was the son of *Oisin*, the prototype for physical strength; "one with a heart like twisted horn sheathed in steel." In his first battle, caught up in a warp-spasm he killed three enemy kings and coincidentally his friend *Linne*. He aligned himself with the *Fianna*, the warders of Ireland and thus came into contention with the legal rulers of that land. In final conflict *Osgar* met King *Cairbre* in single combat and the slew on another. While *Osgar* remained alive he was found wounded on the battlefield by his own father who noted that there was "not a palm's breadth of his body without a wound." **Osgar's** wife, *Aideen*, had him buried on *Ben Edat* (Howath) and raised over his body the great cromlech which still stands overlooking the plain of the battle of *Gowra*.

AOSTRAS , terror, **aois** + **trag** , “always at the fast,” from the root **trud** , distress. Confers with the English **trod** and **threaten** .

ARD , high, **aoine** , fast, OIr. **oine** , Eng. **jejune** . Note the goddess **Aoine** and combined names such as **Ard bhurr** , i.e. **Arthur** , the “High Bear.” Heights of land were considered to have best access to the gods of the air which is why Celtic festivals were sited on the most elevated spots which could be found. Hence also the Christian insistence that the high should be made low.

ARD-BEUR , **ARD-BHURR** , etc., the “high sharp one,” King **Arthur** . Sometimes translated as the “High Bear.” The male equal of the **Cailleach bheurr** . In Gaelic myth, **Arthur** was a supplementary character, the son of a king of Britain who stole the two hunting dogs of *Fionn mac Cumhail*. The Irishman pursued **Arthur** to the larger island and retrieved his animals, forcing him to swear fealty in the process. Thomas Bulfinch has characterized the man as “a little prince of the *Silures* (in South Wales) who was magnified into a conqueror of England, Gaul, and of the greater part of Europe.” Tales of his activities were carried from Cornwall when the Amoricians settled Brittany, and his genealogy was extended backwards by imaginative medieval writers, so that he became linked with *Brutus*, a survivor of the Trojan War. In Wales Arthur’s activities may have first been chronicled by St. Talian, a bishop of St. Asaph, in the seventh century. This work was the basis for *A History of the Kings of England*, which was first translated into English by Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1150.

ARDAOIN, DI- , (je doeunn, stress on last syllable), “between two fasts”, Thursday. See *Di-ciadain* (Wednesday) and *Di-haoine* (Friday). “There is a saying, “Luckless is the mother of a silly child, if Beltane comes on Thursday.” On the other hand, note the old rhythmical saw:

*Thursday, the day of kind Cille Colum,
A day of setting sheep apart for luck.
For arranging thread in the loom,
And for getting a wild cow to take its calf.*

ARD GREIMNE , the lord of *Lethra*, the “Other Side,” and thus the Otherworld. His name indicates a “High Stronghold,” a place referred to in the records as “a land of red brightness,” and he appears to be an alter-ego of the sun-god *Lugh*. He was the father of two noted female warriors

Sgaitheach, “who taught *Cúchulainn* martial arts and *Aoife*, who had the capacity to defeat him, but finally became his lover”

ARD MACHA . the “high,” or “mighty,” **Macha**, anciently called **Emain Macha** . the capital of Ulster raised in 370 B.C. by the queen named **Macha Mong Ruadh** . Situated a short distance from **Emain Macha** , which was the seat of kings during the earlier Ulster Cycle. Corresponding somewhat with **Armagh** , the invisible dwelling of *Ler* on *Slieve Fuad* in Ireland. In the oldest tales, **Ard Macha** was the land base of *Ler*, god of the sea. When it was at hazard from the invading Milesians, *Ler* made its ramparts invisible to all but “gifted” souls. Its boundaries were first traced by the shoulder-brooch of his “daughter” **Macha**, one of the triad of goddesses that comprised the *bafinne*. One of the derivations for **Emain** is **eo** + **muin**, the neck, “a brooch”. Of the three *bafinne*, **Macha** represented the *cailleach* or crone, governess of future events, the equivalent of the Old Norse goddess *Skuld*, who cut the thread of fate when men died. **Macha** was reincarnate at one stage as the daughter of *Uisdean Dearg*, or Red Hugh, a prince of Ulster who left his principality to his two brothers *Dithorba* and *Cimbaoeth* and to his daughter **Macha**, each to rule in turn. At Red Hugh's death, **Macha** refused to follow the succession, thus she fought and killed *Dithorba* and then forced *Cimbaoeth* to marry her, after which she ruled as High-Queen of all Ireland. The five sons of *Dithorba* were banished as a danger to the throne, and in the western realms they plotted against the queen. She went into Connaught province alone in the guise of an old hag, supposedly seeking refuge at their camp fire. One by one the brothers attempted to take sexual advantage of her, but when they came at her she roused the trees with her magic and used their inspirited roots to bind the attackers in place until they swore her personal allegiance. Thus was laid the foundation for the powerful northern kingdom of Ulster, whose remains are now no more than a grassy rampart. Another myth explains its decay: After the foundation of **Emain Macha** the “goddess” went to earth, but remained the patroness of Ireland. She was reincarnated again in the reign of *Connor mac Nessa*. She came then to an solitary Ulster farmer named *Crundchu* as a young woman of great beauty. As this man was a widower he gladly took the **Macha** as his wife. At the annual fair of **Emain Macha** , *Crundchu* drank too freely and bragged that his wife was so fleet of foot she could outrun the king's stallions. Unfortunately, the king heard the bragging and took the man's bet. As **Macha** was pregnant at this time she pleaded with the men who had assembled to postpone the race until after her delivery. Seeing that

they were against this, **Macha** agreed to the race and quickly outstripped the stallions. At the race's end, she fell upon the track and delivered twins. Holding them aloft, **Macha** announced that her favour was withdrawn from Ulster and that, henceforth, in every hour of battle the men of Ulster would find themselves under her curse: "For this hour, the pains of childbirth shall fall on each of you when you are in greatest need. When you try to lift sword and spear you will be as helpless as the meanest woman in childbirth, and this pain will ravage your bellies for five days and four nights, and the curse shall rest on the north for nine times nine generations." Thus, **Macha** predicted the "troubles" that still divide Ireland, and following this she ran south into Connaught Province and formed a new alliance with the clans there. In her new guise she was Queen *Mebd*, or *Badb*, the warrior-queen, the befind of fate in the present tense. The mature *Mebd* and the overly-ripe **Macha** each had the capacity to shape-change into a third befind, the beautiful, youthful **Mhorrigan**, the befind- goddess of past events. When *Mebd*'s forces attempted to invade the north they might have succeeded except that the god-hero *Cúchullain* was in Scotland undergoing training as a warrior when the curse was uttered. Thus he was not susceptible to the symptoms of childbirth and singly-handedly turned back the southerners at a pass between the two lands.

ARDNEMETIA, High **Nemain**, the third part of the triad goddess *Bafinn*. For details see **Nemain-heimhidh**. Corresponds with **Emain Macha**, see above.

ARD RIGH, OIr. **ard ri**, High King. According to tradition their seat was Tara and there were seventy-nine of them between *Slaigne* the Firbolg and King *Conaire Mor O Conchobhar* (1175 A.D.).

ARGADNEL, Silver Cloud. One of the islands of earthly paradise found on the rim of the western ocean; One of the Otherworld islands seen by *Bran* when he travelled in the west. The eastern coast of Canada is, in fact, plagued by summer fogs.

ARGHAS, written rhetoric, sublimely transcribed language, similar to **argumaid**, the Eng. **argument** from the Latin **argumentum**. The druids were skilled in this art which was held to be a high form of magic. While the druids would not write their secrets on stone, paper or wood they often transcribed matters of less importance (using the Roman alphabet).

When Saint Patrick codified the laws of Ireland he called upon one of the *filid-ollam* to represent the whole body of their knowledge in verse. In this form, the laws were easier to remember, pleasant to recite, and more welcome upon the ears. In the Christian era, the lives of the saints were chronicled in traditional verse. When ancient history and genealogy were first inscribed, they were represented as verse. Old standard records, such as the Book of Rights were in poetic form, as was the Calendar of Angus, and the first school text-books.

ARMO, Armour , Armor, place-name, belonging to **air muir** , the place by the sea. This land is now Brittany, in France, but the Latins called it **Armouricius** or **Aermoricus** . The Br. **arvor** , maritime. In the language of old Brittany, **Armory** , the sea land.

ARRACHD , spectre, EIr. **arrig**, from the roots, **ar** + **richd** . our + appearance, semblance, form, **arach**, rearing up from the ground. Thus, a ghost of the man or woman, whether living or dead. The befinde of humans was often said to resemble them in every detail, but was insubstantial and ephemeral. The retreat of a man's ghost was not regarded as important but its approach was seen as an ill omen. Some of the **arrachd** were considered the cowalkers of the gods or the evil familiars of the *baobhe*, or “witches.”

ART AENFER Art the “Solitary,” ruled sometime between 180 A.D. and 250 A.D. It was said that he was not entirely of human blood, his mother having been *Bécuma Cneisgal*, of the “Fair Skin,” a resident of the Land of Promise. She had an affair with *Gaiar*, one of the sons of *Manannn mac Ler*, without asking permission. As a result she was banished from the west and eventually stumbled upon the Irish household of King *Conaire*. She persuaded this gentleman to take her as a concubine but having given birth to **Art**, grew jealous of the relationship between father and son, and took steps to try to have him banished from court. It has been guessed that *Conaire's* falling out with the local earth-goddess may have been at the root of his escalating problems. With the new foreign “goddess” in place the country grew progressively infertile and miserable. Failing at all the usual means of eliminating a rival *Bécuma* talked her son into playing a high-stakes game of *fidchell*, the fate-game also known as *brandubh* . She had no chance of losing since she had the assistance of two expert and invisible masters of that game. When **Art** lost, she was able to place him under the *geis* of taking on an *imramma*, along sea voyage which would

ostensibly lead him to a bride named *Delbchaem*. This maiden was as beautiful as any of her kind, but was the daughter of *Morgan*, king of the Land of Wonder, and the daughter of a giantess named *Coichend*, who just happened to be the most feared warrior-woman in the west. It appeared that *Bécuma* would now have the king and his kingdom for herself. **Art** set out on the ocean, which he cruised without incident. However, in the Otherworld he was forced to overpower hideous toads, wade a river of ice, kill a giant, and make a choice between two cups; one poisonous, the other harmless. Beyond all this, he had to destroy the evil parents of his potential wife. This he managed, and he returned safely to Ireland, where he confronted the widowed *Becuma* forcing her to retire from court. At that, **Art** was deeply troubled by the duplicity of his mother and it was said that he lived a solitary life from that time, "one largely silent to the end of his days." The end came for him when he was killed by foreign mercenaries led by his nephew *Lugaid*, who had been exiled among the Picts. It has been suggested that **Art** may have been driven to deeper introspective because of the early loss of his two older brothers, *Conla* and *Criona*. The latter is supposed to have been eliminated while still a youth by one of *Art's* uncles, but the former was involved in his own *imramma* from which he never returned.

ARTAIR, **Arthur**, MG. **Artuir**, EIr. **Artuir** or **Artur**, Cy. **Arthur**, the Lat. **Artorius**. If native to the Brythonic tongue, which is most likely, it derives from **artos**, a bear, the OIr. being **art**. See also **ard**, high, Cy. **arth**. From this the names **Art**, **Artgal**, **Art** the Foreigner, and **Artbran**, Art the Raven. Hence also **M'Artair**, **Mac-arthur**. **Artan**, a stone; **ard**, high, hard. Laurensen (1879) equated this name with the Norse **Ottar**. In the Shetlands the forename **Otto**, **Otho** or **Ottie** is still in use. This mortal-god was the equivalent of the Welsh *Gwydion*, son of *Don*. Like the god *Aod*, or *Hu*, he was a friend to mankind, a giver of the arts of civilization and a warrior against the dark forces of the Underworld. He may very well be the Celtic god *Lugh* since he is described in Welsh mythology as the son of *Bile* and *Don*. The latter is said to be the mother-goddess *Danu*, the mother of *Lugh*. He certainly corresponds with **King Arthur**, the hero of the much later medieval romances. The designation **athair** (father) may be the same word. In Irish myth **Arthur** appears as the son of the king of all the Britons. He stole the hound of *Finn Mac Cumhail* and was pursued to the main island, where the animals were repossessed. In more general Celtic myth, **Arthur** is accused of purloining the cauldron of the deep from the Fomorian sea-island of *An Domhain*. In this instance he may be

confused with **Artur**, son of *Nemed*, who led the Nemeditians in a very successful battle against the Fomors at *Cramh Ros*. The Arthurian legends of medieval times cantered about a British king who was supposed to have consolidated the Celtic kingdoms against the Anglo-Saxons in either the fifth or the sixth century. Although **Arthur Pendragon** was probably an element of folklore he became central to the so-called “medieval romances.” He was said to have been a northerner, who as king lived in state with his wife Guinevere at Caerlion on Usk. His knights set out on various chivalrous exercises, some across the great waters of the world. In his appointed time **Arthur** was wounded by unfriendly relatives who promoted the Saxon cause. From the battlefield at Camlan he is supposed to have been transported to Avalon, the island of the faeries. There he rests against the day when he will return to assist his people when they are in need. In the semi-mythic “histories” of early Britain, *Morgan* is represented as the half-sister of **Arthur**. Jealous of his power she plotted against him and it was her son *Mordor* who allied his forces with the Saxons destroying the Celtic kingdoms. Since the Isle of Avalon was a place of forgetfulness, this was no impediment to **Arthur** and *Morgan* living together in this place in their after-lives.

ASDUINN, **as** + **duin**; **as**, out of (some foreign place), from + **duin**, a man the OIr. **ass**, Gaul and Lat. **ex**, from. Also used as a privative prefix, as is the case here. **Asair**, a harness, weaponry, a shoemaker, **asgan**, a dwarf, **àsran**, a forlorn object, **astrannach**, a stranger, **astar**, a journey. ON. **Asa**, a nickname for *Odin* because of his morose state. Hence **Asgardr**, *Odin's* world and **Asbrigr**, *Asa's bridge* also known as *Bifrost*. ME. **asadien**, **satiated**, and thus **sad**, the obs. Eng. **asal**. Related to the current words **assets**, **sate**, **sadist**, **satisfy**, **satire**. Compares, as well, with the G. **eas**, another privative prefix, in OIr. **es**, Cy. **eh**, Gaul & Lat. **ex**, out of, out from, thus **eas**, a waterfall, the Skr. **â-patti**, a “miss-fall.” **Easg** combines the prefix with **ung**, a snake to produce “water snake,” “slime-eel,” or “fen-snake.” Note the obsolete **easga**, a “bloated snake,” the moon, OIr. **ésca**, **ésce**, **æsca**, bearing the meaning a “full moon.” These words confer with the Gaulish god **Æsus** whose name appears in Gaelic as **Aes**, **Aod** or **Aed** the Latin **Odo**, which clearly matches **Odin**. The Gaelic god was considered tripartite his other forms being *Tar* or *Thor* and *Dà* who is the equivalent of the Old Norse *Tyrr*. Notice that the Gaelic form for that last name suggests duality as it is the English word “two.” As we have said elsewhere *Thor* and *Tyrr* are often said to be dialectic forms of the same god. Note also that *Dà* is a form of *Dagda*, the “dad” or “father of the gods.” In Welsh

mythology the trio consists of **Hu** or **Kai** who matches **Odin**, the one-armed *Bedwyr* who is clearly *Tyrr and Kynddelig*, who by elimination is *Thor*. From the OIr **ec** we also have **eug** or **aog**, death, real and personified, and this relates to Odin's role as a soul-gatherer of spirits of the dead. The references to a snake embedded in this last word reminds us that Odin's folk were referred to as "the coiled serpent people." In Gaelic countries **Latha Aod** or "Hugh's Day" was an attachment of the celebration known as the Samhain, and fell on or about the first day of May. This god appears in Persian folklore as **Asura-masda** and the Umbrians of Italy called him **Æsun**. The source-word is thaken as Skr. **as**, (that which is) "to be." The most interesting Celtic reference to this god is with respect to the **Creag Asduinn**, "**Asa's** Crag" or "Rock." which was said to have originally been found at the centre of *An Domhain*, "The Beginning Place." That land was "at the far end of the big world in the middle of the Magnificent Loftiness of the Ocean in the very middle of the Meadow of Allure on the Plain of the Crag." It was "a big black stone and *Manan*, son of *Lidhir*, King of the Ocean, was living in it." This means that he was, literally embodied in the stone, which was also his royal residence. This is the "Stone of Abundance" also referred to as the "Kettle of the Deep," from the fact that it was located in the "Great Kettle" of the Atlantic Ocean. It is often spoken of as "fallen from heaven," and of meteoric origin. This stone was eventually purloined by the *Dagda* and his sons and became the source of spirit for the British Isles. It is variously said to have been buried in Ireland, or England, or Scotland, or Wales, but some say it was either dug up, or destroyed, in the remote past so that the spirit of magic is now "out of the land." The Old Norse god Thor also stole a similar "Kettle of Regeneration" from the sea-folk, and like the Gaelic model it was said to have brewed their first ale, and was thus, "the source of all poetry and inspiration." To obtain the great wisdom which was **Odin's** trademark he visited *Mimir's* Spring, itself described as "the fountain of all wit and wisdom, in whose liquid depths even the future was clearly mirrored." The old man who guarded it was well aware of the powers and refused **Odin** a drink unless he agreed to give up one of his eyes to help enspirit the spring. The god did not hesitate but removed his totem, which *Mimir* sank deep in the waters of his "fountain." There it shone "with mild lustre, leaving **Odin** with but one eye, which is considered emblematic of the sun." The Oehlenschläger reminds us that "his second eye, the moon, shines not so bright as he placed it in the water. This is his pledge that he may daily fetch the healing waters for the strengthening of his remaining eye." Thus *Mimir's* spring can be seen as the ocean, from which the sun and

moon emerge following their individual schedules; **Odin** represents the sun and *Asa*, the moon, both aspects of a single godhood. Drinking deeply of this “headwater of memory” **Odin** obtained the insights he sought. Although he was made wise, he became **sad** and depressed for his view of the future made him aware that the fate of the gods was mortality and doom. The knowledge of their eventual destruction at the end of time so affected his spirits that he was afterwards melancholy and contemplative rather than happy. Elsewhere we are told that **Odin** stole the secret of ale-making after he seduced the giantess who guarded this secret. This reminds us that the *Dagda* was also to have stolen the “wine with the life foam” from the Fomorian Undersea Kingdom. Like the Christian God **Odin** prompted many of the name and duties of those he followed. As a sea-god he is mentioned in the sagas as *Nikkr*, the equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon *Ness*; the word “sadness” is therefore a compound of **Asa-nikkur**, in which form he is the equivalent of *Manann mac Ler*. The crime of the land people is forgotten in some of their versions of mythology, thus one tale says that *Manann* gave the *Lia Fail* or “Stone of Destiny” to the land-folk, entrusting it to one of the Fomorians to transport it to Tara. When his messenger was a long time returning from this errand, *Manann* supposedly became enraged and withdrew the black stone, instructing *mac Caoilte* to place it instead “on the pinnacle topmost on my royal castle. The miscreant was a thousand years at this task as the pinnacle was above water, and the stone heavier in air than it was beneath the sea. The luckless man died as the stone tumbled one final time back into the depths. The Hebrideans claim that the Creag Asduinn is now a part of their island and lies where the luckless Fomorian last dropped it. The kettle is sometimes entitled *Coire Fionn*, after the Ulster-born hero. In one of his stories *Fionn* is represented as holding the secret of *bho’n rinneadh fion*, “the life-foam of the deep,” said to have been given his ancestors by *Manann*. When the sea-king visited *Fionn* in the Hebrides he supposedly commented: “I am glad to see that you are maintaining the beverage of the ancient brewers, which has now passed by word of mouth for a thousand years.” He then went on to predict that the formula would soon be lost because “the alien intruder (Christians) will soon come, and the ear of the Gael will be inclined to believe that falsehood is truth and truth falsehood. Then the life-foamed wine will fail in this land of the Gaeldom, and the spirit will drain away to other places.” It is obvious from this that the Kettle of the Deep, the “stone” within it, and this “foaming wine,” represent patent symbols of sexuality, mortality and regeneration. This is reinforced in the fact that **Odin** wore a marvellous arm-ring, *Draupnir*, which was “the emblem of fruitfulness,

precious beyond compare.” Like *Lugh* *Odin*’s totem was the eagle and the raven and the wolf. While *Lugh* had the *bafinne* as his personal bodyguard, **Odin** possessed the *Nornr* or *Valkyra*. Like *Cromm* or the *Cailleach*

ASGAN , dwarf, grig, a merry creature. Similar to **aisteach** , a diverting or witty person. Probably a combination of the Teutonic **Asa** , *Odin*, with **gin**, born of. begat by; the Eng. **kin**. The *dvergr*, or “dwarfs,” of Old Norse mythology, as opposed to the *svartalfar*, or “dark elves.” The former were usually misshapen and were not banished from the world of men by *Odin*. They were skilled craftsmen in metals. represented as dwelling in mountains, hence their secondary name *bjergfolk* , “hill-people”. It was said that they were wealthy, and on occasions of festivity, they raised their hill-tops mechanically upon seven red columns, so that passers-by observed their homes “of gold and crystal.” They were great miners, but also scavengers, and it is said that the wealth scattered “in the Great Russian wars” found its way into the Scandinavian *Guldberg*, “Gold-hill,” where it is still interred. Keightley claims that these people were obliging and neighbourly, “keeping a friendly intercourse with mankind.” He also notes that they had “a sad propensity of thieving not only stealing provisions, but even women and children.” “They have a great dislike for noise, probably from a recollection of the times when *Thor* used to fling his hammer after them; thus the hanging of bells in the churches has driven them almost out of the country (Gnomes Fairies Elves and Other Little People, p. 95). In fleeing Europe, at least one of this kind relocated to North America. In “*Thorston’s Saga*”, which appears in the Kampa Dater (Camp Notes) of the Norse explorers (ca 1,000 A.D.) *Thorston*, the captain of a longboat of twenty-four sailors, met a “black elf” on a trip to *Vinland the Good*. (Gnomes Fairies Ellves and Other Little People, p.70).

ASGAILL , from the Norse **askell** a contraction of **as-ketalla** , **Asa** or **Odin's** -kettle; purloined by *Thor* and *Tyrr* from the frost giants. The source of a never-ending flow of food and drink, conferring with the Gaelic “Cauldron of the Deep.” Said to be the source of “all poetry and inspiration.” From this we have the family name **Macaskill** . In the Welsh Book of Taliesin, there is a tale entitled “The Spoils of *Annwn*,” in which three shiploads of King *Arthur*’s men entered the “Glass Fortress of the Deep” to carry off the “Cauldron of the Head (i.e. leader) of *Annwn* (the Gaelic *An Domhain*, also called the Dead Lands).”

ATHACH , a giant; Ir. **fathach** from the root **pat**, to extend. The lowland **fachan** , described as a costal creature with a single eye, hand and leg; apparently a survival of the old Fomorian sea-giants. See more under **aithech** and *amhas*. This creatures has world-wide distribution in historical as well as in mythological literature.

ATHAIR , **ATHAR** , **ATHRAICHEAN** , (ah-ayr), m., SIr.& OIr. **athir** (ahir) **father** ; cf. Anglo-Saxon, **faeder** ; Latin, **pater** ; Skr. **pitar** , all designating the male parent. **An-t-athair** . the one god; now applied to the Christian God, formerly designating the pagan creator-god, who was never precisely named, it having been considered bad taste (and even dangerous) to attract his attention through "the naming of names." The latter god was sometimes distinguished from the Christian God as, **an-ol-athair** , literally the father of **ol**, drink or **ale** , but figuratively the father of **all** things. As such, this immortal god-of-gods corresponds with the Norse **Alfadir** , the Middle English, **Allfather** , lately known as the **Yulefather** , **Father Yule** , or as the unlikely pagan/Christian character designated as **Father Christmas**. The pagan father-god was thought to exist when there was nothing beyond elemental chaos. Perhaps out of boredom, this "one-god" was thought to have created the raw matter and energies of the universe as well as the three immortal elemental gods of fire, water and air. He invested each of these with the spirit, or ghost, that which allows the sensations collectively termed life. He also started the universal clock ticking, and withdrew to watch the result, or to take up some other arcane interest. Because of this, the **an-t-athair** was considered a remote deity with no history among men, but our ancestors thought he might dwell beyond the north, or pole, star since it was observed that the other constellations rotated abjectly about this central source of light. See *Aod*, *Lugh*, *Ugh*, *Uile-loc*.

ATHAIR-NEIMH , See above + **neimh** , poison, the "snake-father." Similar to Br. **aer** or **azr**; the source of the English **adder**. a serpent, the anti-father; beginning with the Christian era, the Devil. It was reasoned that time, having a beginning must also have an end, and that the creator-god therefore had a second face as the destroyer of the universe. In this guise, he is **an-t-athair-neimh** , the pagan equivalent of the one who will, in the fullness of time, extinguish all life as it now exists. In Norse mythology this last act has been promised to the giant *Svrtr* (Darkness), a form of *Lokki*, the god of underground fire. The pagan equivalent of the forces of darkness as represented in Christian myth. It may be significant that the

Celts referred to the Anglo-Saxons as "the coiled serpent-people," equating their spirits with that of the "Great Snake," the foreign god named *Woden*, or *Odin*.

ATHAIRNE , see entries above, god-like. A druid and poet from Ben Edar (Howth). It was said that his satire was so powerful "The lakes and rivers receded before him when he named them, and rose up before him when he praised them." He made a circuit of Ireland demanding the wives and treasures of his hosts. In Connaught he visited King *Luain* and demanded his eye. Under the laws of hospitality, the king could not refuse a poet, but *Mac Da Tho* king of Leinster did refuse the services of his wife, and the aggrieved **Athairne** demanded that *Conchobhar mac Nessa*, take up his cause. The battles that followed led finally to the death of *Mac Da Tho*.

ATHAIR TALAMH , the "Father of the Ground." Cahmomile. Used as a medicine against stomach upset, an anti-inflammatory for wounds, a sedative.

ATH LIAG FIONN . Finn's High Ford. The ford into which **Finn mac Cumhail** threw a golden chain attached to a flat stone, a present given him by the *Tuatha daoine*. It is promised that when this stone is again seen the world will end in exactly seven years.