

Mysterious Ways

A Cyberzine for Pagan men who love men.

Summer / Fall 2021
Volume 2, Issue 2

Welcome to the latest issue of Mysterious Ways! Summer is here and things are slowly getting back to “normal.” Vaccinations are up, Covid cases are down, and at least some physical events and gatherings are moving cautiously moving forward.

With folks coming together again, love and lust may even be in the air—as well they should be!

— Mel Mystery



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Theme this Issue: Love and Lust Magick



An effigy of the lustful and horned Greek God Pan created at the 2019 Arcadia Camp Out.

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Special Thanks

Special thanks to all who contributed articles , poetry, and art this month.

Events and Gatherings

Virtual Brotherhood by the Bog Review

By Mel Mystery

Brotherhood by the Bog (BBTB), a spiritual retreat for Pagan men was held virtually the weekend of April 22-25, 2021. The 2020 retreat had been cancelled due to Covid, and we decided to hold the event virtually for 2021. This year's theme was "Metamorphosis" and focused largely on how we've adapted and continue to adapt ourselves, our Paganism, and our Pagan events during pandemic. Since the event was virtual, we were able to have guests and presenters from all over. The event is normally held at First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach. This year one of our presenters spoke to us virtually from California and the award



for most distant guest went to an attendee from Portugal. This year's event was free and registration was gained by joining a Facebook group specifically created for this year's virtual retreat. It was in this Facebook group that Zoom links were sent out for each of our workshops and activities. We had just over 100 people join and most workshops averaged 8-10 people. As individual schedules and time zones varied, we also recorded the workshops and other events so that attendees could watch them later if they couldn't make a particular timeslot.

Staffing for the event was made up of local planners as well as a few folks outside of Virginia who had been involved with past retreats, but who have since then moved out of the area. Each staff person took on hosting one or more workshops or other activities. In addition to our retreat staff, other presenters included Sir Hex Nottingham, a local OBOD Druid; Eric Eldritch of Stone Circle Wicca, Tomás Prower, author of **Queer Magic** and **Morbid Magic**, and Pagan music sensation, Alexian. Nottingham presented workshops on "Our Haunted Lives" and an exploration of how magick is interconnected in a workshop titled "Biocosmic." Eldritch facilitated a "Show and Spell" icebreaker and presented a workshop on "Ancestral Paganism." Prower presented a worldwide overview of the mythologies related to his books on **Queer Magic** and **Morbid Magic**. Alexian performed our Saturday evening concert.

Other workshops included self-care during difficult times; Pagan legal issues; Discordianism, Chaos Magick, and Pop Culture; and a presentation on werewolf sexuality in mythology, folklore, and historical accounts. There were also open group discussions on how our Paganism has been affected by the pandemic; what to do "after Covid"; and a panel discussion on transformation. Entertainment included Alexian's concert; Pagan game night; and a "Bardic Circle Death Match." The first rule of Bardic Circle Death Match is not to talk about Bardic Circle Death Match, so if you missed it—I can't talk about it here — your loss.

A daily ritual was also included in the schedule. The opening ritual was pre-recorded at a local beach park to give a more normal outdoor feel to the ritual. The closing ritual was prerecorded at the Native American Burial Mound in First Landing State Park where the retreat is usually held. The main ritual was an ADF style ritual adapted to Zoom focusing on change and transformation. The Friday evening Zoom ritual fused elements of Druidry, Discordianism, and pop culture.

All-in-all the virtual retreat was a success. We are expecting the event to revert back to an in-person event in 2022, though there has been talk about how we might incorporate a virtual element for those not able to attend in person.

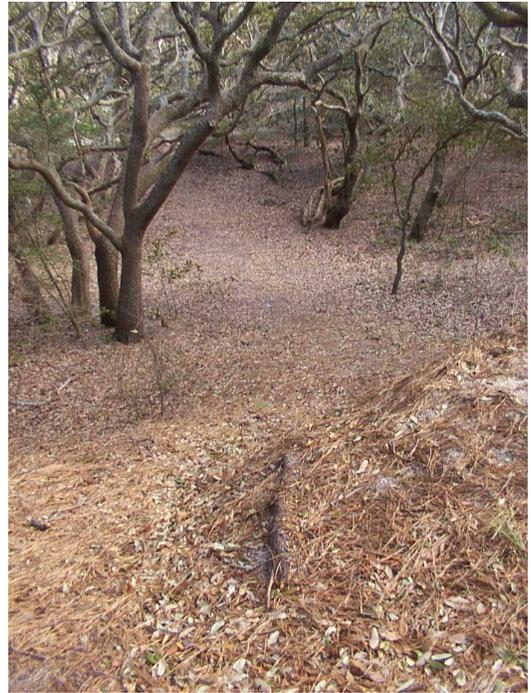
For more information on BBTB:

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/brotherhood-by-the-bog-pagan-men-s-retreat>

Arcadia to be held in-person this year, but with a few changes

by Mel Mystery

The Arcadia Camp Out for Queer Pagan Men is scheduled to take place the weekend of October 8-10, 2021. Originally, the event was set to take place at Arcadia Sanctuary in Amherst, Virginia. The Arcadia Camp Out and Arcadia Sanctuary are two separate entities which coincidentally had the same name and decided to partner to host the Camp Out. Unfortunately, the Sanctuary is involved in a Zoning dispute with Amherst County. The county has forbidden our Queer Pagan event from taking place at the Sanctuary under threat of heavy fines. While discrimination against Pagans, Gay folks, or both may be at play, the main issue at hand is whether the Sanctuary is zoned as an event venue. The letter from the county came only days after initial announcements for the 2021 Arcadia Camp Out went out on social media, so we had to scramble to select another venue.



Given the need to change venues, we've had to make a few adjustments to this year's event. The event has been moved to First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach, Virginia where we have successfully held other Pagan men's retreats for nearly two decades (i.e. the Brotherhood by the Bog Retreat and its predecessors). We decided not to change the registration costs that have already been advertised. As our up front costs are more, we have decided to shorten this year's Arcadia Camp Out from three nights to only two nights. As an added perk to attendees, we will be providing basic meals with their registration.

Regular registration is \$100 before July 31 and it goes up to \$125 after July 31. Regular registration includes one tent campsite and basic meals. We will also offer a \$50 day trip option for folks who do not wish to camp with us and have other accommodations. Funds from registrations will also go toward various supplies needed for workshops, rituals, the Samahin party, and the overall event.

This year's theme is "Connecting and Reconnecting," a slight change over last year's theme which would have been "The Space Between Us—Making Connections Across the Void." Last year's theme was chosen before the Pandemic and was meant to address the physical and emotional space between Queer Pagan men, but took on a whole new angle with the pandemic. As the 2020 retreat was cancelled, the theme was not addressed. Given our opportunity for "Connecting and Reconnecting" after Covid, the current theme seems more hopeful and appropriate. Our patron deity this year is still Hermes.

Given the weekend nature of this year's Arcadia Camp Out, this year's event will be a focused retreat. We will have workshops, a main ritual, a costumed Samhain/Halloween party around the campfire, and possibly drumming on the beach. The schedule is evolving and will be updated on our web page as we get closer to October.

For more information and to register, please visit:

<http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

Stone and Stang held Virtually this Year

The Stone and Stang retreat for Men Who Love Men took place the weekend of April 24-25, 2021. Stone and Stang is another event that went virtual this year. The event is hosted by the Unnamed Path. The theme for the weekend was "Reclaiming the Self: Renewal, Restoration, & Integration. This year's guest presenters included Marc Leger who presented "When the Shadow Gets in the Way"; Chris Allaun who presented "Plant Spirit Magick"; Casey Giovinco who presented "Soul Retrieval: A Journey to the Light Goddess"; and Lee Harrington who presented "Sacred Kink—The Eightfold Paths of BDSM."

Publisher's note: I reached out to Stone and Stang via the contact form on their website in early May in hopes of getting a full review, but they had not responded by the time this issue of Mysterious Ways went to publication. I was able to gather the above information from their website: <http://stoneandstang.com/>

From Across the Pond

Phallic Pagan Monuments in Portugal

by John Pead (writing from Portugal)

Mel has told me that the theme of this edition of Mysterious Ways involves love and sex magick. Although these 'From Across the Pond' articles are more to do with ancient pagan sites and beliefs in Europe and beyond, I was pondering upon standing stones and their phallic nature. Many resemble cocks and so definitely invoke a sense of male sexuality. Therefore, I am going to briefly mention two such, different, megaliths here in Portugal. These are the Menhir of Meada and the Menhir of Rocha dos Namorados.

The Menhir of Meada is located near the town of Meada near the Spanish border with Portugal. It is, at 7.15 metres high (23.45 feet), the tallest menhir in Iberia. It was erected around 6000 years ago (early 4th Millennium BCE) as part of a line of monuments, all built so the next could be seen in the distance. It was 'rediscovered' in 1965 in two pieces and restored in 1993. This was a mammoth task considering it weighs around 16 tons! Looking at it you can easily see the shape of an uncut cock, the foreskin covering even accentuated in its shaping by its builders.

It is speculative as many pagan monuments had a calendrical or astronomical purpose, but I wonder whether there was another reason for its form. Could it have been for male cult purposes? We know so little of even Celtic attitudes to homosexuality as conjecture has to be based on art rather than documents and we all know how the Christian church perverted any suggestion of homosexuality in pagan cultures. The prehistoric Bronze Age, when this menhir was erected, is an enigma as far as belief structures and cultural norms go, so speculation is, for the most part, all we have to interpret their ritual structures. Still, it would be interesting to have your thoughts so please email me with them.

The Menhir of Rocha dos Namorados (in Portuguese 'boyfriends rock', 'namorado' being 'boyfriend') near Corval, is a granite monument in the shape of a mushroom roughly 2 metres high by 7 metres in circumference. There is conjecture whether it is a man-made monument or a natural outcrop of rock. It has dimpled megalithic engravings from the prehistoric era so, whether natural or not, it has been venerated since early times. The Christians added a graffiti cross so 'converting' it from its pagan ritual purpose; a common Christian practice which shows a fear of people using it still for pagan worship.

Bizarrely, considering the masculine 'namorados', there is a custom on the Monday following Christian Easter for young unmarried women to face away from the stone and throw three stones over their shoulder using their left hand. If the first lands on top and settles, she will marry that year. If the second does so, she will marry the following year and if the third is successful, the year after that. Hence it has a pseudo pagan practice to this day. However, there is conjecture as to its original cult purpose. Its mushroom shape has been compared to a female uterus and so the thought is that it had a fertility symbolism. However, I suggest there may have been a more 'male' orientated symbolism. Whereas the Meada menhir shows clearly an uncut cock, could not this monument demonstrate the cut mushroom head of a cock? It is interesting that the first monument is almost directly north of this one in the same region (Alentejo). Some transla-

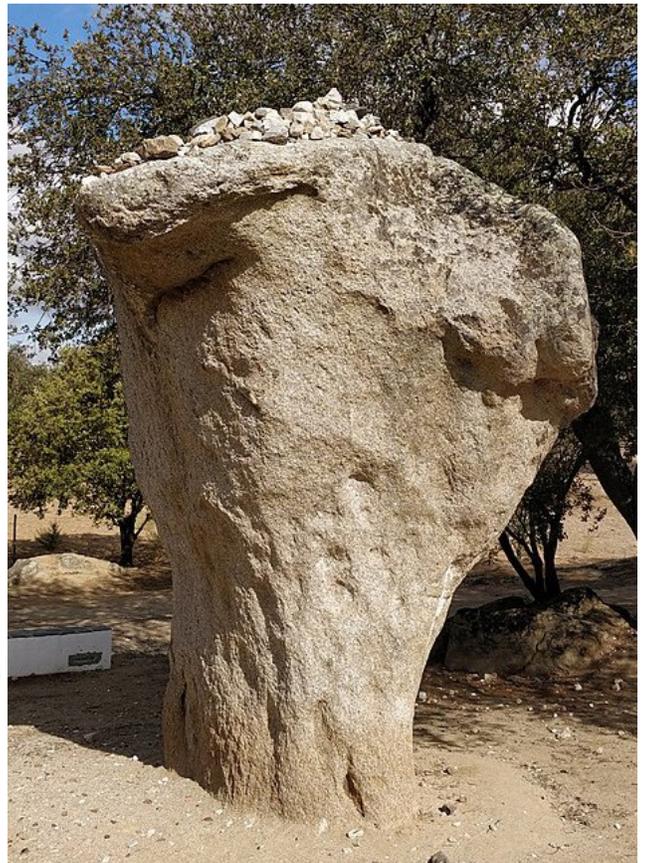


Menhir of Meada
Attribution to Dobroide (Wiki Commons)

tions of the Portuguese come out as 'lovers rock' or 'valentines rock', however I prefer 'boyfriends' (plural) so giving an interesting speculation as to whether male orientated cults were more in evidence in Portugal than is usually given credence. It would make a very interesting study. We know of male cult practice in later pagan ages which had homosexual elements, often masked by the dom/sub practice, where to be on top was okay but to be the bottom was not. However, I speculate that in many cultures this attribution was made by later writers influenced by elite or Christian dogma. I suspect the ancient world had as many purely gay sexual experiences as we do now.

Ancient cultures, their monuments and cult practices are of enormous importance to modern pagans. They are our ancestral pagan roots and need to be studied with a totally pagan perspective. I hope this article inspires you to do just that.

John (Anarion)
Boeotia@protonmail.com



Menhir of Rocha Dos Namorados
Attribution to Roundtheworld (Wiki Commons)



Love and Lust Spells

Gay Men's Love Spell

Write the following on the parchment:

*Flame of love, burn strong and bright,
Fill his heart with my loving light,
(state your name and your lover's name)
No other man will he see,
With loving arms, he will come to me.
So mote it be.*

Ingredients and Supplies

- Coriander
- Dragon's blood
- Mandrake root
- Yarrow
- Candles—white, black, and pink
- Love potion
- Parchment
- Incense Burner
- Ash Pot

Blend all the herbs while envisioning yourselves in a variety of romantic settings. Carve your name on one side of the pink candle and your lover's name on the other. Cast a circle. Then envision yourselves as lovers while anointing the pink candle. Next burn all the herbs as an incense, and light the candles in this order—black, pink, white. Read the spell out loud, and touch the parchment to each candle flame. Let the parchment burn in the ash pot. As the flames rise, say "In correctness, and for the good of all." Carry the ashes in a black bag, hang it on your bedpost, or bury it where it will not be disturbed.

Love Potion

Charge all the ingredients in the pan within a magic circle.

Simmer for two minutes while visualizing love coming into your life and see a pink aura around and in the potion.

Light the candle and project your thoughts for love.

When the potion has cooled, put it in a bottle and cap tightly.

Use it sparingly with a few drops behind the ears or over your heart.

Notes: This one smells very nice. It goes bad very fast. Refrigeration can help it last longer.

Ingredients and Supplies

- 2 cups spring water
- 3 tablespoons salt
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 3 rose petals
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pink candle
- Enamel pan

Apollo Solar Love Potion

Cast a magickal circle at dawn. Then place two Hyacinth flowers, a solar stone, and the spring water in a jar. Offer the other flower to Apollo. Say three times:

Apollo, strong and bright,

Send me my Mr. Right.

God of Vision and the Sun.

Help me to know that he's the one.

Close the magickal circle. Leave the jar with the Hyacinth, spring water, and solar stone to charge in the sunlight all day. At dusk, bring the jar inside. You can place a few drops behind your ears, over your heart, or on your clothing like cologne whenever you go out. Also carry the solar love stone in your pocket.

Ingredients and Supplies

- A glass jar
- 3 Hyacinth flowers
- Spring water
- A solar stone (Amber, Citrine, Sunstone, Carnelian, Tiger's Eye, etc.)

Pan Lust Oil

Cast your magickal circle. Mix all the ingredients in your cauldron or a small bowl. Light the candle and chant.

Pan, Pan, Send me a sexy man.

And when I'm done,

If I still lust, send me another one!

Imagine physical qualities you'd like in a man or men. When you feel the time is right, close the circle and wear a few drops of the oil whenever you are feeling lusty.

Ingredients and Supplies

- A candle shaped like the Greek god Pan or a phallic candle
- 1/8 cup olive oil
- 3 drops Musk oil
- 2 drops Patchouli oil
- 1 drop Sandalwood oil
- 1 Bay leaf

The Ethics of Love and Lust Magick

Many experienced magickal practitioners will suggest that you never cast a love or lust spell on a specific person, and that it is better to cast a general spell to attract the person (or persons) who are right for you at this particular time, or even to boost your own general attractiveness. If you do cast a spell with a specific person in mind, you should at the very least qualify that this spell will come to pass "only if it is in your best interests and the other person's best interests." If you do cast a spell on a specific person, you should be aware of the old adage, "Beware what (or who) you ask for, you might just get it (or them)!" Not everyone we are attracted to is necessarily a good match for us.

Gay Gods and Spirits

Austin Powers: Modern Sex God

by Mel Mystery

Does Austin Powers fit the archetype of “modern sex god”?

I personally think he does.

The phallic symbolism in the Austin movies includes everything from chess pieces to large drills to rockets. Many of these items are even described in phallic terms and slang like “Johnson”, “Wang”, “weiner”, “tallywacker” and so forth. In other cases, the phallic symbolism is inferred such as when Ivanna Humphalot caresses the chess pieces with her mouth. We never see Austin Power’s phallus, but this too is inferred in such scenes as the opening credits to the 2nd movie where Austin wanders around the hotel naked with various items both hiding and hinting at his phallic region.



Austin Powers himself fits certain criteria similar to that of archetypal phallic gods. He has a sizable libido, and he is free and uninhibited in his sexuality. He’s hairy like a wild animal, a sure sign of his masculinity and his kinship with such wild and hairy gods as Pan. He proudly wears his male symbol in the form of a necklace. Austin even has a magickal and irresistible mojo that drives women, fembots, and even a couple of men wild. His last name “Powers” invokes something mystical, masculine, and virile. He aspires to 60s style swinging which involves uninhibited sex with multiple partners. While he isn’t horned, his catch phrase “Do I make you horny?” brings up subtle associations with ancient horned gods.

Despite his intense libido, he obviously cares about and bonds with his sexual partners. It’s not just about sex, but about romance. He genuinely cares about his partners, all the while not taking himself too seriously. I can imagine ancient phallic gods being similar in these respects. Sometimes it’s hard to put a personality to ancient gods because of their remoteness in time and place, but I can imagine them not so much being about sexual conquest but about sincere bonding – even if they do bond with lots of partners.

I’m divided on whether Austin’s pledge of monogamy and marriage to Vanessa at the end of the first movie is a testament to his caring and affection for her, or whether it’s a betrayal of his own nature in an attempt to fit in with the times. Either way, Austin happily returns to his old ways in the second movie after Vanessa is exposed as a fembot. Later in the movie, he is reunited with the metaphorical goddess in the form of Felicity Shagwell. Felicity could be considered symbolic of a fertility goddess, and Austin’s equal in most every way. She provides a feminine balance to his masculinity. Though both aspire to the swinger lifestyle, they also both seem a bit jealous of each other’s conquests – a theme that plays out in the stories of many ancient divine couples.

In much the same way that the elves of myth diminished in size and stature from human size to the size of fairies, and just as the Greek Eros was diminished from a handsome young adult to the Roman Cupid who was a chubby baby, I believe the phallic god archetype is diminished in Austin Powers. At the very least, he needs a penis pump - implying his phallus isn’t as big as he’d like and definitely not as large the phallic gods of the past, who didn’t need such devices to maintain a huge.... um ... demeanor.

Just as mere mortals are afraid of the supernatural magick of the elves or the power (and sometimes madness) of love, they also fear primal and uninhibited sexuality. So the phallic god of today comes up a little short.

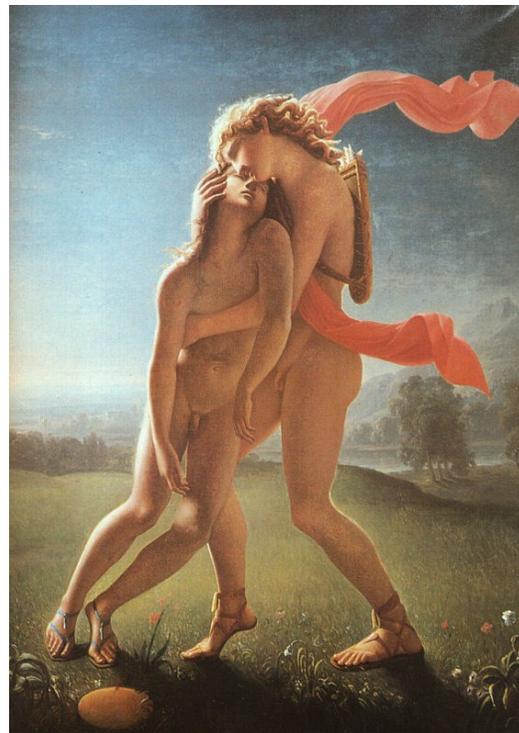
The Story of Apollo and Hyacinthus

By Mel Mystery

Hyacinthus, also known as Hyacinth, was one of Apollo's many male lovers. Hyacinth was a beautiful Spartan youth who was also admired by Zephyrus, the West wind, Boreas, the North wind, and a mortal named Thamyris. Apollo taught Hyacinth how to use the bow, how to play music on the lyre, the art of prophecy, and they exercised together in the gymnasium.

One day Apollo and Hyacinth were out throwing the discus. Jealous of their love, Zephyrus, the West wind, blew the discus back where it fatally hit Hyacinth and caused his death. Apollo tried to heal Hyacinth's wounds, but to no avail. Apollo wept for Hyacinth and promised to always remember his lover in his music and songs. Out of Hyacinth's spilled blood, Apollo created a flower to remember his lover. This flower was the Hyacinth flower and it is often used in gay men's love spells. The original Hyacinth flower may have been a purple iris or larkspur, not the flower we know as Hyacinth today.

In later stories, Hyacinth was resurrected and gained immortality as a Spartan deity. He was honored at the three-day festival of Hyacinthia in early summer. The first day of the festival mourned his death, and the other two days celebrated his rebirth.



The Death of Hyacinthos by Jean Broc, 1801

Help Us to Help You and Our Tribe of Queer Pagan Men

Where else can you find a publication geared toward your unique interests and experiences as a Queer Pagan man?

Submissions to *Mysterious Ways* are not only encouraged, they are vital to provide several voices to the content of this Cyberzine.

I usually start sending out requests across various social media about a month before the submission deadline, but you don't have to wait for my request to get your articles in. The submission deadline for the next issue is always listed in the current issue and I'm always happy to receive submissions anytime during that six month period. *Mysterious Ways* is published semi-annually. While there is usually a specific theme for each issue, submissions of a general nature are welcome too.

Please consider sharing your voice by sending in your articles, book reviews, event reviews, poetry, art, or anything else that might be relevant to Queer Pagan men. Don't forget to share information about your Queer Pagan Men's groups and events!!!

Submission deadline for the next issue of *Mysterious Ways* is December 15, 2021.

Between the Worlds

A Spiritual Gathering for Men Who Love Men

September 20-25, 2021

Pomeroy, OH

www.betweentheworlds.org

Eros: Patron of Male-Male Love

by Mel Mystery

The Greek god Eros is about as complicated and multifaceted as love itself. Eros is the primordial god of attraction, love, lust, and intercourse. He is also considered the patron god of homosexual love between men, and a protector of liberty. In fact, certain Greek armies and Roman Spartans made sacrifices to him before battle because the love between male soldiers was believed to ensure military success. Aphrodite was considered the patron of heterosexual love.

Statues of Eros could be found in the Greek wrestling schools, as these were places where men would associate with their beloveds. Eros, Hermes, and Heracles make up a homoerotic trinity presiding over homosexual relations. They are said to respectively grant the blessings loyalty, eloquence, and strength to male couples.

There are several stories of his mythical origins. To some Eros was the principle force of attraction and order that brought the universe into being out of chaos. It is said that Eros was birthed from an egg laid by Night and conceived by Darkness, and that he sprang forth from the primordial chaos along with Gaia – the Earth, and Tartarus – the underworld. Eros is considered the firstborn light that brought all things into being and brought order to them. In the Eleusinian Mysteries, he is worshipped as Protogonus, the first born.

In later stories, Eros is said to be the son of Aphrodite and Ares – love and war. Sometimes it is said that his father is Hermes or Hephaestus. In these myths, he is considered an attendant to Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

Eros is a typical trickster god. He is playful and sometimes causes trouble among both the gods and men. In some stories, he is unscrupulous and cruel, and in others he is more mindful of the great power he yields. In Greek mythology, Eros is depicted as an athletic nude youth or teenager with wings. His instrument is the bow and arrow. He has two kinds of arrows. One is golden and tipped with dove feathers and this causes love at first sight. The other is leaden and tipped with owl feathers and causes indifference or strife. Sometimes he is shown blind or blindfolded. As the old adage goes, “Love is blind.” The Romans, perhaps in fear or jealousy of his great power over love and lust, demoted Eros to the chubby cherub we often today associate with Valentine’s Day.

Eros is associated with air, Friday and the planet Venus. Hearts and the heart chakra, as well as roses and rose quartz are considered Eros associations. His colors are red, white, and silver. The 4th day of every month is considered sacred to him.

Horned and Horny Gods

by Mel Mystery

Phallic and fertility gods seem to be the favorites of many Gay men, whatever their paths. Many Gay Norse Pagans choose the phallic, fertility god Freyr in their practice. Gay Hellenists frequently revere the ever-erect satyr god Pan or the androgynous fertility god Dionysus. Among gay Druids and those gay and bi men who follow a Celtic spiritual path, the horned (and horny) god Cernunnos takes center stage, along with his brother, consort, and / or rival the Green Man, who is god of vegetation and fertility.

Phallic worship also plays into many gay and bi men’s spiritual practices, especially those associated with horned, phallic gods. Many phallic gods have horns because horns are representative of wild, primal virility and sexuality. It is the male of many species (Billy goats, rams, bulls, stags, and others) that develop horns, and these are often fully developed near mating season. This is likely the origin of the term “horny” in reference to men becoming sexually aroused. Like the Oak and Holly Kings, horned male animals often fight it out for the affections of a female, though homosexuality among these animals is not unheard of.

Arcadia 2021

“Connecting and Reconnecting”

A Camp OUT for Queer Pagan Men

October 8-10, 2021

Virginia Beach, VA

www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia

Oak and Holly King: Rivals or Lovers?

by Mel Mystery

In modern Paganism, Cernunnos and the Green Man have taken up the roles of the Oak King and the Holly King as they battle each other for rulership of the light and dark halves of the year and the affections of the Earth Goddess. Many gay men have reimagined these stories, calling the Oak King and the Holly King gay lovers, rather than enemies or rivals.

While the Oak King and Holly King seem to have had some role in European seasonal folklore, their popularity in modern Paganism can be attributed to three books – **The White Goddess** by Robert Graves, **The Golden Bough** by Sir James Frazer, and **Eight Sabbats for Witches** by Janet and Stewart Farrar.

According to the stories, the Oak King and Holly King battle at the Winter Solstice. At that time the Oak King defeats the Holly King and the Oak King reigns and during the light half of the year as the days grow ever longer from the Winter Solstice to the Summer Solstice. At the Summer Solstice, the two fight again, but this time the Holly King wins and reigns during the dark half of the year as the days grow shorter from the Summer Solstice to the Winter Solstice. This cycle repeats itself annually. In some traditions, the time is shifted slightly with the battles taking place at the equinoxes rather than the solstices and with the victor being at the height of his power and the loser being reborn at the appropriate winter or summer solstice.

Cernunnos and the Green Man seem to be used interchangeably among many modern Pagans, even though one is a god of animals and the other is a god of vegetation. They also seem to be used interchangeably in the roles of the Oak King and the Holly King. My interpretation is that the Oak King is best represented by the Green Man since the Oak King's strength grows as we move from winter to spring – a time when plant growth is reborn and rejuvenates. As such the Holly King is best represented by Cernunnos. This would make sense given that stag rutting season is usually in the fall and that the Holly King is often depicted with stag horns. The Oak and Holly Kings could also be imagined specifically as dual aspects of one or the other of these gods.

For many gay men, the two gods are lovers rather than rivals. Their battles take on the character of sexual conquests with the winner claiming rulership of the appropriate season.

Cernunnos: Horned God of the Forest

by Mel Mystery

Cernunnos is a Celtic god associated with fertility, animals, nature, and the Underworld. He is a shaman figure with stag horns. Gods with antlers or horns are often symbols of masculinity and male virility. The famous depiction of Cernunnos found on the Gundestrup Cauldron depicts him sitting cross-legged among a group of forest animals while holding a torque in his right hand and a ram-headed snake in his left. The torque is a sign of nobility and wealth among the Celts, though it also might have been a symbol of homosexuality among the Norse. The wealth symbolism is furthered in that Cernunnos is often portrayed with a purse of coins. The snake in his left hand might be a symbol of healing, transformation, and the underworld. The snake is seen by some as an obvious phallic symbol. Horns and antlers are symbols of masculinity and virility. Besides being stag-headed himself, the ram-headed snake with which he is frequently depicted counterpoints his masculine and phallic nature. Cernunnos is sometimes portrayed naked with an erect phallus, though this tendency is more prominent in fertility gods of other cultures such as Pan from Greek mythology or Freyr from Norse mythology. Not much is known about Cernunnos or about how he was once worshipped, but that hasn't stopped him from becoming a favorite among modern neo-Pagans.

In modern times, Cernunnos is revered as one aspect of the Pagan horned god. He is seen as the instinctual and wild part of mankind. He is wild, sexual, virile, and lusty. Cernunnos is also seen as the embodiment of strong masculine energy. He is a "Lord of the Forest" and of wild places. He is protector of the animals.

Cernunnos is the Celtic aspect of the Pagan "Horned God." Horned fertility gods from other cultures include Pan (Greek), Faunus (Roman), Herne the Hunter (British), Freyr (Norse), and Pashupati (Hindu).



Image of Cernunnos from the Gundestrup Cauldron from the Wikimedia Commons

Poetry and Art



Image from Distilled Images - <http://www.distilledimages.net/>
Instagram/Twitter: @distilledimages

Only Lust

by M.R. Mirabal

*Sometimes, it's only lust.
Why embellish?
A voice,
A touch,
A smile though insincere,
Can ignite passion...*

*The flesh is weak.
The brain shuts off,
Ignores its own advice:
On standby so to speak
After flashing a screen-saver
Of Prince Charming on his knees.*

Love's Magick

by Mel Mystery

*Overwhelmed by the charm of your smile,
Enchanted by your mystic gaze,
I admire you from a distance.*

*I long to press my lips softly to yours,
To feel your pulsing heart next to my own,
To simply hold your hand.*

*I long to show you a lost place and time,
To watch the heavens on a starlit night,
To follow a crystal stream on a cool spring day.*

*But alas,
Even your gentle touch
Would forever drown me
Deeper within your spell.*

Gorse's Promise

As Spring approaches yellow-haired maidens dance on the sídhe,
The salty spray of ocean mists clinging to their hair.
Protect ye they will from the vengeful sprite.
Yet touch them not lest their nettles bite.

Spider webs and lilting birds, this lovely shrub, as home, is superb.
Sun rays land, pods pop and seedlings fly, allowing gorse to multiply.
Thorny broom sweeps across the land, From Éireann's brow to al-Andalus,
Alban Eiler rings forth its truth.

From darkness, light. The warmth returns.
The land is thawing and green things grow.
Happy thoughts, balance restored.
Holly King yawns and Oak King stirs.

Morning Fire

Hazy, weight. Tumescence.
Quickening, tingling. Balls askew
Essence stirs in the morning light.
A crow calls.

Light and heady my King is inside me
I am flanked. Joined by breath.
Arching, flowing. Sweet musk and honeydew.
A moan. Who? Retreat.

A pressure. A gentle push. Advance.
Fingers on the pulse.
Follow it, man. Depth.
Birds Chirping?

All too soon, empty. A dull ache.
Magick done.

Labhrás, March 9, 2021



Image from Distilled Images - <http://www.distilledimages.net/>
Instagram/Twitter: @distilledimages

Queer Pagan Resources

Queer Pagan Men's Groups

Brotherhood of Arcadia — The Brotherhood of Arcadia (BOA) is a spiritual organization created from the fusion of Hellenist and Pagan beliefs and practices with an emphasis on queer and sexuality positive beliefs, practices, and deities. BOA membership is open to men who love men regardless of whatever personal labels one chooses, and who are also over the age of 18. No one – male, female, or trans – who feels called to join will be turned away.

FMI: <http://www.melmystery.com/index.php/brotherhood-of-arcadia>

Brotherhood of Cernunnos -- A Brotherhood of UK Gay Pagan Men. **FMI:** <http://www.brotherhoodofcernunnos.org/>

Brotherhood of the Phoenix — A Neo-Pagan order for Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender men who love men. We celebrate the Spirit of the Divine within and build community with men who seek positive transformation of self, community, and the world. Together we work to weave the magick that changes lives.

FMI: <https://fellowshipofthephoenix.org/>

Cern'osia -- An eclectic Neo-Pagan faith which focuses exclusively on the veneration and worship of the Celtic Horned God, Cernunnos. Although it could be adapted by anyone who worships the Horned One, it was designed primarily with the needs of a solitary Pagan man in mind. **FMI:** <https://cernosia.webs.com/>

Ecclesia Antinoi — Devoted to the worship of Antinous, the lover of the Roman emperor Hadrian. Antinous was deified after his death and is worshiped by modern practitioners as a god of gay spirituality, youth, and beauty.

FMI: <http://www.antinopolis.org/>

Gay Druid Brotherhood — An international network for homosexual and bisexual men on the Druidic and Keltic inspired Pagan paths. **FMI:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/gaydruidbrotherhood/>

Green Faerie Grove — A brotherhood of queer men in Columbus, Ohio. **FMI:** <http://greenfaeriegrove.org/>

The Minoan Brotherhood — A men's initiatory tradition of the Craft celebrating Life, Men Loving Men, and Magic in a primarily Cretan context, also including some Aegean and Ancient Near Eastern mythology.

FMI: <http://www.minoan-brotherhood.org/>

Radical Faeries — Generally we are gay men who look for a spiritual dimension to our sexuality. Many of us are healers of one kind or another. Our shared values include feminism, respect for the Earth, and individual responsibility rather than hierarchy. Many of us are Pagan (nature-based religion). **FMI:** <http://www.radfae.org/>

The Unnamed Path — The Unnamed Path is a shamanic path for men who love men. The path focuses on four main parts—Magic and Prophecy, Shamanism, Energy Healing, and Deathwalking. **FMI:** www.unnamedpath.com

Submission deadline for the next issue of Mysterious Ways is December 15, 2021.

Please consider sharing your articles, reviews, poetry, art, events, and announcements.

E-mail these to Mel at knightsofmatrix@gmail.com. Please put "Mysterious Ways" in the subject line.

Upcoming Retreats and Gatherings

September 20-25, 2021 — Between the Worlds at Wisteria in Pomeroy, OH. Keynote speaker: Ivo Dominguez, Jr., Entertainers: Justin Hiltner and Discarded Mischief. A spiritual gathering for men who love men. FMI: <http://www.betweentheworlds.org>

September 23-26, 2021 — Gay Spirit Visions Fall Retreats at the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center in Highlands, NC. FMI: <http://gayspiritvisions.org/annual-gatherings/>

October 8-10, 2021 — Arcadia Camp OUT at First Landing State Park, Virginia Beach, VA. This year's theme is "Connecting and Reconnecting." The Patron deity this year is Hermes. A camping retreat for Queer Pagan and Hellenist Men.

FMI: <http://www.olympuscampgroundresort.com/index.php/events/arcadia>

Blogs and Podcasts for Pagan men who love men

A Path through the Woods — Blog by a gay, Pagan, polytheist who lives in Chicago — <https://www.adrianmoran.com/>

Discovering the Male Mysteries — Official webpage for Mel Mystery and the Discovering the Male Mysteries podcast for gay and bi Pagan men. — <http://www.melmystery.com/>

Enfolding.org — A blog by Phil Hine to discuss interests including Tantra, Queer Theory, Gender, History, and Occult Practice. — <http://enfolding.org/>

Faehaven — Based in Harrisburg, PA the community is forming in order to create a space where queers and their advocates can explore spirituality of all sorts and have a safe space to share among like-minded independent individuals. — <https://faehaven.wordpress.com/about/>

Horns — A NSFW magazine where erotica meets Queer occultism and Paganism. — <http://www.hornsmagazine.com/>

Transfaith — An online journal for Trans spirituality. Includes a Trans Pagan section. — <https://www.transfaith.info/pagan>

Walking the Unnamed Path — Discusses the teachings and techniques given to us by their Ancestors of MWLM, and laid out by their late founder Hyperion. They also discuss topics and ideas pertaining to queer Pagan men in general. — <https://www.blogtalkradio.com/walkingtheunnamedpath>

Witches Betwixt — Witches Betwixt is a collective of queer witches representing a wide variety of magical practices and spiritual paths. We release a 45+ minute episode bi-weekly in which we discuss various topics relevant to the experience of a queer witch. — <http://witchesbetwixt.buzzsprout.com/>

**Looking for a speaker for your next gathering, retreat, or other event?
Check out the Queer Pagan Speaker Directory online!**

www.melmystery.com/index.php/links/queer-pagan-speaker-directory

Mysterious Ways

The Mysterious Ways Cyberzine is produced and published by Mel Mystery.

Mel Mystery is host of the Discovering the Male Mysteries Podcast for Gay and Bi Pagan Men. He is also author of the book, "The Gay Guys Guide to Werewolves and other Man Beasts" and he has a few other books in the works

You can find out about Mel, listen to his podcast, and find out more about his books at: www.melmystery.com

Archive copies of this newsletter will also be kept on the site.

We need your support!!!

This paper is a community-based project. We're not charging for subscriptions. We're not accepting paid advertising. Those writing articles are not paid for their work. This paper is for the Queer Pagan Men's community and by the Queer Pagan Men's community.

If you think this paper is worthwhile, please consider helping us to thrive. We need folks to submit articles, artwork, poetry, reviews, and other content. We need folks to share this in Queer Pagan groups and social media groups. We need folks to print copies and share them in LGBTQ and Pagan spaces in their local communities.

Thank you for doing your part!!!

Next Issue: Charting Our Own Paths

Paganism is often considered largely individualistic, though many work within the guidelines of a particular path or magickal system. As Queer Pagan men, how do our magickal paths reflect our Queer identities and sensibilities (or do we keep our Paganism and our Queerness separate)? What specific queer Pagan male groups, events, and magicks are we pioneering?

Please send articles, reviews, original poetry, and other submissions to Mel at knightsofmatrix@gmail.com by December 15, 2021. Be sure to put "Mysterious Ways Submission" in the subject line.

Submission Guidelines:

1. All submissions should be of interest to Queer Pagan Men and fit at least two of the criteria—Queer, Pagan, and Men.
2. All submissions (especially photography and artwork) should be rated PG-13 or less. Since this newsletter will be shared in social media groups and in Pagan shops where minors might have access, we'd rather err on the side of community standards—not that we necessarily agree with them all.
3. Most articles should be a typewritten page or less. We may consider longer articles based on relevance and content.
4. You retain ownership and/or copyright of any articles or artwork you submit. We are only providing a venue to share your work with the world.
5. We reserve the right to refuse any content for any reason; to make minor edits such as spelling, grammar, and formatting; or to send the content back to you for revision.
6. We will not accept content that is explicitly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ageist, body shaming, or that otherwise spreads hate, negativity, or misinformation about any population or subculture of people.