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Editor's Notes

I started this newsletter exactly one year ago, and running it by oneself is certainly a responsibility and a possibility for expression and dedication to you. Thank you for reading it. I hope to continue if for another year, or until another editor steps forward to shoulder the burden.

This issue is especially dedicated to Norman Nelson, and I've decided to post a lengthy republishing of his works here in this issue.



Books, Part 2

Table of Contents

- News of the Groves
- Change of Mike's RDNA website
- News from the Order of White Oak
- My Own Land, a Poem
- The Passing of Norman Nelson, a Founder.
- The Obituary of Norman Nelson
- Later Chronicles, Chapter 10, a Poem
- Some Final Thoughts, by Norman
- The Epistle of Norman
- The Second Epistles of Norman
- The Third Epistles of Norman
- Media Corner: 2 Classic Space Botanical Robot-Dramas
 - Silent Running
 - Wall-E
- Book Review: 9 More Pages of Reviews of Really Old Celtic

News of the Groves

Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota

Our Beltane was a thing to be remembered--many of us played Fire Soccer, and our scorched shoes remain a testament to that night. As summer approaches the Carleton grove dwindles to a single member, our Archdruidess pro tempore. But before that, there was a mystical 2nd order initiation; and come the fall, we hope for good things from the freshmen.

Avery

P.S. Avery is working on logging down all the amazing locations in the Carleton Arboretum.

From her recent blog:

My name is Avery and I'm a member of the [Reformed Druids of North America](#), the oldest druid group native to the United States. I write mostly non-fiction, but I felt compelled by another pagan blogger's challenge to make June [Pagan Values Blogging Month](#).

I like to keep my mind open to the supernatural, but not so open that my brains fall out-- which means I take a lot of religion with skepticism. Yet insofar as the Reformed Druids are a pagan group, I feel like our special brand of paganism is something I should be proud of. In our membership ceremony we honor all aspects of nature both seen and unseen. We give non-human beings the well-deserved dignity of equal treatment with humankind, and we acknowledge, for once in the twists and turns of our lives, our own limitations: "Thou art everywhere, but we worship thee here; Thou art without form, but we worship thee in these forms; Thou hast no need of prayers and sacrifices, yet we offer thee these prayers and sacrifices." These words seem self-conscious and meek, but when they are said in a ceremony they feel very right to me. Would that in our everyday lives we could recognize our ignorance of the effect our actions have on the living planet that produced our bodies.

Reformed Druidry is about doing more than just "appreciating nature" or "doing something for our environment". It is recognizing that we are part of nature, and we are part of our environment, despite all our attempts to separate ourselves. This is a form of wisdom known to cultures around the world, when they address other living creatures as people, or welcome animals or plants into their daily lives as equals. It doesn't involve believing in anything you can't see-- rather, a new druid is asked only to broaden her definition of what's important to her.

I've read a few books that strengthen the philosophical backing for these new pagan values: Graham Harvey's [Animism: Respecting the Living World](#) and David Abram's [The Spell of the Sensuous](#). Both these writers give examples of how living in a shamanic or animistic community changes one's perception of reality. Abram, a philosophy professor, talks about how the powerful relationships he had with birds during his time studying in Nepal.. Harvey writes about his time living with neopagan groups in Britain, and how he discovered affinities for animals he never realized he had. Both these writers question the language we normally use to describe nature, and the baggage it carries with it. You can think of paganism as dangerous language--with every special term and phrase, it challenges the religious status quo and disturbs those who want a "normal" religion to live a "normal" life with. Reformed Druidry especially, explicitly drawing its inspiration from the non-human planet, upsets our assumption that the Earth is ours for the taking.

When I talk to my friends about my religion, I point out that there's no need for a leap of faith to believe in what I say, and scientific evidence will neither back me up nor disprove me. Reformed Druidry is a choice: a choice about how to interpret what you already know, and what you will choose to act on.

She has also begun a twitter website: <http://twitter.com/ReformedDruids>

Monument Grove (briefly revived): News from DC

Mike has temporarily re-hoisted the banner of the DC grove after his return from Laos. He however will not be holding regular services, but is open to visitors. His primary concerns this summer is moving the www.geocities.com/mikerdna website to a new host after 10 years. Mike Scharding can now be found on facebook, but he doesn't discuss Druidism directly much there, more general life stuff, you know, the trivial banter of his daily life.

Hazelnut Mother Grove: News from California

The 5th annual Celtic Midsummer Faerie Festival will be held June 13 - 14, at VFW Hall near Phoenix Park in Fair Oaks, California. Festival opens at 10 a.m. both days, closing at 9 p.m. on Sat. and 6 p.m. on Sun.

More info here: http://www.groveoftheoak.org/events/faerie_festival.html
-belisama13@comcast.net

Ban Na Inis Protogrove: News from Washington

Hi, Mike – here's news of interest to Druids in the Pacific Northwest, from Ban na Inis at Avalon ProtoGrove. When you have a minute, please forward it to anybody you know of between Portland and Vancouver B.C. who might be interested.

(||)
Ban na Inis

The Druid Mysteries at Camp Indralaya on Orcas Island

June 3-7 (Wednesday dinner - Sunday lunch) The Druid tradition, wrote H. P. Blavatsky, is "full of deep and sacred truths." Reborn in the 18th century from its Celtic roots, Druidry is among the major currents of Western esotericism, with its own rich heritage of spiritual teachings and practices. Come take part in this ancient yet still intensely relevant tradition, as Archdruid and widely read occult author John Michael Greer transforms Camp Indralaya on Orcas Island for a late spring weekend into a school of the Druid mysteries! Attendees will learn and practice Druid meditation and spiritual exercises, and study the secrets of the Three Rays of Creation and the seven principles of the cosmos. The weekend will culminate in an opportunity for ceremonial initiation into the Druid mysteries; those who wish to receive initiation should bring a white robe or other white clothing. Please note that initiation as a Druid is available to anyone, male or female, who completes the preparatory work and is present at the dawn ceremony on Sunday.

Former Seattleite John Michael Greer has been active in Western esoteric spirituality since 1975, was initiated into Druidry in 1993, and became Grand Archdruid of the Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA) in 2003. An initiate of several occult lodges and a longtime student of spiritual ecology, he is also the author of eighteen books on occultism, including "Inside a Magical Lodge" and "The Druidry Handbook" (2006).

Onsite fees include lodging, vegetarian meals, and program for the entire event Plumbing Cabin or Roundhouse: \$350

Sleeping Cabin: \$254

Tenting: \$218

Locals / Day Visitor: \$85 (program fee only; meals extra)

For more information or to register, go to www.indralaya.org.

Koad Grove: News from Ohio

Koad Protogrove celebrated the Summer Solstice, honoured the Earth Mother, and shared the Waters of Life. We had four members in attendance. Lughnasadh is planned for Friday 31 July in Toledo



Change of Mike's RDNA Website

Mike's RDNA website, first started in 1995 at St. Cloud State University and moved to www.geocities.com/mikerdna in 1998 is now moving yet again to a yet un-determined location with its own domain.

It has always been intended a personal site, but became de facto a pseudo-official web-page of the RDNA. Now there are multiple websites by Reformed Druid groups, facebook and conferences to help bring us together from the far corners of the world. This is good.

Geocities.com is closing down operations, even for paying customers, but I'm encouraged by the many offers of web-hosting by my friends. In case of sudden closure of my webpage, it is currently being mirror-back-upped at <http://www.cyberdragons.org/www.geocities.com/mikerdna/> which surprisingly took only minute for Joey to set up and copy with all the photos and links intact!!!

There will likely be an announcement in August or September with the new web-site, at which point I'll need your help to spread the word.



Order of White Oak: Relayed News of Druidism

Check this out. Maybe next year we could have something of this scale on the East Coast?
Ellen

Gorsedd for the Festival of Lughnasadh, July 31 to August 3, 2009: The House of Danu, an alliance of groves and seed groups within the Order of Bards, Ovates, and Druids in California, will host an historic Gorsedd for the Festival of Lughnasadh, July 31 to August 3, 2009, at the Pema Osel Ling Buddhist Retreat near Monterey, California.

This is an unprecedented gathering of numerous Druid organizations in the West, and anyone interested in exploring the California Druid experience is invited to attend. This is a rare opportunity to acquire knowledge from the most celebrated scholars of Druidry. The Chosen Chief of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids (OBOD), Philip Carr-Gomm is traveling from Sussex to help ground participants in Druid culture. The Grand Archdruid of the Ancient Order of Druids in America (AODA), John Michael Greer, is coming down from Oregon to share his extraordinary knowledge of Druid history and magic. Archdruid Emeritus and founder of Ár nDraíocht Féin (ADF), Isaac Bonewits, is coming from New York to do assist in our discussion of Druid rites and ritual.

The Gorsedd will be a festival of learning, drumming, storytelling, games, initiations; Bardic evenings around the campfire, a magnificent Eisteddfod of our best performing artists, and a grand procession for the sacred ritual of Lughnasadh that you can help create.

http://www.houseofdanu.com/component/option,com_gorseddregistry/Itemid,53/task,showevent/eid,1

My Own Land

From Koad Grove

Give me my own land,
Where the trees will hold their proper place
As lords and ladies of the land
Standing tall as they reach
For the Gods of the Sky
Standing firm as they commune
With the Gods of the Land
Reaching deep as they seek
The Gods of the Deep Waters

What a beautiful sight,
The sun exalted in blue skies
Singular in its majesty
Arc through the heavens
With nothing obscuring the sight

Yet what a wonder
To see the Bright One
Filtered through the endless leaves
Stream down in Ogham
That plays upon the ground

With each passing breeze,
A different message
With each subtle breath
A new way of seeing
With each moving cloud
A story in telling

The trees have free reign
On this land, free of trespass
They will grow where they will
And flourish as they must
There will be groves that form,
This is natural in the wild
There will be straight pathways,
This too is part of the norm

There will be avenues of arbours,
That calls to the Sun
There will be mazes and mysteries
In this land full of trees

Give me my own land
From here to horizon
Give me my own land
And I will give it away
The Gods will walk there,
Amongst pine, oak, and maple
Stand in the virtue of
Land, sea, and sky

To the new sun rising,
I open my palm,
Breeze and leaf
Murmur and flow

To the bright moon observing,
I hold up my face
To capture the light
Ghostly I walk,
Through the dark and the night

To the quiet forest,
In deepest of darkness
I hold myself still
I raise my own branch
Up to the sky,
I whisper a prayer,
To the deepest of Night:
“Swallow me whole
“In this infinite shadow”
The stars slowly flicker,
Then silence

For the Summer Solstice, 2009
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The Founders of the RDNA:

**Top (L to R) David Fisher & Howard Cherniack,
Bottom (L to R) Norman Nelson & David Frangquist. Taken c. 1961-1962.**

The Passing of Norman Nelson

The RDNA has a very down-to-earth appreciation for its founders, but has never taken them to be deities, just nice guys. We however do miss them when they go quiet and disappear, for long periods at a time, as is the way of many Reformed Druids. Sadly, Reformed Druids also die, since we are only human after all.

On April 13, 2009, Norman Nelson passed away in his beloved hometown of Rapid City, South Dakota; survived by his sister. Despite his protracted communication with the RDNA since its founding, his disappearance in the RDNAtalk conference was not noted for several months until Stacey asked me to seek him out. By then his e-mails had not been answered for a while and his phone disconnected. I reached his pastor in the Emmanuel Episcopal Church and she confirmed the death announcement in the

Carleton Alumni Affairs office.

Norman was an instrumental member of the original three founders (plus the fourth founder Frangquist) of the RDNA. It was his history of masonry and love of fraternity that gave much of the grove-structure, 3 +7 order structure and openness & applicability of Reformed Druidism to practitioners of all creeds and faiths. An inveterate punsters, poet, and antiquarian; he was known for rambling stories, long jokes, and his conviviality. In one sense, his attention to Druidism was a pre-view of the “earth stewardship” and “inter-faith” dialogue that was budding in the Episcopal church of that time (Fisher and Frangquist also remained long-time involvement in the Episcopal Church through their lives).

Norman was best known by later Druids as the 2nd Archdruid of Carleton, the Patriarch of the Fifth Order of Bracicea (dedicated to fermented beverages), founder of the second missionary grove (in South Dakota) and the author of numerous epistles in the Apocrypha. He was often consulted by Isaac Bonewits on the Druid Chronicles (Evolved) project and assisted me greatly with the ARDA 1 and ARDA 2 projects.. He also dropped numerous puns int the RDNAtalk conference on yahoogle.com and loved sharing stories of the early days.

The last time that I met him in person was at the 40th Anniversary of the RDNA in 2003 in Carleton, for which I paid for his ticket so he could attend. He was not well then, but he attended with relish and livened all the discussions. Before he left, he gave me the green chalice from the early days that he wished me to take care of and convey to the archives, when possible. As always, he invited me up to his home in South Dakota to enjoy the sunset from a nice “sitting rock” on a hill under a large pine tree that he liked to frequent. Sadly, each opportunity to take that up was missed by myself.

I'd like to share some of his writings with you to give you a small taste of the thoughts of this man and why he will be missed.

The Obituary of Norman Nelson

Norman Eugene Nelson died on April 13, 2009, following a prolonged illness. He was born in 1941 in Deadwood, SD, to Dorothea Dawson Nelson and Stanley Norman Nelson. After growing up in Deadwood and Rapid City, Norman graduated from Carleton College in 1964, followed by a Master's degree in Biology from USD.

He taught at small, liberal arts colleges in Iowa and Kansas before returning to Rapid City in the early 1970s where he did some teaching in the public schools. He then worked for many years as a printer and owner of a printing shop in Rapid City until he retired in 1994. He continued to work as a free-lance editor on a number of projects, mostly about South Dakota history.

His greatest love was for the Black Hills and in particular for the cabin at Camp Remington that his parents purchased in 1957 and where he spent many summer weekends throughout his life. This exposure to nature surely fostered his interest in environmental protection and, although not an avid hiker, he was an active environmentalist in the Sierra Club for years.

He had a phenomenal memory which served him well with his interest in historic preservation. He was a founding member of the West Boulevard Association, wrote a pamphlet on neighborhood historic houses, and was a long time fixture at their summer festivals. For many years, he also served on the Rapid City Historic Preservation Commission and Historic Sign Review Committee.

Many have been regaled by his stories and anecdotes, and of course, anyone who knew him will know that he was a punner extraordinaire.

From childhood on, he was a member of Emmanuel Episcopal Church where he served on the vestry, as a layreader, as a representative to state church assemblies, and in other capacities. He also did layreading and helped maintain the small, open-air Chapel of the Transfiguration at Camp Remington. He is survived by his sister, Carlyn Jane Jervis and husband, Tom, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, as well as by cousins Janet Erickson of San Diego, CA, Betsy Stewart of Eden Prairie, MN, Greta Friel of Maynard, MA, Karen Woodward of Eau Claire, WI, and their spouses and children.

Cremation has occurred and a memorial service is being planned for July 11 at Camp Remington in the Black Hills. Memorial contributions can be made to Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Rapid City or to the Sierra Club Foundation, 85 Second Street, Suite 750, San Francisco, CA 94105. Arrangements are through the Osheim & Schmidt Funeral Home.

Later Chronicles, Chapter Ten:

O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

7. In all that we do we praise thee: In our getting up and in our lying down, in our sleeping and in our waking; in our eating and in our drinking; in our working and in our times of leisure; for we are alive only through thee,^q and in our every act too we praise thee.

8. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

9. In all that we see do we praise thee: in the sky and the sea, the hills and the plains; in the clouds and the stars, the moon and the sun;^r in the birds and the flowers, the butterflies and the myriad-colored fishes.

10. We praise thee with our admiration of the sunset and of the mountains, of the trees and of the streams. For thou hast made all things, and for all we see do we praise thee.

11. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

12. In all that we hear and smell and feel and taste do we praise thee: in the song of birds and the roar of the sea; in the perfumes of flowers and freshness of a summer rain;

13. in the softness of a kitten and the coolness of a lake; in the sweetness of honey and the savor of fruits; for all that we hear and smell and feel and taste is of thee,^s and for all sensible do we praise thee.*

14. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

15. For all that we love do we praise thee: for the love of our parents, and for the love of others; for the act and emotion of love is an act and emotion of praise, and in loving do we praise thee.*

16. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

17. In our meditations^t and services do we praise and think upon thy works and power.*

18. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

19. In all the whole world do we praise thee, from the east to the west do we

praise thee and from the nadir to the zenith do we praise thee.

20. We praise thee in the day, and in the night, in all seasons of the year, and in the myriad of years.^u

21. We praise thee knowing and unknowing, believing and of little faith, for thou hast made all and art all, and we can praise and admire nothing without praising and admiring thee.

22. O Earth-mother, we praise thee.

23. Peace! Peace! Peace!*

Some Final Thoughts

(By Norman Nelson, 1976)

1. In creating the RDNA, we took as our basic philosophy what I usually sum up as, "Take a look around you at nature there must be something bigger than we are!" For many people, this came to be a deep and abiding sort of faith. Many who could not stomach 'organized religion' were attracted to Druidism, which was most definitely a disorganized religion.
2. RDNA never asked people to renounce their own religion, but was rather supplementary to the "standard" religions. If you read the Tenets, you will see this. For some, Druidism remained supplementary; for some, it became primary; and for the majority, I believe, it was an interesting experiment which was soon dropped and probably forgotten.
3. It is difficult from my perspective, remembering the beginnings of our "joke," to know what Druidism means to those who encountered it in later years, after the founders were gone. It has remained viable, which means that we must have tapped some sort of fundamental need in people; it is taken quite seriously by quite a few, which means that we created something deeper than we originally intended.
4. To all who have experienced it, in the various Groves which have been established or through the telling of the story, THE BLESSINGS OF THE EARTH-MOTHER BE UPON YOU.

Peace! Peace! Peace!

*What follows are his
epistles from the Apocrypha*

The Epistle of Norman

(By Norman Nelson, 1974)

(Carleton Apocrypha Only)

(In regards to the Isaac Affair)

Chapter the First

1. Dear Isaac:
2. I don't know in advance what I'm going to say, and I really don't know where to begin. I guess I'll start by saying that I don't think that there is really any alternative to schism on *your* part. As I see it, RDNA can accept almost anything, but if you feel that you can't accept the other practitioners of the rite, in their infinite variety, then you must leave us for your own peace of mind.
3. Believe me, unless Druidism has changed tremendously in the several years I have been in only nominal touch with it, we will never require you to leave us!

Chapter the Second

1. The RDNA was never intended to be a religion, except in the "dictionary" sense, a strictly legalistic thing; since Carleton required everyone to attend religious services, we started our own religion, Druidism was not, at the time, intended to be anything except a joke.
2. As it developed, we wound up with quite a bit more than we had ever intended to create. I have used the catch-phrase that our disorganized religion appealed to those who couldn't stomach organized religion.
3. Seriously, though, we seemed to have struck a responsive chord in quite a few people. Dick Smiley was one I especially remember, for whom Druidism came to be an intensely serious

business, we worked hard to keep it lighthearted!

4. One of the basic ideas which we hit hard on (partly to be acceptable, partly because it meant quite a bit to us *per se*) was that Druidism was not intended to be replacement for any religion no one was expected to deny any other faith (Christian, Jewish, what-have-you) to call himself a Druid; everyone who partook of the waters was automatically a Druid. (This means our membership includes such disparate entities as John Nason⁷ and Bard Smith⁸, the latter an ordained Episcopal priest.)
5. We established the first three orders because that was the way the service was written! Fisher was our 3rd order, and represented to everyone originally that he had gotten it all (including his ordination) from someplace he had been in school. Actually, of course, he invented it.
6. The higher orders came about equally haphazardly; Frangquist and I wanted to play a bigger role, so we invented the idea of the higher orders to ease Fisher out and let someone else be Archdruid! We gave him the honor of being Patriarch of the 4th order, and thereby "accidentally" wound up with the higher orders for ourselves!

Chapter the Third

1. To return to the question of your schism (repeating that I've been out of touch with what Druidism has been doing from about 1970 on):
2. Druidism is wide enough to embrace almost anything you want to do; if you feel it constrictive, then schism is best. I fear that you are getting away from the RDNA I know and if you're going to make great changes, then there is no question that to continue to call it the RDNA is doing a disservice to the RDNA we have known.
3. I am not frightened off by the Neopagan label. The only thing disturbs me about it in connection with RDNA is that we never conceived of ourselves as pagans! Druidism was a supplement or a complement to other religions.
4. I must admit that I have ceased to practice any other religion (unless you count church at Christmas and Easter) and *do* still occasionally have a Druid service (usually improvised, since I never remember to have the book with me), but the only time I have used the term "pagan" to describe myself has been when the Mormon missionaries were at the door. (And I recommend the effect *that* produces!)

5. My biggest concern is that Druidism will be submerged, will be merely another quaint alternative ritual for those who are grabbing a straws in an effort to be different. I am still convinced that for most of the practitioners thereof, neo-paganism is either a fad or a self-conscious revolt against mummy and daddy.

Chapter the Fourth

1. We somehow created more than we knew when we created the RDNA.
2. For many, what we were saying was that they were feeling; we articulated the inarticulate feeling that many had, which I once described as "Look around you there must be something bigger than we are."
3. We called it the Earth-Mother; the worship of the Earth-Mother was a symbolic way of saying thank-you to the forces that created the earth and us.
4. The other god-names were just trappings, as far as I know. Several of us got rather deeply into research at on point, and much of the trappings came from that period. In my mind, at least, and I think I speak for most of the others, we were just using alternative names for the Earth-Mother.
5. Again with the qualification that I don't know recent RDNA developments, I will have to admit that I laughed out loud when I read your description of Druidism. Two reasons impelled it.
6. The first was that you were so far from (beyond?) what we envisioned when we started it; the second was the incredible amount of jargon that seems to have accumulated.
7. Don't take me wrong; I just can't take the RDNA seriously!
8. Look to the origins, and you will find a college prank.
9. Look to the early years, and you will find a "philosophy" or whatever you want to call it, that somehow appealed to a lot people who were searching for some sort of meaning in the world.
10. (I suspect that our strongest appeal was to that bright sort of person you find at Carleton, who has all of a sudden begun to realize that they don't have all the answers and that nobody else does either.)

Chapter the Fifth

1. Finally, I want to stress one crucial fact in the development of RDNA; it just happened!

2. We had some literally incredible events (such as the prediction of the death of Kennedy, which is hinted at in Latter Chronicles 5:12ff., and scared the hell out of us; or the efficacy of the Druid curse, which after being used two or three times, with effect, made us decide to let the secret of it die with us who know it).
3. We almost convinced ourselves sometimes that we were playing with some power greater than ourselves. But we also always managed to keep the perspective; even at its most serious moments, Druidism kept one slightly askance eye on itself!
4. Today I still call myself a Druid, although I no longer call myself a Christian; I can't accept the story of Jesus as the Christ.
5. But all that Druidism asks of one is belief in the tenets. You can come up with all sorts of deep and jargonistic statements, but you can't get away from the tenets;
6. North American Reformed Druids believe that one of the *many ways* (emphasis added) in which the object of man's search for religious truth can be found through Nature, (which we personify as) the Earth-Mother. Nature, being one of the primary concerns in man's life and struggle, and being one of the objects of creation (we never bothered about the implications of that; a creator) is important to man's spiritual quests.
7. Druidism isn't to me what it would seem to be to you. Perhaps you are right, but, being as close as I am to the origins, I can't forget what it meant then, and what it evolved into in the first few years. You can't; I can't!
8. This has been a long and rambling epistle apologize. As I said, I didn't know when I started where I was going; I'm still not sure that I have covered all the bases, but it's after midnight, so I'll quit.
9. May the blessing of the Earth-Mother, the never-changing All-Mother, be upon you in whatever you do.

Norman Nelson

10 Geimredh XII

10 November 1974

The Second Epistles of Norman

(By Norman Nelson, 2002-2003)

(New to ARDA 2)


Chapter the First

1. 12 Nov 2002 12:58:26 -0700
2. I've been waiting a couple days for someone to come up with a definitive reply to you, but Druids, too, have a bad case of manana syndrome.
2. Let me introduce myself briefly, I'm Norm, and I'm about to turn 61. I'm one of the "Founders" and was the second Archdruid. [However, as you'll see below, that doesn't mean that anything I say is definitive!]
3. There is no single route to being a "Druid"; in fact, I would believe that every individual has found his/her own path. The Reformed Druids of North America have no creed; we used to say, "Look around you at the natural world; there must be something bigger than we are, and we choose to honor it as the Earth Mother."
4. That honor may be called worship, or just appreciation, or _____ [You fill in the blank]. The RDNA has **never** required anyone to give up another faith to become a Druid. We've always been complementary or supplementary, not exclusive.
5. Similarly, those who have attended RDNA services (or had other contact with RDNA) have either agreed with our premise and added it to their own beliefs (I know there are Druids with Jewish, various Christian, Shinto and Wiccan backgrounds, and there are probably representatives of other faiths, major and minor) or else have gone away and had nothing to do with Druidism. For a few, it has become their only religion; that's okay, too.
6. The whole RDNA "religion" started as a joke, anyway; a protest against required attendance at religious services at Carleton College in Minnesota. The day I graduated in 1964, the Board of Trustees repealed the requirement, thereby rendering RDNA moot, but to the surprise of the Founders, RDNA kept on going, and is now approaching its 40th birthday!
7. For some, including me, it remained a "supplement" to another belief (e.g. a way of

getting in touch with the feminine, creative side of a patriarchal god, or whatever).

8. For others, it became their core belief because it answered their questions [which seems to me to be the real function of humanity's need for any religion].
9. If someone were to take a poll of RDNA today (don't worry, it won't be done because most folks wouldn't bother to reply!) I think you'd still find a whole spectrum of beliefs.
10. Consequently, there has never been a successful attempt to codify what Druids believe. As the joke goes, if you have two Druids together, you have at least three belief systems!
11. Imagine!!! A do-it-yourself religion that lets you pick and choose from a whole buffet of options. Start doing some reading (Mike Scharding's book is the obvious place to start) and devise your own "book" of readings, etc., to answer the questions you have. It won't match anyone else's, but it'll be right for you.
11. And, as I like to say, "Funny, you don't look Druish."


Chapter the Second

1. 21 Dec 2002 12:34:24 -0700
 2.  I concur that there is no authority that can "unmake" a Druid, just as there is none that can make one.
- You're a Druid if you feel Druish. I guess you could be kicked out of a particular (pun intended) Grove, but that doesn't mean you cease to be a Druid.
3. In the early days, everyone who partook of the Waters was automatically made a member of the Carleton Grove, including John Nason, the then president of Carleton, and his wife, to whom I served the waters the weekend before my graduation (with my fingers crossed, on a campus where the discovered possession of alcoholic beverages was an automatic 10-day suspension). By that standard, there are a lot of Druids out there, even if they don't know it.
 4. The long-defunct Council of Dalon ap Landu never, to the best of my memory, ever tried to excommunicate anyone (even Isaac!). Given the above criterion, I don't think we even thought it possible.
 5. The closest thing to a "head of the RDNA" would probably be David Fisher, since I think he's the highest ranked Patriarch. However, he's no longer practicing Druidism (at least officially he's not) and the opinion of any Patriarch is worth just as much as the opinion of

any member of RDNA. For us to have a "head" would be the tail wagging the dog!

6. "The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true." --James Branch Cabell

Chapter the Third

1. 28 Oct 2002 16:16:36 -0700
2.  Excommunication? Can't have that unless we first have communication!
3. As I noted to someone recently, the "founders" didn't give up sacrifices. We gave up virgin sacrifices (couldn't find anyone willing to lose theirs in public), but we sacrificed plant life.
4. Given the cannibalistic overtones of the Christian communion [there's that word again!] sacrifice of some sort seems to be integral to most religions, serious or otherwise, be it a literal shedding of blood or the sacrifice of self during Lent or Ramadan.
5. Meseems that the Reform can stretch far enough to encompass almost everything. I'd qualify that by saying that "everything" should be limited to what's legal, but I also remember that I once served the Waters of Life to the president of Carleton on a campus where possession of alcoholic beverages was an automatic 10-day suspension (and the pop machine in the dorm parlor sold lemon sour and club soda!), so we've been stretching the limits since the Founding.

Chapter the Fourth

1. Sun, 4 May 2003 18:38:16 -0600
2. I'm just back from the reunion at Carleton; I'll tell you more later, if anybody is interested.
3. During the weekend, I had an insight that I want to pass along: one of the things that has attracted people to RDNA over the years is that, when we put it together, we forgot to include something that is a major aspect in most other "religions" - guilt.
4. While the service begins with "forgive three sins" (some modern versions say "three errors"), there's none of the "I'm a miserable sinner and have to spend the rest of my life trying to atone" that's a major aspect in most of the other major faiths.
5. Ergo, Druids are free to enjoy all the aspects of Nature, and to revel in them, without having to worry about crossing some invisible line and winding up among the damned. We don't have a hell... nor a heaven.

6. We don't object to those faiths that do, and if an individual believes in them, that's his/her business. We won't criticize them, as long as they don't try to demand that we share their beliefs.
7. As I said, this came to me this weekend as a genuine insight, one I'd never thought about before. Just thought I'd pass it along to see what others think about the concept. Several people to whom I mentioned the concept over the weekend agreed that it was a good point.
8. Right now, though, it's still "firmly carved in Jello", so if you want to dissent, go ahead. On the other hand, I think it could be a real revelation about what RDNA has meant to so many people from so many backgrounds.

Chapter the Fourth

1. Sat, 11 Jan 2003 12:05:11 -0700
2. I'd bet that each of us has had similar feelings at one time or another; it's one of the things that has led us to seek answers in Druidism, in communication with and honoring of Nature.
3. I've been extremely fortunate in finding another person who feels about these things as I do (although I don't think she's ever considered Druidism).
4. She used to live here, and now lives in Delaware, but she tries to arrange her schedule so that she can spend a month every summer at my family's cabin in one of the most beautiful spots in the Black Hills. And, as she likes to say, she just sits on the porch and stores up memories to hold her for the rest of the year when she's not here.
5. I've often found myself seeing something special, from a dew-spangled spider web to a lone pine tree growing out of a solid wall of granite, and showing it to her or telling her about it.
6. We don't use any mystical language to try to describe these things; in fact, we often don't use any language at all but to nod in appreciation. With her, I know I've found a kindred soul to whom such explanations are unnecessary.
7. Keep going out into Nature. I second the suggestion to get linked with some sort of group (mine is Sierra Club) that takes like-minded people into Nature, perhaps you'll find such a friend there.
8. Sierra Club also has something they call "Inner City Outings": they take young people from the inner city out on camping trips, etc. Such a trip could give you an excellent chance to pass

along to others (it's easier with strangers) some of what you feel without worrying about being thought odd.

9. Most of all, keep seeking... spirituality is not something you find, it finds you. It has found many of us, in one form or another, and somewhere out there there's a person with whom you can have that silent understanding I feel you're seeking.

Chapter the Fifth

1. Sat, 18 Jan 2003 13:14:49 -0700
2. Here's a suggestion for "following your own path" in a contemplative way. An ancient (Celtic? it looks like it) tradition in Christianity is the Labyrinth, a pattern laid out on a cathedral floor or paths in a garden, etc. I've even seen one made with duct tape on a carpeted floor in a church "parish hall".
3. There's no reason you couldn't make one in your own living room or yard. It's NOT a maze, just a winding walk from outside to the center and back again.
4. The concept is that tracing the pattern allows you to center yourself, to think the necessary thoughts; it can be used for prayer, or meditation, or just relaxation. It can be very powerful to use.
5. (Also, it is customary not to acknowledge someone if you meet in one; they're there for their own reasons, and shouldn't be interrupted.) It's also something that would fit well into Druidism! Look into it, one and all.
6. [I haven't looked, but I'm sure that a search at Google, etc., would lead you to more information. I first encountered the idea from a young Episcopal priest who was heavily into Celtic spirituality; she laid out one at our church for a couple weeks.]

Chapter the Sixth

1. Sun, 19 Jan 2003 13:21:14 -0700
2. Ineffable is not secret, it's just impossible to describe.

Words can not communicate individual experiences, because there aren't the right words for that.

3. Make up one and give it a specific meaning, and you can use it to communicate, but the subtle nuances will never be there.
4. Perhaps this is why many groups use metaphor to discuss internal experiences. I remember a group that once spent two hours discussing "having the chair pulled away as you're sitting down" to describe various experiences in their

lives. Each had an ineffable experience, but all shared the common feeling(s), and true communication happened.

Chapter the Seventh

1. Tue, 21 Jan 2003 11:59:24 -0700
2. It will be interesting to see the interchange on this. I don't think I've ever sat down and tried to define it for myself; could be fun to try to work it out.
3. A good discussion group (or bull session) can force you to do that kind of thinking. You can't express [to others] what you've not found the words for.
4. Breathing is certainly part of it (if you don't breathe daily, you'll have a hard time worshipping), but worship is something more. Perhaps that sharp intake of breath when something really hits you, like the autumn tree. Interestingly, the Greek word translated as spirit in the Bible is pneuma, breath.
5. Falling down prostrate when struck by something special is optional, obviously. Getting a little weak in the knees is pretty common, at least for me. Awestruck is one word that comes to mind.
6. Finally, I'd note that worship is not just something done in your church, mosque, synagogue, or grove. If the pneuma is there, you're worshipping. If you're just tracking along through life without being aware, you're not.

Chapter the Eighth

1. Fri, 24 Jan 2003 11:48:49 -0700
2. From the very beginning, RDNA was *not* (yea, verily, *never*) intended to replace any other "religion", but merely to be a supplement recognizing the importance of Nature in the individual's life.
3. For some, it has become their sole belief, but many others find no conflict between Druidism and whatever else they practice.
4. I once said (literally giving the sermon from the pulpit on an Earth Day Sunday!) that until the 1979 revision of the Book of Common Prayer, when Episcopalians heard the word "stewardship" they knew it was Pledge Sunday. The new BCP has a dozen or so references to stewardship in the meaning of caring for the creation.
5. My favorite is from a section of additional prayers and thanksgivings in the back of the BCP. Thanksgiving #5 [For the Nation] is probably a good one (with appropriate changes)

to use for Druid meditations. {incidentally, I usually refer to it as "the zingers") In usual usage, the leader reads each paragraph, and everyone joins in the responses. It is not copyrighted, so if you want to use it, feel free.

6. For the Nation [p. 838]
7. Almighty God, giver of all good things: We thank you for the natural majesty and beauty of this land. They restore us, though we often destroy them.
8. Heal us.
9. We thank you for the great resources of this nation. They make us rich, though we often exploit them.
10. Forgive us.
11. We thank you for the men and women who have made this country strong. They are models for us, though we often fall short of them.
12. Inspire us.
13. We thank you for the torch of liberty which has been lit in this land. It has drawn people from every nation, though we have often hidden from its light.
14. Enlighten us.
15. We thank you for the faith we have inherited in all its rich variety. It sustains our life, though we have been faithless again and again.
16. Renew us.
17. Help us, O Lord, to finish the good work here begun. Strengthen our efforts to blot out ignorance and prejudice, and to abolish poverty and crime. And hasten the day when all our people, with many voices in one united chorus, will glorify your holy Name.
18. Amen.

Chapter the Ninth

1. Wed, 29 Jan 2003 11:17:31 -0700
2. But I heard just last weekend that they're ice-fishing on Lake Wobegon... Did you hear about the [fill in your own favorite ethnicity] who went ice-fishing?
3. Caught two 25-pound blocks and a sack of cubes!
4. Wed, 12 Mar 2003 15:07:53 -0700
5. This Explains Everything!
6. In preparation for the Earth Summit, the UN conducted a world-wide survey. The only question on the survey was: "Please give your honest opinion about solutions to the food shortage in the rest of the world."

7. The survey was a complete failure. The Chinese didn't know what "opinion" meant; the Middle East didn't know what "solutions" meant; the East Europeans didn't know what honest" meant; the West Europeans didn't know what "shortage" meant; the Africans didn't know what "food" meant; the South Americans didn't know what "please" meant; and the USA didn't know what "the rest of the world" meant.

Chapter the Tenth

1. Mon, 3 Feb 2003 10:48:36 -0700
2. I don't think it's a benefit to ANY religion to make it compulsory that one must attend the services.
3. If you're getting something from it, you'll go to services or practice the rituals or meditate on your navel or whatever. If you're only there because somebody made you go, you're going to become restless and rebellious - dispirited in several senses of the word.
4. I would guess that exactly that happens to a majority of teens, for a shorter or longer period of time. I'll further guess that many in this discussion quit going to "church" for exactly that reason.
5. In other words, if you want someone to NOT practice a religion, make them do it.
6. RDNA was not started to protest religion; it wouldn't still be here if it was. It was started to protest making people practice religion. As I've noted before, at Carleton even the atheists had to meet to get chapel credit!
7. Carleton was founded by the Congregationalists, and the requirement was a left-over from the 1870s, when the population was much more homogeneous.
8. To end on a lighter note: I once was in a town where the Congregationalists and Baptists had combined; everybody called it "the Congo-Baptist Church", which always gave me some really great mental pictures.

Chapter the Eleventh

1. 5 Feb 2003 12:34:35 -0700
2. Phrased that way because we wanted everyone to be able to participate. Most religions are either/or -- you're a Christian or a Jew or a Buddhist or a Muslim or whatever, and can't be true to any combination thereof; you've got to pick one.
3. In that Tenet, RDNA very carefully described itself as a "supplementary" religion -- it was not necessary to give up any other beliefs to

participate. We were consciously trying to be non-threatening to any other belief system.

4. And when I read that last sentence, I realize again that we expected RDNA to be ephemeral, and not to continue after its purpose was completed.
5. Please don't try to make RDNA one of those either/or types. You can believe almost anything and still get the benefits of contemplating the lessons of Nature, the Earth-Mother.

Chapter the Twelfth

1. Thu, 13 Feb 2003 11:00:11 -0700
2. Rather than respond to several postings individually, here's a sort of all-encompassing string of answers. You are cordially invited to thank me for not filling up your mailboxes with 4 or 5 postings!
3. If you'll check, you'll find that in the early 1960s the Christian fundamentalists were a very small minority, not the behemoth they've become today.
4. I very much doubt that any of them ever saw the Chronicles. They wouldn't read anything that smacked of paganism, anyway. [And remember: the Religious Right is neither!]
5. As for the "style" of the early Chronicles, bear in mind that they were written ONLY for the few of us who were at Carleton at the time; since most of us were also practicing Christians, the parody of the Biblical style only added to the fun.
6. Frangquist may dispute this, but I don't think they were meant to be enduring. I certainly never thought so. They were just a little "in joke" for us, because we could read between the lines and know what was actually being referred to.
7. For example, the "altar which was small and portable" was a wire phonograph stand from somebody's dorm room, draped with a sheet.
8. I don't think anyone outside our little group ever saw them when they were first written, so it was not necessary to write in a style intended to be "taken seriously".
9. Only when it became obvious that RDNA would continue to have real meaning for some did they become our "scriptures", subject to all sorts of interpretations. The theologians among us still enjoy that game.
10. I don't think that at the "founding" any of us thought that RDNA would have any life after we beat the religion requirement. Remember

that it took more than a year to accomplish that goal. We held services in the spring of '63, fall of '63, and spring of '64.

11. By that time, all of us began to realize that we'd hit some sort of a chord that had real meaning to some folks; this is when the exploration of antecedents and meditations, etc., became more than a joke.
12. I'd say that it was also the time when the Chronicles evolved from the parody to serious thinking about our relationship to the world. I believe that it was also at this time that we began to realize that RDNA might continue to exist.
13. When you are reading the meditations, etc., which were recorded for use at services and as individual exercises, you're looking at RDNA after some people began to take it seriously.
14. Dr. John Messenger, who became our "faculty advisor", contributed some of the Celtic poetry which made it into the book. It became part of the service to read some meditation (including much not in the Chronicles--I sometimes used appropriate portions of the Psalms when I was A-D) aloud, and have a period of silence for people to think about it.
15. We didn't have a "sermon", with some leader telling us what to think, but each person was free to make his/her own interpretation (or just twiddle thumbs during the silence).
16. In the initial stages, only a Third Order could consecrate the Waters. (Actually, he/she didn't *do* it, just verified that they had been consecrated by the Mother.)
17. Everyone who partook of the Waters was considered a First Order, so there were lots of people who only attended one service but (usually without their explicit knowledge) became First Order Druids, including the Nasons.
18. As I recall, subscription to the Tenets was only necessary for Second and Third Orders. Again, note that the Tenets were written to be supplementary to other faiths, not exclusionary. [And remember that the Tenets weren't written until after the first few services.]
19. I hereby add the disclaimer that the above are my own opinions and memories. Others may have differing viewpoints. After all, it was 40 years ago!
20. I still think that the RDNA we know today was a process of evolution from joke to serious Weltanschauung. What's important is not what

it was meant to be, but what it means to each of us today. If it still has validity, it lies in that.

Chapter the Thirteenth

1. 5 May 2003 11:03:44 -0600
2. The vigil, I'd say, can be any of these, although I think your "chapel in the woods" is closest to the intention, unless you have a nearby Bo Tree where you can find enlightenment. You need to spend the night thinking about Nature and your place in it. (This would presumably rule out a snipe hunt.)
3. A few hours of personal meditation and contemplation. A few hours of finding out WHO you really are. A few hours of finding out who the other people in your life are. A few hours of finding out WHY you are. A few hours of finding out WHAT you're here on earth to do.
4. Do a little digging and find out about the vigils of young men about to be knighted. There are some obvious similarities in intention, if not in rituals.
5. An unexpected side effect of being a Third Order is that, in the eyes of others, you become oracular. You're expected to know "the answers" to life's questions (and "42" doesn't count!).
6. You've got to find the answers inside yourself, for yourself. This will NOT equip you to counsel others with "the" answers, since the answers you find will be personal, but it'll give you some insight into how to help others find their own answers.

Chapter the Fourteenth

1. May 25, 2003 3:11 PM
2. It is a curious phenomenon by which, when you learn something new or get into a good discussion about something, it starts popping up all over the place. I remember once learning a fancy new word in 4th grade, and there it was in the funny paper that night!
3. I suspect that the "something" has been there all along, but you're newly sensitized to it, so it jumps out where previously you wouldn't have noticed it. I think we've all experienced it, though. Which brings me to:
4. As we were having our discussion on morality, I was reading a science fiction book, *The Parafaith War*, by L. E. Modesitt. In it, I found the following, supposedly taken from the sacred text of one of his future societies. It seems worth passing along.

5. "...As cultures advance in knowledge and power, the conflict between reason and faith becomes apparently greater. Not only have people attained through technology the powers of old gods to cast thunderbolts or to heal or to destroy, but they have exercised those powers, and they know that divinity is not required. They can determine that sufficient power determines destiny.
6. "The problem with technology is that it rewards the able while also empowering those who are less able. A man who cannot fathom a computer or an infonet can destroy those who can, and who have been rewarded for their skills.
7. "Yet, if each individual obtains and wields the power within his or her scope, few individuals will survive. By placing power in a greater being, a deity, in some force greater than the individual, or even into a belief that the community is greater than the individual, an individual is expressing a faith in the need for an entity greater than mere personal ambition or appetite. That faith ... allows the individual to refrain from exercising power, yet it also places such an individual at the mercy of those without such faith.
8. "While it can be and has been argued that all people are created equal, genetics and environmental analyses have verified that such equality ceases at birth, perhaps even earlier.
9. "With unequal power and unequal ability the lot of humanity, religion has sought to establish a common ground by subsuming all to a mightier god, yet reason and technology have conspired to communicate that no such god exists -or that such a god does not interfere- and that some form of might makes right. And no god has, in recent historical times, destroyed the side with the bigger battalions and mightier technology.
10. "So ... how can a rational individual confront the problem of power? In the same way that all the faithful have throughout history - any sharing a set of ideals and a spirit of community more highly valued than individual application of power....
11. "One of the cries of the true believer is that there are moral absolutes that can only be set forth by a deity. Yet if life is sacred, as many deities have proclaimed, how can a deity command people to kill in his name, as most deities have done? How can we even exist, since we must consume, in the natural state, some other organism, and that means killing? Likewise, if life is not sacred, then the

injunction to be fruitful and multiply is a military command, not a deistic one...."

Chapter the Fifteenth

1. June 19, 2003 1:22 PM
2. Everybody has/had two parents. Each of them, two likewise. Run this logic
3. back a few generations, and the number of ancestors of each of us is greater than the population of the whole earth at that time. Ergo, we're all related, in one sense.
4. The path that is right for you is not necessarily the path of your people", even if you know who they were. It's probably not even the path of your own parents. It's your path, and it's probably pretty eclectic.
5. I've maintained for years that much of the famous "adolescent rebellion" we all went through (and some of you are now seeing from the other side!) is a process of questioning the beliefs (not just religious, but almost everything) that have been handed down to you; from the whole buffet available, you eventually pick your own, personal, set of beliefs, and when you've internalized them, they're your own beliefs.
6. (Most of the time, for most people, they wind up being very close to the parental version, but by being tested, they've become internalized, instead of imposed.)
7. Accretions to your own personal beliefs can come from anywhere, and usually do. This one reason some people find Mike's books of meditations so fascinating. Just pick out the parts that fit!
8. I doubt that you could find two pastors in the same Christian denomination who share identical personal beliefs. Then throw in all the other denominations that call themselves Christian, and consider the number of individual paths involved! Yet they're all aimed at the same end. [Or do the Catholics believe all roads lead to Rome?]

Chapter the Sixteenth

1. Wednesday, July 2, 2003 1:01 PM
2. Some time in the late 70s or early 80s, I was up at the local mall and met a guy in a Carleton sweatshirt; I ask if he went there, and he said "Yes". I told him I was Class of '64, and he said, "Wow! We really admire your class, because you were radical before it was fashionable!"

3. The founding of RDNA was only a small part of what was going on there at the time... lots of other revolts against the Administration and the archaic "in loco parentis" rules (of which the religious attendance requirement was a part). Women's hours were enforced at almost every college in the country at the time; remember, we were only a couple years away from the 50s!
4. >Of course the whole chronicles are a biblical allusion in language, esp. book 5 which is something like the druids "sermon of the mountain".
5. The earliest part of the Chronicles was a deliberate parody of the Bible; it was part of the in-joke we were playing. I've long believed, and finally confirmed from Frangquist's own lips at the Beltane reunion, that as a couple years pass, in the later Chronicles you can literally watch RDNA change from a protest joke to being quite a serious philosophical system.
6. The idea of a personal search for "truth", for meaning in life, indeed for meaning beyond one's own life, is (to me) the best explanation for the continuation of the RDNA.
7. For many people, even those such as me who continued to belong to "traditional" religions, that mind-set of seeking for meaning continues to hold a powerful sway.
8. I took a 4-year seminar through an Episcopal seminary to learn about the history and theology of the church, and it was incredibly meaningful to me.
9. If you don't think questioning the articles of your faith is a widespread phenomenon, ask any priest or pastor or rabbi or imam about their own spiritual path.
10. They've all had the questions; they've found the answers that they sought in their faith, whatever faith it is. As has been pointed out many times before, you cannot find faith by logic; you have to work it out for yourself.
11. Our "mission statement" (if you will) remains "Look around you at the world. There's got to be something bigger than we are." RDNA honors that concept by praise of the Earth-Mother.
12. RDNA may have started rather haphazardly, but at the same time it was carefully crafted to supplement, not supplant, any other faith.
13. For some, it became their sole practice, and that direction has attracted many other people to those Groves or as solitaries. For most of those who were there in the early days, RDNA

remains an adjunct to their way of finding their own view of their faith.

14. Given the origin, RDNA really has little control over who calls him/herself a Druid! By announcing to the world (or just to yourself) that you are a Druid, you become one!
15. Originally, we considered anyone who attended a service and partook of the Waters to be a First Order Druid automatically. Today, apparently, to become a First Order requires a ritual of commitment of some sort in many Groves.
16. At the same time, I'll bet that some of you in this class consider yourselves Druids without ever having attended a service. No problem, at least in my mind.
17. Well, this has turned into more of a sermon than I intended. Take it all with a grain (or a block!) of salt.

Chapter the Eighteenth

1. Wednesday, July 9, 2003 12:00 PM
2. I'm reminded of two or three things by this discussion. The Jews, working from some obscure Bible passage (in Revelation?) have as an article of their faith that only 144,000 souls will be saved at the end of the world. When I find them at my door, I ask them to verify this, and then ask how many members their sect has (it's above that number). They usually go away, then.
3. Back in the days when Mormon missionaries were easily recognizable (18-year-old boys wearing suits and hats, with nametags saying "Elder So-&-so"), my dad was sitting on the front porch when a pair of them approached, and politely asked if Dad would be interested in learning about their church. Dad, equally politely, replied that he wasn't interested, because he "belonged to a church that was in the apostolic succession".
4. They then made the fatal mistake of asking, "What's that?" For the next 30 minutes, my dad gave them a lecture on the history of the formation of the Christian church, the apostles having laid their hands on the bishops to pass along their "powers", the bishops ordaining the priests, etc., etc. The poor Mormons were too polite to interrupt him! They, too, went away as soon as they politely could.
5. I've also found that you can get rid of most door-to-door missionaries by telling them either that you're a Druid or that you're a Roman Catholic. They're afraid of the former, and know that it's hopeless to try to convert the latter!

6. And, of course, there's the option that's been discussed here: politely invite them in, start to undress, and ask them to assume the missionary position!!! [If that doesn't work, at least you'll have some fun!]

Chapter the Nineteenth

1. Sat Jul 26, 2003 11:56am
2. Some important points here. Every faith has something to contribute to the personal growth of one who reads their writings. Western civilization tends to be Bibliocentric, but that's unavoidable, given European history.
3. I once saw a very neat (and very hard) quiz which presented short quotations; all you had to do was decide if each came from Shakespeare or from the Bible. I consider myself well educated and well read, but I only got about half of them!
4. I strongly urge each and all of you to start your own "Green Book" - there's an old word for it, "chapbook"; a collection of quotations, etc., that have particular meaning to you at the time you collect them.
5. Your book will evolve, of course, as you do; today's incredibly apt words may be meaningless next year, but if you've gotten a year's worth of value from them, you're ahead!
6. The collections in the Reformed Druid tradition are items that have, at some time, appealed to somebody, and been deemed worthy of being passed along. Bear in mind that you were not the compiler(s), so some of them will have no relevance to you. Others will strike just exactly the right chord for where you are in life right now. And you'll add your own gems to your collection.
8. Some traditions are shared by RDNA and others. In fact, it's possible that our practice had its origin in a practice with which I was familiar before the founding.
9. Our family has a cabin up in the Black Hills, along with several other cabins, all owned by Episcopalians, and there's a little chapel there where they've had services every summer since the early 1920s. It's beautiful, with a window over the altar looking out at the Hills and with only waist-high walls and a roof where the congregation sits. [If a priest is not available, I'm licensed to read Morning Prayer, but so far this year I've not had to do it.]
10. Long ago, the then bishop decided that any priest who was staying there was on vacation: if he took the service, he shouldn't be asked to

prepare a sermon, which was too much like work.

11. Consequently, the tradition for many years has been that after the readings from Scripture, where the sermon would normally be, we just say "be silent and look around you for a few moments".
12. Readings and meditation! In fact, I've been told by some who've attended there that they've never heard a better and more meaningful sermon!

The Third Epistles of Norman

(By Norman Nelson, 2003)

(New to ARDA 2)

Chapter the First

The Forty-Year Long Protest March

Summer Solstice 2003, A Druid Missal-Any

1. Imagine yourself and a couple friends organizing a protest march to correct what seems to be an injustice.
2. A year later, the injustice is irrevocably ended. Forty years later, the march continues! What happened?
3. Since I find myself in exactly that situation, I was asked, "What do you think about the continuation of Druidism?"
4. These comments are mine only, but from conversations with some of the other founders, I believe they represent a consensus of opinion.

Chapter the Second

1. First, some forty-year-old history:
2. Back in the long-ago days of the early 1960s, several students at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, decided that the college's religious attendance requirement was actually doing a disservice to religion by forcing people to attend.
3. (A graduation requirement, it said that, seven weeks out of each ten week term, students must attend a religious service of some sort.)
4. Most of us were religious, but we felt that forced religion turns people away from faith, rather than attracting them.

5. Most students at Carleton attended the weekly Congregational services at the college chapel, conducted by the chaplain.
6. Some attended the downtown churches of their own denomination, and then filled out "chapel slips" to be handed in to the deans for credit.
7. For those who belonged to churches or religions not represented in town (such as Jews), there were official campus organizations which gave them credit for attending their meetings.
8. The situation had actually become so ridiculous that even the atheists had a campus group which met for chapel credit!

Chapter the Third

1. To organize a protest against the requirement, we decided to start our own "religion" and apply for chapel credit. If we got it, we would show how ridiculous the requirement was; if we didn't, we would protest and accuse the administration of hypocrisy, since we were attending religious services.
2. In the early spring of 1963, the Reformed Druids of North America was formed; we even drew up a constitution for ourselves as a campus organization. The official date of the founding was Beltane, 1963.
3. We were very careful to structure our "religion" so that it didn't require giving up any other faith; we didn't want to antagonize any one. (I've always called Druidism supplementary, not designed to supplant any other belief.)
4. After six or seven weeks of Saturday afternoon services, at the end of the school year in mid-June, several men and two or three women submitted chapel slips for the last Druid service of the school year.
5. We were careful also to go for our "regular" chapel credit, just in case. (The Druids met on Saturday so as not to conflict with any Sunday services people wanted to attend.)
6. The slips for the women were accepted by the Dean of Women's office, while the Dean of Men's office rejected credit for the men.
7. After the rejection, one of the founders went to the Dean of Men's office and asked why we had been turned down. He took along a list of "strange" religious groups from the Minneapolis phone book, and asked "Would this be acceptable? Would this? Would this?"
8. Finally, with all his other reasons exhausted, the Dean said that we couldn't receive the credit because we weren't "an officially recognized

campus organization;" we didn't have a faculty advisor.

9. The next fall, the speaker at one of the first (also mandatory) weekly all-student convocations was a new professor, who spoke about his anthropological work in the Aran Isles, where Druid practices still continued under a thin veneer of Roman Catholicism. Before he left the room that night, RDNA had a faculty advisor! We knew we had outfoxed the Dean!
10. That fall, we received chapel credit for our services, and again when we started at Beltane for the spring. We felt that we had definitely won our protest.
11. It gets even better: the day I graduated in 1964, the college Board of Trustees met and abolished the religious attendance requirement.
12. I learned recently that one of those who most favored the repeal was the Episcopal bishop of Minnesota, who also argued as we had that the requirement was a disservice to religion. I've also heard that the college chaplain supported it, and that subsequently, enrollment in religion classes increased dramatically.
13. So, in June of 1964, there was suddenly no more need for protest, and therefore no more need for the Druids. Our victory was total, and most of the founders fully expected our organization to disappear very quickly.

Chapter the Fourth

1. However, for some participants, RDNA had begun to take on a meaning of its own. (We joked that, for the students who couldn't stomach organized religion, our disorganized one was perfect!)
2. In reality, through their meditations and study of their role in nature, they had begun to find a personal, meaningful realization we had never intended to impart.
3. RDNA met their requirements for a faith that explained their lives. For them, it was no longer a joke.
4. You can see this happening with David Frangquist, the author of "The Chronicles," as his writing changes from a parody of the Bible in the first chapters to a serious examination of what it meant to be a Druid.
5. Now, forty years later, here we are. Not only is Druidism still here, it's thriving! RDNA continues in its original form for some, but numerous "offshoots" have also arisen, attracting different sorts of people to their

different emphases. While I've not looked into them, I salute them for answering the religious needs of their participants.

6. Personally, I still believe that RDNA is a supplement to other faiths, as I think do the other founders. But I must respect those for whom it has become their exclusive faith. Given our origin, I'm a little bemused by that, but I think I can understand it.
7. And, more importantly, I think that Druidism, in its various manifestations, should and will continue.
8. Even if it eventually becomes meaningful only to one person, it still deserves recognition for that. I guess we wrought far better than we thought we did when we started our little "protest march."

Chapter the Fifth

1. 10 Aug 2003 21:12:13 -0600
2. IMHO, an AD doesn't "head" a Grove... s/he is the person appointed/elected to conduct the services, not to speak on behalf of or to determine the thinking of the Grove's members.
3. The reason we've had a "meditation" instead of a sermon is that the AD doesn't tell the members what to think or believe, s/he just suggests ways for each member to make up his/her own mind.
4. Since the demise of the Council of Dalon ap Landu (due to the individuality of its members, who couldn't/didn't bother to reply to questions put to the Council), there has been no governing body of RDNA.
5. Ergo, each person who calls him/herself a Druid is one. There is no higher authority to determine orthodoxy or to declare excommunication.
6. This may be embarrassing to us old-timers, but it's a fact of life, and we've learned to live with it. We may fervently disagree with what a particular group is doing, but there's no way we can stop them from doing it.
7. From the beginning, RDNA has prided itself on being a "disorganized" religion; neither then or now is it time to start imposing criteria for what makes one a Druid.

Chapter the Sixth

1. Wed Aug 13, 2003 1:50pm
2. Isn't the term "orthodox Druid" a bit of an oxymoron? How can any group or "religion" which can be joined by saying "I'm a Druid" have an orthodoxy?

3. RDNA has been eclectic since its founding (believe me, I was there!) and remains so to this day. There may be some people calling themselves Druids whose practices are peculiar to me, but it has never been my job to determine what Druidism is (at least in its RDNA version(s)).
4. I suspect that to the Druid groups in Europe which are not part of "our" Druidism, we're as bogus as you can get! And it's highly unlikely to me that they, any more than we, are practicing the "true" Druidism of 2,000 years ago.
5. Originally, you became a Druid by partaking of the waters. Period. Belief that "Nature is good" quickly cropped up as an additional criterion. Remember, these were people whose "robes" were bed sheets and whose first altar was a small metal phonograph stand from someone's dorm room!
6. Most importantly, if we were to succeed in our purpose of ending the "religious attendance" requirement at Carleton, we couldn't do anything that would give the authorities an excuse to shut us down.
7. All the founders were Christian and Jewish, and we didn't want (and couldn't afford) to offend anyone. I've always maintained that RDNA was conceived as supplementary and/or complementary to "organized religion", not as a replacement for it.
8. The only reason that I can find for the continuation of RDNA 39 years after it became unnecessary is that for some people it is a means of the search for "truth" (yea, one way among many). For some it has become their exclusive "faith"; for others, be they Wiccan or other pagan or Christian, it remains a supplement.
9. For me as an Episcopalian, it gives new emphasis to the many places in the Book of Common Prayer where we are exhorted to take care of creation as a way of honoring the Creator.
4. Sorry if this makes a hardship for solitaries, but it's in the original Constitution, etc., and I can't change it unilaterally. [I'd be glad to send you some Waters, if you need them! You'll have to do your own ceremony, though.]
5. Likewise, anyone who is associated with RDNA can call her/himself a member of RDNA, or "a Druid" for short.
6. BUT, and this is the important thing, nobody (repeat, NOBODY), not me nor any other founder nor you nor any "offshoot" or Grove or individual member, can claim to *speak for* RDNA.
7. You can proclaim your own beliefs from the rooftops, or go door to door proselytizing, or whatever turns you on, but by the very nature of RDNA, you can't say "this is what RDNA thinks" or "this is what RDNA believes".
8. We don't have a pope, a moderator, a Sanhedrin, a senate, a General Assembly, or whatever you want to call the central authority.
9. The Council of Dalon ap Landu, which consisted of all ordained 3rd orders, was to be such an authority, but in the days before e-mail, it was impossible to get a quorum to make any decisions after the first couple years (and would probably have been so even with easier communication), and the CoDaL died a quiet death. I don't think it would be possible (or sensible) to try to reconstitute it.
10. If we're to continue as a "disorganized" religion, which I think is one of our great strengths, we should not have any such central, final, (and probably arbitrary) authority.
11. One of the serious problems in which any group, secular or religious, can find itself is to have such an authority, which must inevitably lead to that authority wanting to perpetuate itself.
12. This is what leads to schisms in religions, and to anarchy in civil organizations. RDNA does not want or need such an authority. "My way or the highway" is not a Druid attitude!
13. That little tirade doesn't really answer your question, so: First, bear in mind that the "original intent of the founders" was very specific - to get rid of a graduation requirement at Carleton College.
14. After that was accomplished, most of us never expected RDNA to continue. I've gone into my thinking on why it's still around elsewhere, and won't take the time or space here to repeat it.
15. To the extent that any group, splinter or symbiotic, carries on the "purpose" of RDNA -

Chapter the Seventh

1. 15 Aug 2003 11:08:55 -0600
2. I've been trying to distance myself from the OMS debate going on in RDNAtalk, but I do have a comment or two which may be relevant.
3. To my way of thinking, anyone who wants to call him/herself a Druid is one. To be a Reformed Druid, part of the RDNA, I'd add that one must partake of the Waters consecrated by an Archdruid in the RDNA.
4. After that was accomplished, most of us never expected RDNA to continue. I've gone into my thinking on why it's still around elsewhere, and won't take the time or space here to repeat it.
5. To the extent that any group, splinter or symbiotic, carries on the "purpose" of RDNA -

the search for [personal] truth with the assistance of Nature - that group is good because it carries on the purpose of RDNA for its members.

16. Someone noted someplace that any time you have two Druids in a room, you have at least three different opinions.
17. There is one thing we all agree upon, however, and that each Druid's search for "the truth" must be a personal search. We've never been a group which tries to impose "The Truth" on anyone. I don't think we've ever capitalized the word "truth".
18. To the extent that any group has found *the* truth, and begins to try to make others think exactly their way, they are doing a serious disservice to RDNA.
19. Indeed, I'd go so far as to say that they have left RDNA by their own choosing, because that's inherently not the way RDNA does things.
20. I believe it was the wonderfully cynical Mark Twain who said, "Mankind is the only animal that has ever found the True Religion. Thousands of them!"

Chapter the Eighth

1. 15 Aug 2003 13:37:15 -0600
2. There are plenty of Archdruids. Every Grove has to have one. Each AD is, automatically, autonomous. Add in the "retired" ADs, and you're into the hundreds of people. But, and this is important, there is not, never has been, and organizationally can't be an "Arch-Archdruid", one supreme head of the RDNA.
3. When the "higher Orders" were conceived, it was never intended to make them leaders of the organization; rather, they were "honorary" higher levels for the ego of the participants. [Note that we made Fisher the Patriarch of the 4th Order, thereby limiting him from being patriarch of even higher orders.]
4. In a way, it's similar to Masonry: every Mason receives the first three degrees. There are additional degrees (two sets of them, in fact), but they are both adamant that there is no "higher degree" than Master Mason, the third degree.
5. There is no-one qualified to accept or reject any person or any group as part of RDNA.

6. If Mike chose to accept OMS stuff for ARDA2, that's his decision as an archivist. If ARDA is to represent the whole spectrum of the original RDNA and its subsequent manifestations (as I think should be its purpose), it needs to be all-inclusive.
7. Putting something in ARDA is not giving it the imprimatur of RDNA, since that's not the function of ARDA. There's a lot of stuff in there that's not "official".
8. ARDA is not an official RDNA publication, it's Mike's contribution to the RDNA. RDNA has no control over it (and vice versa).

Chapter the Ninth

1. 20 Aug 2003 11:46:34 -0600
2. Security Council of the United Druids? SCUD? Why not? Then any correspondence between the members would be guided missives?
3. Actually, deep in my heart, I don't like the idea of any body able to make decisions for me on what my version of RDNA is or will be or should be.
4. The original (now, if not dead, somewhere beyond moribund) CoDaL was a good idea at the time; there were only a dozen or so members, and many of them knew each other personally.
5. They all had a shared background. They could, therefore, be said to be the "collective thought" of RDNA at that time. As the number of Thirds grew, and as the Reform moved beyond Carleton, the Council became impractical, logistically.
6. There were members who had no connection with the original grove, and there were members nobody even knew about.
7. In the era of snail mail communication only, it was impossible to contact every member, let alone to force them to respond to anything they did receive.
8. How do you establish a quorum for a body so nebulous you don't even know who's in it?



Dr. Druid

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions with answers from Dr. Druid.

Submit your questions to:
Doc.Druid (at) Gmail (dot) com.

Due to family concerns, there will be no article this season.

Please keep sending the questions and controversies to him.

Druid Media

2 Classic Space Botanical Robot Dramas



Silent Running, 1971

A wondrous movie about a botanist aboard a space botanical vessel in a fleet of spaceships carrying the last plants from an earth now hostile to plant life. His companions on the vessel are rather indifferent to the survival of plants as artificial nutrition has replaced plant-based food. Freeman Lowell however is a softie for tradition and tenderly takes care of the several large bio-domes with the help of simple robots. When the orders are received to abort the mission, destroy the domes and return to Earth, he rebels and has to come up with a plan to save the plants without the help of the other crew men.

This has to be one of the more interesting psychodramas, not unlike 2001 of close-quarter social dysfunction and it is quite melancholy. It was an influential movie for the second of the two movies ; Wall-E, whose director borrowed several concepts for the 2005 film. The

British TV series Red Dwarf also built on the idea of long-space journey problems amongst its crew.



Wall-E (2008)

I liked this movie, because of the “earth-destroyed-and abandoned” motif and the only one who cares are the robots left behind. The following is a brief summary from www.imdb.com

In a distant, but not so unrealistic future, where mankind has abandoned earth because it has become covered with trash from products sold by the powerful multi-national Buy N Large corporation, WALL-E, a garbage collecting robot has been left to clean up the mess. Mesmerized with trinkets of earth's history and show tunes, WALL-E is alone on Earth except for a sprightly pet cockroach. One day, Eve, a sleek (and dangerous) reconnaissance robot, is sent to earth to find proof that life is once again sustainable. WALL-E falls in love with Eve. WALL-E rescues Eve from a dust storm and shows her a

living plant he found amongst the rubble. Consistent with her "directive" Eve takes the plant and automatically enters a deactivated state except for a blinking green beacon. WALL-E, doesn't understand what has happened to his new friend, but true to his love, he protects her from wind, rain, and lightening, even as she is unresponsive. One day a massive ship comes to reclaim Eve, but WALL-E, out of love or loneliness hitches a ride on the outside of the ship to rescue Eve. The ship arrives back at a large space cruise ship, which is carrying all of the humans who evacuated earth 700 years earlier. The people of earth ride around this space resort on hovering chairs which give them a constant feed of TV and video chatting. They drink all of their meals through a straw out of laziness and/or bone loss, and are all so fat that they can barely move. When the auto-pilot computer, acting on hastily given instructions sent many centuries before, tries to prevent the people of earth from returning, by stealing the plant, WALL-E, Eve, the portly captain, and a band of broken robots stage a mutiny. *Written by [Anonymous](#)*

Similar Movies to Watch:

[2001: A Space Odyssey](#) (1968, *Stanley Kubrick*)
[Glen and Randa](#) (1971, *Jim McBride*)
[The Omega Man](#) (1971, *Boris Sagal*)
[Outland](#) (1981, *Peter Hyams*)
[Solaris](#) (1972, *Andrei Tarkovsky*)
[Soylent Green](#) (1973, *Richard Fleischer*)
[Zero Population Growth](#) (1972, *Michael I. Campus*)
[Code 46](#) (2003, *Michael Winterbottom*)
[Saturn 3](#) (1980, *Stanley Donen*)
[Sunshine](#) (2007, *Danny Boyle*)

• Book Review



9 More Pages of Really Old Celtic Book Reviews, Part Two.

By Daniel Hansen of Washington State

ANCIENT CELTIC BOOKS

ANNALS OF THE FOUR MASTERS. The usual English titles for *Annala Rioghachta Eireann* [Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland], a chronicle history of Ireland compiled in 1632-6. Purporting to begin “forty days after the Flood”, in the year of the world 2242, the annals are often only a record of names, dates, and battles, many of them fabulous, with occasional quotations from ancient sources; but they become more of a modern literary history as the timetable approaches the present. The Annals contrast with the narrative history of Geoffrey Keatings, compiled about the same time. The principle ‘master’ of the annals was the Franciscan lay brother Micheal O’ Cleirigh (1575-1643), a native of County Donegal. The identity of the other three ‘masters’ is somewhat cloudy, as the introduction cites a total of six compilers, most of them Franciscans. Sean Mac Colgain in Louvain made the designation “Four Masters” ex post facto about 1645. The industrious O’ Cleirigh, who is often cited as the ‘master’ of the Annals, also compiled a version of the *Lebor Gabala* [Book of Invasions].

ANNALS OF TIGERNACH. This is the oldest surviving native Irish historical record that was purportedly compiled by Abbot Tigernach (d. 1088) at Clonmacnoise on the Shannon. Fragments of the

manuscript are included in Rawlinson at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Although T.F. Rahilly (1946) and Paul Walsh (1947) have disputed the naming of the Annals of Tigernach, but that name has persisted since Whitley Stokes used it in his translation, 1895-7.

AURAICEPT NA NECES. The *Auraicept na nEces* [Irish, the scholar's primer] is a treatise on the origin and classification of the Irish language, used in bardic schools in pre-Norman Ireland. Among the subjects discussed are the origin and order of Latin and Irish alphabets, including Ogham, grammatical gender, verb forms, and elements of rhyme. Sometimes attributed to the 7th century warrior and poet Cenn Faelad. The standard modern edition is by George Calder (Edinburgh, 1917).

BLACK BOOK OF CARMARTHEN. In Welsh it is *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin*. It is the earliest complete manuscript of Welsh poetry, transcribed c. 1250, and housed now in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. The collection includes a large number of poems datable from the 9th century to the end of the 12th century. Many of the poems sing the praises of heroes, including Gwyn ap Nudd. A considerable number of poems are in the voice of Myrddin. Carmarthen or Caerfyrddin is a former county (until 1974) in south Wales, now it is a part of Dyfed. The Book is called 'black' because of its cover, not because it is a polemic or indictment.

BOOK OF ANEIRIN. The Welsh title is *Llyfr Aneirin*. Transcribed in the middle of the 13th century and now kept in the South Glamorgan County Library; about 80% of the orthography is from the 13th century, while about 20% dates from the 9th and 10th centuries. The manuscript includes the famous poem Gododdin with the superscription, "this is the Gododdin, Aneirin sang it". This is to be distinguished from Canu Aneirin [the Poetical Works of Aneirin]. It was named after Aneirin [Welsh form of Honorius; or Welsh *an-*, very; *eur*, gold; *-in*, diminutive] who was a Welsh bard thought to have lived c. 600 CE in the 'old north', former Welsh-speaking territory of Scotland. He is sometimes called the 'British Homer', or 'Aneirin of the flowering muse'. The Welsh triads refer to him as 'Aneirin of flowing verse, prince of poets'. Aneirin and Taliesin and three others whose work did not survive are *cynfeirdd* [old poets]. His compositions are contained in the 13th century Canu Aneirin. He is best known for his works in the lengthy Gododdin, an elegy for Welsh chieftains who fell in the battle of Catraeth at the hands of the Saxons. He occasionally carries the patronymic ap Caw; a Cornish variant of his name is Annear.

BOOK OF ARMAGH. The Latin name for the Book of Armagh is *Liber Ardmachanus* and in Irish as *Canoin Patraicc*. It is a copy of the New Testament with 215 (originally 222) vellum leaves, 195 by 145 mm. It includes material in both Latin and Gaelic was begun about 807 CE by Feardomnach (Ferdornach) (Died 846 CE) and two assistants in Armagh, the seat of the primate of Ireland in what is now Northern Ireland. It was done at the request of Torbach, abbot of Armagh, 807-8. Its small size suggests it was originally intended for the abbot's personal use, but in the course of time it came to be regarded as one of the insignia of the coarb of St. Patrick. As such it was used to record the offerings made to Armagh by Brian Boruma in 1002. The passages in Irish are among the earliest we have. What has given this biblical manuscript its special interest for historians is that it contains at the front a collection of 7th century texts about St. Patrick by Muirchu (transmitted in two other manuscripts) and Tirechan (not transmitted elsewhere), and at the back a copy of the 4th century Life of St. Martin of Tours. Many Latin passages deal with the life of St. Patrick, and were once revered as being in his own handwriting. The Lives of St. Patrick thus collected have sometimes been treated as though they were associated with the later reliquary status of the book. The Patrician documents were used to establish the prerogatives of Armagh as archiepiscopal see of Ireland and Patrick as the apostle of the Irish. An 11th century insertion about Brian Boruma (Boru) describes him as "The Emperor of the Irish". During the Middle Ages a hereditary keeper belonging to the MacMoyre family was appointed for the book. Until the late 17th century its hereditary stewards before passing into private hands kept it as a relic. It was sold in 1680 and eventually in 1854 it was presented into the library of Trinity College, Dublin where the Manuscript is still housed.

BOOK OF BALLYMOTE. The Irish name for the Book of Ballymote is *Leabhar Bhaile an Mhota*. This large manuscript collection is an anthology of genealogical, legal, literary, and quasi-historical literature is the work of three scribes – Magnus O' Duibhgennain (hereditary seanchaidh, or historian, from a family with branches in Lei trim and Roscommon), along with his two assistants Salamh O' Droma, and Robeartus Mac Sithigh. It was compiled c. 1383-7 in the Sligo town of Ballymote, partly at the seat of the Mac Donnchaidh lords of Corran and Tirerrill and partly in the house of Domhnall Mac Aedhagain in Ormond (County Tipperary). Unlike the Book of Uí Mhaine, which was written for a patron, the bishop (later archbishop) Muircheartach O'

Ceallaigh, the book of Ballymote was apparently intended as a source book for the compiler's professional needs. Although much of the material in this book is historical, it also includes important literary and imaginative items, such as the key to the Ogham alphabet. There are bardic tract on meter and grammar, stories of the birth of Cormac, and tales of the loathly hag transformed into the beautiful woman, as well as the Irish version of the *Aeneid*. Handwriting and illuminations recall 12th century decorated manuscripts. In 1522 it passed from Mac Donnchaidh ownership to that of O' Domhnaill of Tir Chonail; it was acquired by the archbishop James Ussher in the 17th century, it was later in the Trinity College Library, and in 1785 the manuscript was presented to the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin where it is housed today.

BOOK OF CONQUESTS OF IRELAND, also known simply as the **BOOK OF INVASIONS**. The Celtic name is *Lebor Gabala Erenn*, or simply *Lebor Gabala*. The Taking of Ireland also called the Book of Conquests/Invasion: the early medieval Irish history, purporting to trace the origins of the Irish tribes back to the time of Adam. It is an elaborate legendary account in prose and verse of the origins of Ireland and the Irish people first written in the 11th century. Its authors drew on earlier material, much of it of Biblical inspiration; chief among its sources were a number of 10th and 11th century poetic compositions, some of which incorporates unaltered in his complex origin-legend. Beginning with the creation of the world, he discusses the pedigrees and wanderings of the Gaidil, before describing the various settlers of Ireland down to the arrival of the Gaidil (including Cesair, granddaughter of Noah, Partholon, Nemed, the Fir Bolg ['men of bags'], and the Tuatha de Danann [the Pagan gods, here euhemerized as magicians]. The remainder of the work concerns itself with kings ruling in Ireland after its settlement by the Gaidil, descendants of Mil of Spain. Pre-Christian rulers are traced from Eremon, son of Mil, to Nath I', while Christian monarchs from Laegaire mac Neill to the author's own time are listed. It was remarkably popular from the onset, as the existence of various medieval recessions of the narrative indicates. Moreover, its influence proved long-lived. While its traditions cannot be taken at face values, it provides a valuable insight into the intellectual and cultural milieu of its author and audience, as well as into the making of a national myth.

BOOK OF THE DEAN OF LISMORE. James MacGregor, Dean of the isle of Lismore in Loch Linnhe, Strathclyde, formerly Argyllshire, compiled this collection of poems in the 16th century. Unfortunately, he chose to transcribe the Scottish Gaelic in a Scots phonological rendering of his own invention. In the 19th century Thomas MacLauchlan reconstructed the Scottish Gaelic spelling and translated them into English (Edinburgh, 1862). Alexander Cameron included material from the manuscript in his *Reliquiae Celticae* (Inverness, 1892-4). More recently the Scottish Gaelic Text Society has issued collections of Scottish Verse, edited by W.J. Watson (1937) and Heroic Poetry (1939). The collection of heroic ballads is the earliest extensive corpus of these ballads in existence. This manuscript should be distinguished from the *Book of Lismore* or *Book of Riabhach MacCarthaigh* [McCarthy] compiled at Kilbrittain, County Cork, in the 15th century. The Irish Lismore deals mostly with saint's lives, including St. Brendan.

BOOK OF DEER. The monastery and village of Deer in north Aberdeenshire that has figured prominently in early Scottish history. Although it was thought to have been founded in the 6th century by Colm Cille [St. Columba] and his Scottish disciple Drostan, the site was occupied by the Cistercians in 1218-9. The Latin Book of the Deer, c. 9th century, contains some added Gaelic entries, c. 1130-1150, and so precedes that first great collection of Gaelic writing, the Book of Dean of Lismore, by four centuries. Popular tradition asserts that Deer was named for the tear [deur] Colum Cille shed as he departed the site.

BOOK OF DIMMA. The Book of Dimma is an enshrined illuminated Latin 'pocket' Gospel, now in Trinity College Library, Dublin. It is dated by its decoration to the end of the 8th century and is the work of at least two scribes, whose names have been erased and Dimma's substituted. Dimma mac Nathi was a legendary scribe who wrote a Gospel book for St. Cronan, the founder of the monastery at Roscrea. The book's shrine dates from the 12th and 15th centuries.

BOOK OF THE DUN COW. The Irish name for the Book of the Dun Cow is *Leabhar na hUidre* (*Lebor-na-Heera*); the many learned commentators who sometimes employ the abbreviation LU when referring to it prefer the Irish name. It is an important source of Celtic mythical tales as well as information about customs, rituals, history, and laws of the Celtic peoples. It is the oldest manuscript written entirely in Irish of three volumes of prose, compiled by monks around 1100 CE at the great monastic center of Clonmacnoise on the Shannon. Linguistic and paleographic evidence suggests that it was compiled in the late 11th century and revised

in the 12th. Some of the stories within it are much older and many have survived for generations through oral tradition. The Book of the Dun Cow contains versions of stories from the Mythological Cycle and the Ulster Cycle, including a version of the epic *Tain bo Cuailnge* [The Cattle Raid of Cooley], the story of the battle over the Brown Bull of Ulster. It also contains the story of the Voyage of Bran and Mael Duin. A large part is devoted to the Ulster Cycle.

The Book of the Dun Cow is one of three noteworthy volumes of Celtic lore. The other two are the Yellow Book of Lecan and the Book of Lienster. All three books are extremely valuable at the time they were made, since they were hand copied in the time before the printing press made books easier to produce. Making such manuscripts (handwritten books) would have been very time consuming and expensive. This book was compiled by Mailmuri Mac Kelleher (Mael Muire mac Ceileachair). A vignette recorded later in a separate text explains the name of the codex. Fergus mac Roigh is described as being summoned from his grave to recite the Tain to St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, who copied it down on the hide of a dark cow.

The Book of the Dun Cow itself reached near legendary status. It was said that the book was written on vellum made from the skin of a prized cow that was preserved for 500 years. Stories of the thefts, disappearances, and reappearances that pepper the book's history are almost as notorious as the stories written upon its pages. The manuscript disappeared after the Cromwellian conquest and reappeared in a bookshop in 1837; it is housed from 1844 in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. It has been published twice. The first was in facsimile (1870), and the second time it was edited by R.I. Best and Osborn Bergan (1929). Walter Wangerin's popular novel *Book of the Dun Cow* (1978) is unrelated to the material in the codex.

BOOK OF DURROW. The Book of Durrow is a decorated manuscript containing a Latin text of the Gospels, along with preliminaries to include St. Jerome's preface, interpretations of Hebrew names, and Canon table. The text of the gospels is essentially from St. Jerome's 4th century Vulgate translation, but the arrangement of the text and the illustrative pages displaying the four Evangelist's symbols, as well as occasional variants in the text, stems from an earlier 'Old Latin' version. The deserved fame of the book rests on the expert calligraphy of the text, executed in insular half-uncial script, and the exceptional quality and great variety of decorations, surpassed in very few comparable Gospels. It is decorated elaborated opening words of certain passages, and eleven fully decorated pages of ornament based jewelry designs for which red, yellow, green, and occasionally brown paint have been used. Also several 'carpet pages', filled with biting animals and abstract designs, such as trumpets, spirals, roundels, and interlace.

Academic debate over its date and origin make it one of the most controversial manuscripts in the field of insular script and art. Despite its known association with the monastery of Durrow [Irish, *daru*, oak plain], County Offaly, 4 miles north of Tullamore, site of an early monastic center founded in 551 CE, founded by Colum Cille [St. Columba], some scholars have argued for an origin in Iona or in Northumbria. Although absolute certainty cannot be attained because of limited numbers of comparable manuscripts, it seems likely, on the strength of several elements in the decoration and of a number of readings in the Gospel texts, that it was executed in Northumbria in a monastery founded by Colum Cille and his successors and therefore under Irish influence. A subscription at the end of the manuscript, possibly at least in part the work of a devout forger, seems to indicate that the book was copied from a manuscript written by the Colum Cille himself, which led to additional reverence for it in the Middle ages. Flan mac Mael Sechnaill (high king 879-916) encased it in a *cumdach* (shrine). After the suppression of the monastery of Durrow the book remained in the area; later in the 16th century a local farmer was using it to cure sick cattle by dipping it in water that was then offered to the cattle to drink. Henry Jones, Protestant Bishop of Meath, obtained possession of the book in the 17th century and in 1652 presented it to Trinity College, Dublin. It may date from the late 7th century – making it the earliest surviving fully decorated insular Gospel book – but conflicting views place it in the early 8th century.

BOOK OF FERMOY. An Irish manuscript of the mid-15th century that is now housed in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. It includes the texts *Altrom Tige Da Medar* [The Nurture of the Houses of the Two Milk Vessels]. Fermoy is a small town in northeast County Cork.

BOOK OF KELLS. One of the finest examples of the art of medieval manuscript design, the Book of Kells is a richly illustrated book of the four Gospels of the New Testament dating from about the 9th century. Both the calligraphy and the illustrations reflect the painstaking care with which manuscripts were created, entirely by hand. Its superb illuminations have made it the most famous of all the manuscripts produced by the Irish and Celtic churches. The Book of Kells is a copy of the Gospels in a Latin text based on the Vulgate Bible but intermixed with reading from the Old Latin translation. Its date and place of origin remain controversial, with

Iona c. 800 being the most widely accepted attribution because of its wide ranging international contacts. The manuscript was certainly at Kells by the 11th century, as attested by church transactions copied into it, and may have been taken there as early as the 9th century by the Iona community, seeking refuge from Viking raids.

The book now consists of 340 vellum (calfskin) folios (680 pages), written in insular script known as the Irish *majuscule* by at least three scribes. Its Gospel text is based on the Vulgate with an admixture of Old Latin elements. The Gospels are accompanied by preliminary text such as a preface that comprises a list of Hebrew names, the *breves causae* (headings of the Gospel sections), the *argumenta* (brief lives of the Evangelists), summaries, and Eusebian canon tables (Gospel concordance) set within elaborate arcaded structures. The book is lavishly decorated with full-page depictions of the Evangelists and their symbols; portraits of Christ and the Virgin and the child (the *chi-rho* initial); and illustrations of the temptation and arrest of Christ. The book's decoration, probably created by three artists, fuses a variety of influences – Celtic, Germanic, Pictish, Northumbrian, and Mediterranean – with a Carolingian impact being disputed. In its texts it is enlivened with interlinear drawings and decorated initials composed of human and animal figures, most of which carry symbolic resonance's; however, it surpasses other manuscripts in variety, color, and scale. Like many of the Kells images, they invoke liturgical, eucharistic and exegetical meanings, while the book's minor embellishments introduce elements of humor.

The Book of Kells shares many textual and decorative features with the earlier Book of Durrow, both manuscripts being associated with Colm Cille. As one of the key manuscripts in the debate over insular script and art, the Book of Kells has attracted a great deal of scholarly disagreement over its date and origin. The current majority opinion attributes it to the scriptorium of Iona (Argyllshire) though it remains unclear whether its production took place there or (wholly or partially) at Kells, County Meath, where the monastic community moved after Viking raiders in 806 CE had attacked it. It is now housed in Trinity College, Dublin where it had been brought in the 1660s.

BOOK OF LEINSTER. Its Celtic name is *Labar na Nuachongbala*, *Leabhar Laighneach*, it is also known as *Book of Noughavall/Oakvale*, and *Lebor na Nuachongbala*, this book takes its name from the church of Oughavall, near the castle of Dunamasem County Laois. When the Anglo-Normans came to control the area the church was given by Meiler Fitz Henry to the priory of the Great Connell near Naas, which would account for the addition of a copy of the Papal privilege *Laudabiliter* granting Ireland to Henry II of England. Similarly, the O'More's recovery of Dunamase is reflected in the 14th century praise poem in English orthography by a cleric with only an oral knowledge of Irish. Today 197 leaves remain, but in the 14th century there were 250. It is one of three important sources of Celtic mythology, along with the Book of the Dun Cow and the Yellow Book of Lecan. It was transcribed around 1150 CE, roughly the same time as the Book of the Dun Cow. An inscription in the text notes that Aed Ua Crimthainn, *coarb* or abbot of Tir da Glas (Terryglass, County Tipperary) wrote and collected it from many books, probably in collaboration with Bishop Find or Kildare (d. 1160). It was assembled after 1151 during the reign of Diarmait Mac Murchada and completed in the late 12th century. Scholars disagree on the number of scribes involved, either regarding Aed as the sole scribe or identifying four main hands. It contains stories, poems, and information specific to the province of Leinster. Some of the material such as the *Dindshenchas*, the lore and history of places, dates from the 11th century. It also contains the text of the *Lebor Gabala* [Book of Invasions], the pseudo-history constructed under biblical inspiration from Irish myth and legends, the Deirdre story, and the Borama as well as a version of the *Tain bo Cuailnge* [The Cattle Raid of Cooley] that is longer and in other ways different from the version in the Book of the Dun Cow. In addition to the stories, it has a catalog of kings and saints of Leinster Ulster, and Connacht, the Martyrology of Tallaght, and a Book of Rights. When Terryglass was destroyed in 1164, the manuscript may have been brought to Cluain Eidnech (Clonenagh, County Laois) and thence to Nuachongbhail (Oughavall, County Laois). Later in the century, when the manuscript had fallen into disarray, another scribe-scholar compiled it. In the 17th century it was in the hands of the O'Mores; it was then acquired by the Welsh scholar Edward Lhuyd in 1700 and returned to Ireland in 1786 by Sir John Sebright at the urging of his friend Edmund Burke. The surviving manuscript is now in Trinity College Library, Dublin, is the largest and latest of the three surviving compendia of Middle Irish learning dating from before the Anglo-Norman conquest.

BOOK OF LINDISFARNE (Lindisfarne Gospels). This is a Vulgate Gospel book with Canon Tables, preface, Gospels (preceded by *argumentum*, *capitula*, and material on saint's feasts of Italian use). Each Gospel opens with an evangelist portrait, accompanied by their symbol: Matthew's includes a man holding a book who peeps from behind a curtain (interpreted variously as God the Father, Moses, the muse, and reconciliation of the Old and New Testaments through Christ), followed by a decorated Incipit facing a cross carpet page (as is

Jerome's *Novum Opus*). Unusually, one artist-scribe – an incredible act of 'opus Dei' and input of resources made it.

The book was probably made at Lindisfarne, Northumbria, c. 710-720 in honor of St. Cuthbert, whose cult was being promoted as a rallying point for a new sense of reconciliation and Christian identity, celebrating the fusion of Celtic, Germanic, and Mediterranean cultures. Aidan had founded Lindisfarne in 635 from the Columban community of Iona and retained active links with the Irish church, reflected in the decoration of the book and its stylistic relationship to Columban books such as the earlier Book of Durrow and the later Book of Kells. About the year 950 Aldred, later Provost of Chester-le-Street, added a gloss in English – the earliest translation into English of the Gospel – and a colophon naming Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne (698-721) as a maker, his successor, Bishop Aethilwald, as binder, and Billfrith the anchorite as fabricator of metalwork adornment. It is traditionally believed to have been made at Lindisfarne c. 698, when Cuthbert's relics were translated, associated with the Durham Gospels (which show the same correcting hand) and the Echternach Gospels, while an origin at Rath Maelsigi or at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow (which probably lent an Italian Gospel book as a textual model) has also been suggested; Lindisfarne nonetheless remains its probable birthplace. In 1605 it was owned by Robert Bowyer and then by Sir Robert Cotton c. 1613; it has been in the British Museum (now British Library), London, since 1753.

BOOK OF RIGHTS. The Book of Rights or *Lebor na Cert* is concerned with the rights of Irish kings and purports to record a list of tributes and stipends due from and owed to a number of provincial kings. The text can be divided into seven main sections, each consisting of a series of poems accompanied by a prose introduction and focusing on a particular kingship. Since the section on Cashel is both the first and the most detailed, the redactor appears to have been a Munsterman writing for an Ui Brian patron some time in the late 11th century. From the 4th or 5th century Cashel was the royal seat of the Eoganacht. In 978 Brian Boruma (Brian Boru) made himself king of Cashel and his descendants, the Ui Brian (O'Brian), continued to style themselves on such. In 1101 CE a synod was held there, presided over by King Muirchertach Ua Brian who donated the site to the church. It has been suggested that the text was in fact put together specifically for the Synod of Cashel by a scribe in the employ of Muirchertach Ua Brian. Ten years later Cashel was formally constituted as the head of the archdiocese. The architectural remains all date from its ecclesiastical history, and consists of a round tower, the 12th century Cormac's chapel, a 13th or 14th century cathedral, and a 15th century residential building.

BOOK OF TALIESIN. The Welsh name is *Llyfr Taliesin*. The manuscript compiled c. 1275 containing more than sixty poems attributed to the 6th century Taliesin, of which twelve were judged perhaps authentic by Sir Ifor Williams. The collection also includes the *Armes Prydain* [Prophecy of Britain], attributed to Myrddin (Merlin); and *Cad Goddeu* [The Battle of the Trees]. The manuscript is now housed in the national Library, Aberystwyth. It is distinguished from *Hanes Taliesin*, a tale of folk memory and literary invention about Taliesin as a wonder-child.

BOOK OF UI MAINE. The Irish name for the Book of Ui Maine or Book of Hy Many is *Leabhar Ui Maine*. A smaller codex of the late 14th or early 15th century long in the possession of the O'Kelly family, a name borne by the descendants of the Ui Maine sept that occupied in medieval times much of what is now County Galway and sections of Roscommon. The manuscript includes portions of the *Lebor Gabala* [Book of Invasions], poems, genealogies, and pedigrees.

CORMAC'S GLOSSARY. *Sanas Cormaic* is the Irish title of the document often referred to in English as Cormac's Glossary, traditionally named to Archbishop Cormac mac Cuilennain (d. 908 CE), a king of Cashel in Munster. However, some scholars believe the glossary was compiled later than his lifetime. Entries include a large compendium of old and rare Irish words and terms including names from Irish literature and legends. Modern commentators have interpreted many of Cormac's judgments; for example, he places Manannan mac Lir on the Isle of Man instead of on the Celtic otherworldly Emain Ablach. In many instances Cormac is an uncritical euhemerist; he readily cites kings or heroes personages we believe to be of divine origin. Nonetheless, *Sanas Cormaic* is a constantly cited source for information on the oldest oral tradition.

DINDSHENCHAS. Dindshenchas is literally translated as the "lore of prominent places". It is a comprehensive topography of Ireland and a guide to geographical mythology. It is also spelled as Dinnshenchas, Dinnsheanchas, Dinnsheabchus and Dinn-Shenchus. It was established as a dominant literary genre in the Middle Irish period (c. 900-1200 CE) and is contained in the 12th century Book of Leinster and is one of the richest

sources of Celtic myths. The term is applied to a corpus of several hundred accounts and reflects a preoccupation with organizing formerly disparate elements into an aesthetically more satisfying compilation. It is a collection of Old Irish local legends, in prose and verse, explaining the names and giving the association of famous rivers, fords, lakes, hills, and other places. Included are also earlier versions of the stories of mythic and heroic figures that appear in lengthier narratives elsewhere; such as the story of the Sons of Usna and many stories of the Fianna tales. While most texts are imaginative, much information contained is factual; the modern Irish word *dinnsheanchas* means 'topography'. The principal text is in the Book of Leinster (c.1150), but materials are preserved in many great Irish codices as well as in collections in Edinburgh and Rennes, France.

DOMESDAY BOOK. The Domesday Book is the record of a comprehensive and detailed survey of English landholdings undertaken on the orders of William the Conqueror. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, a few days after Christmas of 1085 CE 'the king had much thought and very deep discussion with his council about this country – how it was held and with what sort of people. Then he sent his men all over England into every shire and had them find out... he had a record made of what and how much they, in land and livestock, everybody had who was holding land in England, and how money it was worth.' This record was initially kept in the royal treasury in Winchester and today is held in the Public Records Office. For centuries it survived in two manuscript volumes: the first, known as Little Domesday, covers Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk; the second, Great Domesday, covers the rest of the English counties south of the River Tees, but in less detail. Great Domesday is thought to represent the final stage of a long and complex process, which was halted soon after William the Conqueror's death and before it reached the three eastern counties.

It is the most remarkable statistical document in European history. It records detailed information on some 45,000 landholdings in about 14,000 named places, providing geld assessments and valuations of the estates both from January 1066 CE (when Edward the Confessor died) and 'now', i.e. 1086 CE. In its surviving form it contains a few lacunae – London and Winchester, for example, are omitted – but here is nothing else on this scale before the 19th century. Although in making the survey William's government was able to utilize Anglo-Saxon administrative records, there was clearly no precedent for the scale and thoroughness of 1086 CE, hence the shocked comment of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: 'so very strictly did he have the enquiry carried out that – it is shameful to say it, not one ox, nor one cow nor one pig escaped notice in his survey'. In fact this was an exaggeration since the survey was intended to assist the king's fiscal exploitation of his new kingdom, and this meant that his agents, and this meant that his agents were really interested in wealth at the disposal of the elite. Since the survey shows that by 1086 CE only a handful of elite still bore Anglo-Saxon names, one of its effects was to set a seal on the dispossession of the old aristocracy as a result of the Norman Conquest. According to Richard Fitzgerald, within its own sphere Domesday Book was as authoritative as the Last Judgment, hence the name by which it was then (by the 1170s) already known.

FOUR ANCIENT BOOKS OF WALES. Title of a once influential, now superseded, two volume collection of poetry in Welsh with English translation, edited by William Forbes Skene (Edinburgh, 1868). The four cited are: Black Book of Carmarthen, Book of Aneirin, Book of Taliesin, and the Red Book of Hengest.

GREAT BOOK OF LECAN. The same family of scribes in the same castle compiled the Great Book of Lecan or simply the Book of Lecan to be distinguished from the Yellow Book of Lecan. The Irish name is *Leabhar Mor Mhic Fhir Bhisigh Leacain*. Like many other Irish manuscript miscellanies, The Great Book of Lecan was a product of the Gaelic cultural revival, written between 1390 and 1418 by Giolla osa Mor Mac Firbhisigh, head of a west Sligo school of *seanchaidhe* or traditional historians, and scribe of the text of many Old Irish sagas in the Yellow Book of Lecan. The contents of the Great Book, however, which Giolla osa transcribed for his own use with the help of a number of assistants or pupils. It contains 600 pages of poems of his own composition on the landowning families of O'Dowda's country, a comprehensive corpus with genealogical material of the Irish nobility and the text of many pre-Norman historical tracts. Lecan is the name of a former castle, now in ruins, in the west of County Sligo, two miles north of Inishcrone. There is a modern published edition edited by Kathleen Mulchrone in 1937.

HISTORIA BRITTONUM. *Historia Brittonum* [Latin, History of the Britons] is an early 9th century chronicle of British and Welsh history, chapter 56 of which tells of Arthur, '*dux bellorum*', and his twelve victories. Formerly ascribed to one Nennius, *Historica* is now seen, thanks to the work of David Dumville (c. 1985), to be a compilation from a number of disparate sources.

RED BOOK OF HENGEST. In Welsh it is *Llyfr Coch Hengest*. It is one of the most important of all medieval Welsh manuscripts (written c. 1382-1410 CE), containing texts of the Mabinogi and seven other narratives usually included in the Mabinogion. The Red Book also contains poetry of the Gogynfeirdd (name for courtly Welsh bards or poets), histories, grammars, and proverbs, but not religious works or law. The single hand of a conscientious worker, Hywel Fychan fab Howel Goch o Fuellt, who imposed an order upon the entire manuscript, did most of the copying; internal evidence proves that he worked on other manuscripts as well. Lady Charlotte Guest drew on the red book of Hengest for her translation of the Mabinogion (1846); more recent translations also favor the Red Book, with reference to the White Book of Rhydderch (c. 1325). The name Hengest refers to the mansion in Herefordshire where the book was kept from sometime after 1465 until 1634, when it was returned to Wales. Since 1701 it has been at Jesus College, Oxford.

TRIBAL HIDEAGE. The Tribal Hideage is a mysterious and much discussed document, it survives in no manuscript earlier than the 11th century, but has the appearance of being an ancient administrative record – possibly a sort of tribute list – dating probably from the 7th or 8th centuries CE. It consists of a list of over 30 peoples to each of whom is assigned a number of Hides.

A Hide was the most widely used unit of assessment in the English kingdom for tribute, taxation, and military service until the 12th century. It was not strictly a measure of area. Instead, it seems originally to have signified the amount of land sufficient to support a family, but it had already become a unit of measurement by the time of Bede. It may have had a relationship with economic resources, although numerous examples of ‘beneficial hidation’ show that it could be manipulated in favor of chosen individuals or institutions.

Burghal Hideage is a document probably dating from the reign of Edward the Elder (899-924 CE) that was crucial to the understanding of the defensive system inaugurated by Alfred the Great. It records the number of hides responsible for the defense of each burh, then explains that each hide is responsible for providing one warrior, and that four warriors were necessary to defend a length of a burh’s rampart equivalent to 4.5 meters (5.5 yards).

County Hideage is an administrative document, probably from the early 11th century that supplies important information on the hideage assessment of 13 shires. It provides intermediate evidence between early texts such as the Burghal Hideage and the later Domesday Book.

Some entries describe easily identifiable peoples and clearly relate to early English kingdoms, whereas others describe smaller groupings, and some cannot readily be located. Thus, 30,000 hides are assigned to the Mercians and the Angles, 7,000 to the South Saxons (Sussex), 7,000 to dwellers in the Wrekin, Staffordshire, and 600 to the people of Spalding, Lincolnshire. The omission of the Northumbrians suggests that the text may belong to the period of Mercian supremacy over the southern and central England, although the possibility that it was drawn up in the time of the Northumbrian *bretwaldas* cannot entirely be dismissed.

The document is also important as a record of the social groupings that came to England during the Anglo-Saxon settlement and were gradually absorbed into the kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

WHITE BOOK OF HENGEST. The Welsh name is *Llyfr Gwyn Hengest*. It is a Welsh manuscript dating from the mid-15th century that was destroyed by fire sometime in the 19th century, perhaps in 1810, 1840, or 1858. Among its contents were the Laws of King Hywel Dda (d. 950). Distinguished from the Red Book of Hengest and the White book of Rhydderch.

WHITE BOOK OF RHYDDERCH. The Welsh name is *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*. It is a great collection of medieval Welsh prose, copied on parchment c. 1325, containing versions of the Mabinogi and all other narratives including the Mabinogion, except *Breuddwyn Rhonabwy* [The Dream of Rhonabwy] and many religious texts. In compiling her translation, the Mabinogion (1846), Lady Charlotte Guest relied on later Red Book of Hengest (c. 1382-1410). The transcriber of the white Book is not known, but dialect evidence suggests he was from Deheubarth in southwest Wales. The name Rhydderch alludes both to Parc Rhydderch, a house where poetry was patronized, and to Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd, master of Parc Rhydderch, who apparently owned the book in the late 14th century. The White Book, now in two volumes, was rebound in white leather in 1949 at the National Library of Wales, where it is now kept.

YELLOW BOOK OF LECAN. The Yellow Book of Lecan [*Lebor Buide Lecain*] is one of three most important sources of Celtic mythology, along with the Book of the Dun Cow and the Book of Leinster. Created in the 14th century, the Book of Lecan is not as old as the other two volumes, which were compiled around 1100 CE. It was a private undertaking, created for a family clan; Lecan was the name of their castle. The Book of

Lecan contains a version of *Tain bo Cuailnge* [The Cattle Raid of Cooley]. It also includes versions of great stories such as the *Tochmarc Etaine* [Wooring of Etain] and the *Aided Oenfhir Aife* [Tragic Death of Aife's Only Son], *Scela Cano meic Gartnain* [The Story of Cano mac Gartnain], *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* [The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel], and a version of *Orgain Denna Rig* [The Destruction of Dind Rig]. Although the Yellow Book was compiled at Lecan (now Lacken), near Inishcrone, County Sligo, c. 1390, narratives within the collection can be dated centuries earlier from internal evidence; *Aided Oenfhir Aife*, for example, appears to be 9th century.

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