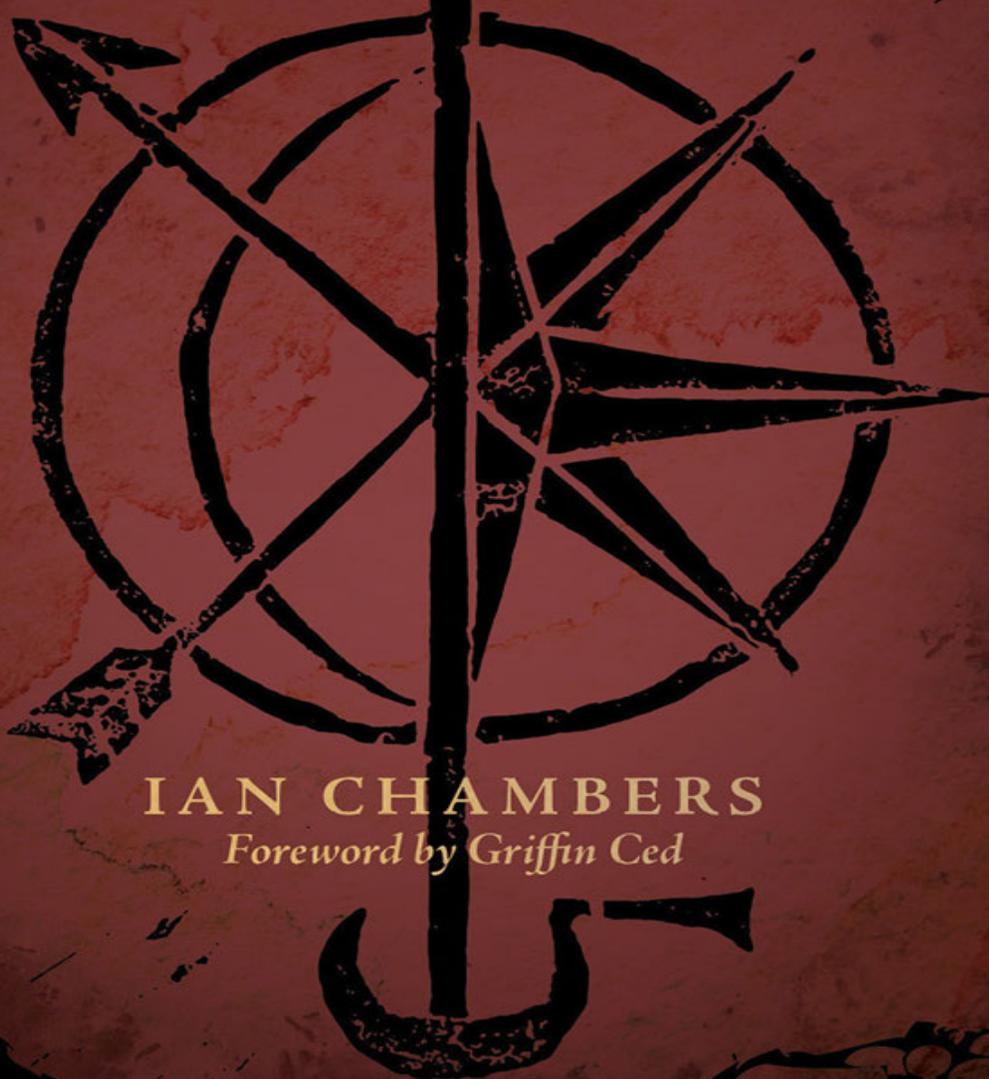


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—Nigel G. Pearson, author of *Treading the Mill*

# THE Witch Compass

*Working with the Winds in Traditional Witchcraft*



IAN CHAMBERS

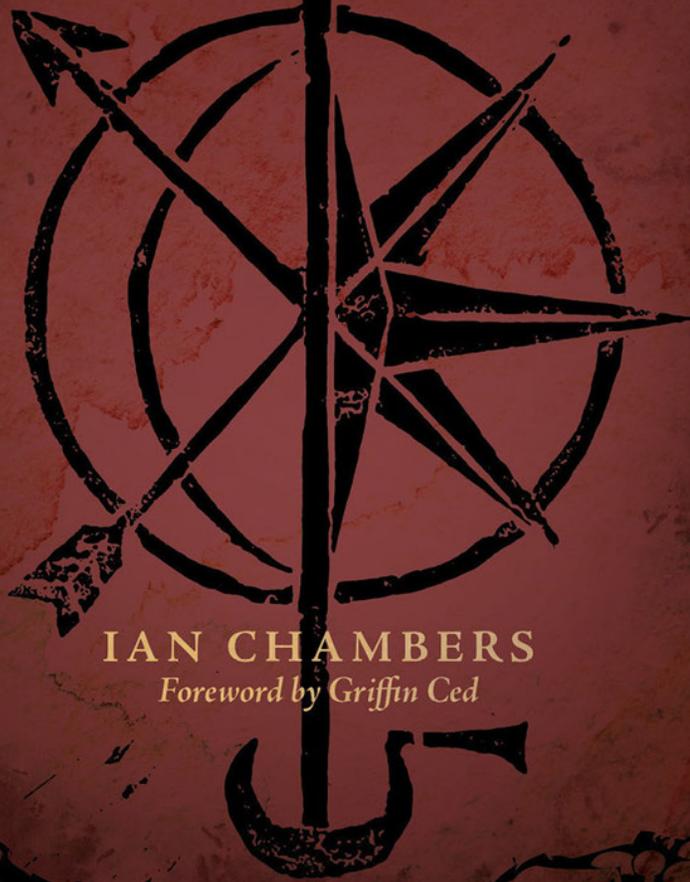
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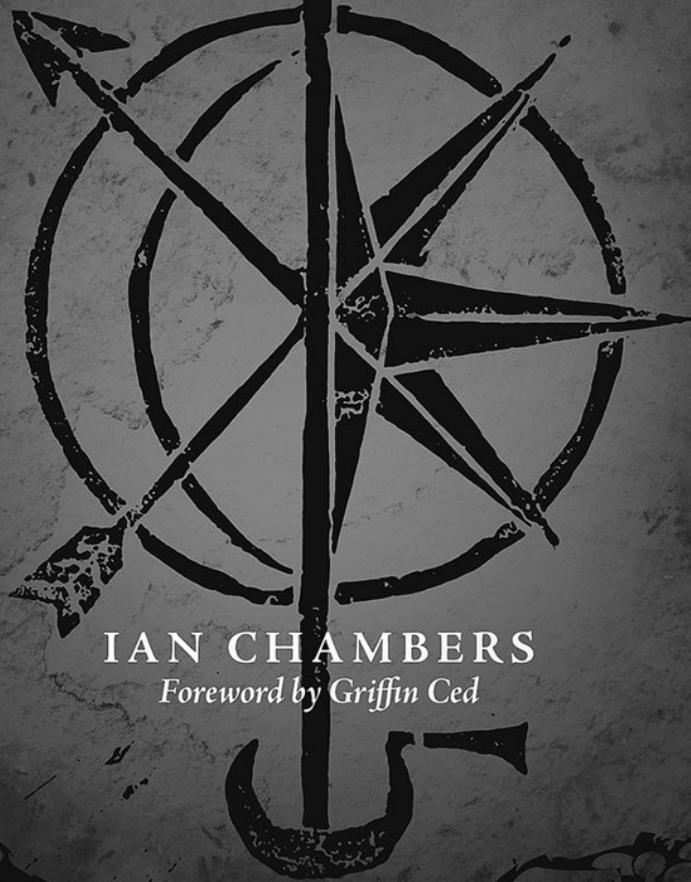
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[Figure 1: The Circle of Solomon and Triangle of Solomon from The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King, 1904, Stephen Skinner.](#)

[Figure 2–Figure 5, Figure 7, Figure 9–Figure 11 provided by Ian Chambers](#)

[Figure 6: The Spirit Compass Rose from The Ars Theurgia Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King, 1904, Stephen Skinner.](#)

[Figure 8 by the Llewellyn Art Department](#)

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*To my dear wife.*

*With all my affection eternally.*

*I. C.*

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## *Foreword*

Of all the many potential tools that could be employed within the art of Traditional Witchcraft, the Witches' Compass is most certainly the most foundational and yet the most complicated of all to address. I have been presenting and teaching Traditional Witchcraft for nearly thirty years, during which I have employed the Witches' Compass as a structural tool to hang many subjects upon in order to lend coherence and clarity to the depth of the material. During this time, I have taught many series on the compass itself only to feel each time that I am able to cover a limited aspect of what the compass holds. Such is the scope of complexity that the compass can hold and illuminate.

Using the compass, witches who work by their "Second Sight" with gods and spirits can navigate all kinds of magical reality as a subjective landscape of ever-shifting qualities of spirit. The compass illuminates the relationships between qualities of spirit, often using legacy material such as mythology to bring further clarity. This supports our ability to practice our art of witchery and inspires evolution in our spirit awareness. All art forms, such as music, poetry, prose, and fine arts, work subjectively upon the growth of our spirit, whereas more objective forms of information are designed to inform our intellect and reason. The arts, including the art of witchcraft, can only be experienced subjectively through our own spirit. This makes each perception of witchcraft as personal to us as would be our experience of all other arts. As such, to grasp and claim the Witches' Compass requires the personal quest of each witch, using the subjective experiences of truth we encounter to shape our compass.

Shifting to a more academic perspective, the overall legitimacy of the compass must also fall back onto the objective recognition of its historic use by multiple cultures, peoples, and times. With all of this in mind, I truly have to applaud Ian Chambers for clearly mediating his insight into the workings of the Witches' Compass as a practitioner but also as an historian and researcher. But above all, it is clear that as one who carries the Old Arte in his blood, Ian's personal understanding of the core nature and use of the

compass supports his ability to bring insight into the history and application of the compass.

Exploring the realms of spirit, including the Divine in all expressions, the realm of the dead, the realms of nature, and the spirits of our civilised humanity, is difficult to navigate. Realms that are, in truth, not geographical but, rather, distinct states of being require us to employ a tool of translation and mediation. The compass is the most important tool of any spirit-based practice; it is a living spirit that arranges itself within context much like a tarot deck does when depicting the mechanics of fate. Due to its fluid nature, the compass can serve innumerable expressions of cosmology, and even though this book does not present the specific way those of my line work the compass, I clearly recognise the root mechanics in play as completely true to my understanding of this sacred tool of the winds!

I am one of those old witches who works by the “Sight,” in constant counsel with spirit allies and gods. For this reason, as I read books, the spirits engage me in discourse as to the legacy I hold within my blood. It makes it bloody hard to read more than a paragraph at a time, and it takes a great deal of concentration to keep my attention on track! It’s funny that Ian knows this about me and still he has asked me to write this foreword, which required me to read his book! Well, having read it, I have to say it was a pleasure to read—so informational and inspirational at the same time, a delightful combination. And I think many will find this book a wonderful starting point to engage in what could easily become the spiritual quest of your life!

**Griffin Ced**

Witch Father and Magister of the  
Ced Tradition of Heretical Witchcraft

## *Introduction*



Whenever we pick up a book or begin a conversation about witchcraft today, it is impossible to avoid an early discussion about the magic circle. This fundamental concept in Wicca—and ceremonial or ritualised magic—is used in a variety of techniques to separate sacred space and contain energy within. In other uses, the circle is formed to protect the necromancer while spirits are summoned. Perhaps the most elementary ritual process of much of modern witchcraft, Wicca, and occult practices, there remains little to be said upon the subject.

By contrast, the compass of Traditional Witchcraft is a tool for location, positioning the witch within an ensorcelled worldview and a mythological map. In addition, it provides the ritual means to traverse the worlds, enabling spirit congress and a mythic landscape that can be accessed at any point in time and space.

Through experience and use, the compass is an expansive cosmological model of mystical and magical operation. As a Ring of Art, it may occasion an appearance similar to that of the magic circle in form. However, the

purpose and basis of the compass are far greater than the sum of its parts, unifying the Hermetic idiom: “That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above.”

The purpose of this book is to explore the historic and cultural usage of the witches’ compass of the winds, “airts compass,” as it has been worked through the years by different groups and individuals, presenting a magical worldview that becomes a necessary part of Traditional Witchcraft today. The Witch Compass seeks to introduce you to the compass of the eight winds as it is used, through myth and magic, to enable a direct and experiential work with the inherent spirits of witchery. The ambition of The Witch Compass is nothing short of sorcery: the ensorcelling of the witches’ compass as a means of travelling to the Grand Sabbath and engaging directly with the spirit of the Devil, the Father of Witchcraft, in order to effect change by working with and through Dame Fate, the triple-faced Queen of the Witches.

The model that is offered in this book represents an entire worldview: a cosmological map and a means of magic and revelation—a throne-chariot, or Merkabah. Ultimately, through understanding, working, and developing a paradigm that allows for all of this, we are empowered to work with our wyrd and learn where and how we may interact, influence, and shape the world anew—in a word: magic.

The Witch Compass is such a complete system of magico-mystical operation that it becomes extremely restrictive to discuss in and around the subject of Traditional Witchcraft without exploring from within the limitless bounds of its multifaceted wisdom. Indeed, in order to approach the very body of Traditional Witchcraft, we may utilise the working airts compass as a tool for expression of all that lies between and betwixt. This grand exposition underlies much of Traditional Witchcraft and is the mainstay of this book.

Traditional Witchcraft is a rather nebulous concept within a broader occult and Neopagan milieu that appears to incorporate many strands and streams of lore and tradition from often disparate sources. Moreover, there is a growing trend whereby many have turned to Traditional Witchcraft as an idiosyncratic expression of witchery, grounded in a slippery historicity.

Lacking a unified and organised singular form, as is found in its more structured cousin of initiatory Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft has popularly evolved into an eclectic grouping of associated aspects, frequently through the unquestionable authority of Unverified Personal Gnosis (UPG). However, there is an emerging set of identifiers through which we can recognise Traditional Witchcraft, although this is still in its relative infancy.

With a strong emphasis upon folklore and practicality, Traditional Witchcraft is seen as positively pragmatic and functional. As a commonality of philosophy, belief and practice presently defies categorization; it becomes a fool's errand to attempt a classification under a single heading. Traditional Witchcraft, then, is too much of a moving target to enable a full and complete exposition, being grounded as it is in the historical record, imagination and practice of folk magics. Furthermore, like most successful currents of magic found throughout the hectic lives of the common person, which one might term "folk," Traditional Witchcraft must answer that fundamental line of inquiry, expressed succinctly by the late Joseph "Bearwalker" Wilson, founder of the 1734 tradition: "Does it grow corn?" In short, we are required to enquire both of ourselves and the magics we operate what it is that we hope to achieve, why, and how.

That's not to say that no result, or even a lack of one, is always a bad result. Indeed, we may have occasion to regard no apparent result as a success and, in and of itself, imbued with some necessary lessons or meaning that does, indeed, yield a healthy crop. However, the baseline of our Craft should always be marked by that rule outlined by Wilson.

Features by which we might recognise Traditional Witchcraft include, but are not limited to, attendance at the witches' sabbath, spirit flight, shapeshifting, meeting with the folkloric Devil, familiar spirits, necromancy, demonology, casting of spells, spoken charms, veneficium (the preparation of poisons), bewitching (enchaining another), and maleficium (witchcraft or sorcery with the intent to harm).

An additional feature is some recognition of the three Fates, sometimes historically recognised during the medieval and Renaissance periods in the form of the classical psychopomp or lunar-affected goddess Hekate or Diana, as explored in Professor Ronald Hutton's "The Wild Hunt and the

Witches' Sabbath."<sup>1</sup> Often accompanying Dame Fate is the figure of the Devil. The role of the diabolic Witch Father is one that must be addressed, being such a significant presence within the work of many modern Traditional Witchcraft models, as well as the present book.

If myths are the stories we tell ourselves to give meaning and purpose to life, the overarching narrative of our society has been that of Christianity. The entire corpus of our cultural conditioning is embodied within a worldview, "habitus," that finds its place in relation to the dominant Christian mythos that permeates all levels of societal and cultural mindset since the early Medieval period.<sup>2</sup> So pervasive has this habitus been that most remnants of a pagan past were seamlessly folded into the narrative, inseparably incorporating, for example, North European fairy lore into a Christian worldview.

## **The Devil in Witchcraft**

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the growth of popular Wicca, with attempts to sanitise certain aspects traditionally belonging to witchcraft, coincided with the development of Neopaganism and Druidry. These latter two expressed, for the most part, a modern Pagan interpretation of history, myth, and folklore coupled with the esoteric traditions of the last century and structured, in their beginnings, around the more Rosicrucian aspects of Freemasonry. Out of this morass, the idea of a pagan witch cult was mooted once again, and despite being roundly discredited by scholars and academics, the belief in a continuation of an ancient pagan religious movement, active in Europe since before the witch trials of the Middle Ages, became entrenched. Indeed, so firmly fixed is this notion that it is oft-repeated today, neglecting the actual historicity, and Pagan witchcraft has stuck.

In recent years, evolving thought has adopted a more realistic perspective, taking in the most current developments in academic research and

experience of practitioners as well as an unprecedented availability of literature and studies in magical thinking and history of the occult. With an upsurge of interest coming from the history and anthropology departments of major universities—thanks in part to the efforts of Professor Ronald Hutton, University of Bristol—the subject of witchcraft has taken a more considered bent in the millennium.

With fresh eyes, the scholarly work of historians such as Emma Wilby (Honorary Fellow in History, University of Exeter) and Jeffrey Burton Russell (Professor Emeritus of History, University of California, Santa Barbara) has made significant contributions to the study of historical witchcraft, which have proved popular amongst the serious lay student of historic witchcraft. Through the hard work of academics and practical students of witchcraft and folk magics, a clearer understanding has emerged of sorcery decoupled somewhat from its late-twentieth-century fantasies of surviving pagan cults and practices.

In his historic study of folk magic practitioners of the early modern period, *The Cunning Man's Handbook*, historian Jim Baker introduces the reader to the concept of the habitus, derived from sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002). The habitus, that is, the habits, disposition, and characteristics which underlie a culture, within which witchcraft historically operated, exist within an exclusively Christianised worldview.<sup>3</sup> By the time of the witch trials in the late medieval to early modern period, Christianity was thoroughly established as the informing cosmological model of Western culture, all else being slotted in to conform with this overriding perspective.

The particulars and details of this outlook may vary to the extent that considerable conflict was present through various schisms that plagued the church at the time. However, it should be understood that the overall model that the common people operated within, including the names and identities of classical gods and spirits, was encompassed by a worldview which held Christ and his teachings as central.

When the inquisitors penned the famous treatise against witchcraft, *Malleus Maleficarum*, we can observe, with the luxury of distance through time, the piteous vulnerability its authors were projecting: the frustration at being

locked into the cold structure of a powerful church that consolidated power and wealth at its top and a stark misogyny that is frankly shocking even today. Like all men bound by a hierarchical power struggle, the authors reacted to the abuses of that power by visiting further violence upon those they could. To use a popular paraphrase of Matthew 26:52, violence begets violence, and in the case of Heinrich Kramer (1430–1505), the principal author of the *Malleus*, the production of a manual designed to persecute any under the suggestion of witchery was prompted after his expulsion from Innsbruck by Bishop Golser, describing him as “senile and crazy” in his correspondence.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, this summation was likely accurate, but the petty and vindictive nature of Kramer summoned a cruel and vicious response, the bilious vitriol dripping from him onto the page, attacking women as justification. Criticised and dejected, removed by more powerful men, Kramer vented his spleen on those who were most vulnerable, and his frustration and anger are palpable.

It is little wonder that the people—subjected to the domineering spiritual culture of the church, yet deprived of its most sacred nourishment due to social status—sought their succour elsewhere on occasion. We must resist the urge to assume that this was to be found in a paganism which did not exist in the minds of the common folk in the manner of later speculative history. No, as the church understood well enough, those who turned from the hectoring of the powerful priesthood would resort, inevitably, to its anathema: the fallen angels, headed by the rebel par excellence.

Within the folklore and custom of the common man, we must remember that the Devil manifests a force that challenges the status quo, driving evolution—a necessary agent of change—that encourages us, through the trickster’s repertoire of turns, to grow and adapt to circumstances. His way is not one of comfort but is transgressive, reconditioning, liberating through casting off the cuirass of expectation and guilt, adopting instead the resplendent raiment of potential. When you have lost everything, you are made free to do anything. All potentiality is his promise and gift; the choice is yours alone. It is to this figure that we now approach, the initiation of the Witch Father.

The role of the Devil in the early medieval period incorporated a function similar to, and reflecting, the Old Testament figure of the “Adversary”: Satan. In this capacity, the diabolic role of the “Adversary” can be seen through the formula of opposition, being the one who advances or evolves through the use of the challenge, of antithesis. As the English chess master Samuel S. Boden (1826–1882) observed, “If you are desirous to learn, always play with a strong player, rather than with an inferior one.”<sup>5</sup>

Within the prevailing worldview of the folkloric past, the position of the Devil became allied with that of Lucifer and attained chthonic rulership in the process. Throughout the body of lore associated with the Devil, we find Him as the “Angel of the Crown,” “hakathriel,” before his fallen state, when He is transmuted into the “bringer of light,” the son of the Morning Star, Lucifer. <sup>6</sup> Furthermore, tradition holds that the emerald jewel which fell from the crown of Lucifer is the keystone of occult lore, the Tabula Smaragdina (Emerald Tablet), or sometimes the Holy Grail itself. <sup>7</sup>

The folkloric Devil, as he is found in witch lore, is the champion of transgression and inversion, the agent of change and evolution, and the fire that inspires or challenges us to commute lead into gold. He is the chief heretic, from the Greek haireisis, meaning to choose for oneself.

In a world dominated by the oppressive structures of the state and church, allied in subjugating the medieval and early modern common class of people, the figure of the Devil emerged in witchcraft as a liberating figure, a rebellious leader with the promise of opposing the harsh stricture that was being imposed.

Indeed, so firmly fixed was the Devil as the spirit of rebellion and heresy that twentieth-century activist and writer Saul D. Alinsky (1909–1972) evoked this very angel in his manual for uniting low-income communities and affecting change against the abuses of power. In *Rules for Radicals*, Alinsky acknowledges Lucifer as the first insurgent, whose rebellion against the establishment accomplished rulership over his own kingdom and instigated the model of counterculture in the process.<sup>8</sup>

The subject of the Witch Compass has been widely discussed since the concept gathered greater attention over the last ten or twenty years. Among

the growing body of literature dedicated to the subject of Traditional Witchcraft, the writings of Shani Oates, as part of the legacy of the late Robert Cochrane and the Clan of Tubal Cain, form a corpus of work which explores the philosophy and purpose of the Witch Compass.

In her debut book, Tubelo's Green Fire (2010), Oates introduces the reader to the concept of the compass previously discussed through some of her essays. Most relevant to our study, Oates has presented an approach to the Witch Compass that harkens back to its original mentioning in the writings of Robert Cochrane, while developing the inherent ideas therein, including the celestial, solar, and lunar influences, axis mundi, and Jewish Merkabah mysticism, to name a few. In addition, the compass of the Clan of Tubal Cain is shown to be connected with seasonal festivals, marking cosmological cycles of birth to death, which are mythically mapped through the journey of the year.<sup>9</sup>

Amongst popular parlance, outside of those few texts which confidently elaborate the tool, the most common understanding of the compass is that it is an alternative, niche term with a comparable structure to the magic circle as found in, for example, ceremonial magic or Wicca. However, the origin and function of the compass finds archaic use and evolution through ancient and medieval demonology and goetic theurgy.

As we shall see through the course of this book, the Witch Compass is not simply a protective repository of magics. As has been previously discussed by Shani Oates, it is a cosmological model, as simple or complex as we require, acting as both map and territory, providing a vehicle for the witch to traverse the many realms.<sup>10</sup> In this way, it is the basis for apprehending the techniques and philosophies underlying many currents of modern Traditional Witchcraft, with roots which include the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, Greek magical papyri, and medieval demonology, theurgy, and grimoire traditions of the spirit compass. Ultimately, the Witch Compass becomes the guiding principle by which we come to navigate the worlds and perform effective sorcery. Frank MacEowen in *The Celtic Way of Seeing* expresses the basis on which the compass horizon informs the worldview through the myth and narratives which fortified the Celtic peoples of ancient Ireland.<sup>11</sup> From the earliest civilisations, who developed

the directions as a means to organise and bring social, spiritual, and ethical order, through to the early modern magician and cunning man, the compass has been ever built upon spirits and direction as a tool to navigate the world.

This book seeks to explore some of those comparable models, which may be found in classical mythology of the wind gods through to Cornish witches binding gales in knots to sell to sailors in the last century; from hoary Chinese Taoist philosophy, feng shui, and I Ching, to the Gaelic airts (directions and winds) through such myths as “The Settling of the Manor of Tara.”<sup>12</sup>

While the origins and practical use of the Witch Compass and magic circle have a clearly shared ancestry, there is, perhaps, a misunderstanding of the compass and its place and purpose in the sorcerous current of witchcraft. There are, of course, differences of opinion and no “one-size-fits-all” within witchcraft—as it should be—and this book is in no way meant as an authoritative or dogmatic attempt, but rather a clarifying elucidation. In turn, the book represents a summation of my years of practice within witchcraft (both Traditional and Wiccan), folk magic, and exploration and research into sundry related and adjacent subjects.

My earliest study of the compass came through the work of Robert Cochrane (Roy Bowers, 1931–1966), who articulated a form of mystical practice he sometimes identified as witchcraft, at other times eschewing the title entirely. My familiarity with Cochrane’s expression of witchcraft grew as I became more acquainted with the efforts of the individuals who had been involved with the work and continue its legacy. Amongst the most striking parallels that Cochrane makes about his use and understanding of the Witch Compass is with the Kabbalist Tree of Life through his letters with ceremonial magician William G. Gray. It can be seen that the Witch Compass may, indeed, function in a similar fashion—the Sephiroth becoming diagrammatically arranged through horizontal and vertical planes. Furthermore, the Kabbalist text *Sefer Yetzirah*, with detailed commentary by Aryeh Kaplan, demonstrates how the system asserts dimensional space and cosmological mapping through the Hebrew alphabet of sacred letters and numbers.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, within his correspondence with various recipients, Cochrane subtly hints at the use of “trees” arranged in

his Compass, by which we might assume the use of the Ogham tree alphabet as it was developed and adapted to correspond with mystical ideas in Robert Graves's *The White Goddess*.<sup>14</sup>

It came as a surprise to me to learn, through an article in the now-defunct *White Dragon* periodical (Samhain, 2006), that Cochrane's Clan of Tubal Cain continues to operate under its current leader and Maid, Shani Oates.<sup>15</sup> Sparking excitement and curiosity, I made the conscious decision to seek out those with working knowledge of the system and corresponded with Shani Oates at some length as well as Stuart Inman of Joseph Wilson's 1734 tradition. Since then, I have been fortunate enough to work with some remarkable individuals, some of whom represent lineages of witchcraft that span many decades and operated around similar times and groups as Cochrane and his associates. I am blessed to be involved and practice regularly with a couple such traditions, one of which was reified in the mid-twentieth century but has its provenance several decades earlier through hereditary family traditions and research of witchcraft and folklore of Wales.

For me, the nature and function of the Witch Compass etched itself upon my magical psyche through my early exposure to the works of Robert Cochrane and subsequent correspondence with Shani Oates. Later, it was working with the Ced Family Tradition of Heretical Witchcraft that provided further depth and breadth of understanding. Headed by Magister Griffin Ced and operating ostensibly out of The Green Man Store in North Hollywood, the Ced Tradition is a British Old Craft line, following Griffin's immersion in the Craft of Essex, United Kingdom, in the 1970s. The Ced line travelled with Griffin and eventually found its home in Los Angeles and Utah, building community and promoting British Old Craft through teaching and direct engagement.

It was through this line of inquiry that I learnt more of the experience of the deep tapestry of the Witch Compass. It was apparent that the compass referred to is a quite different and much more expansive model than the Wiccan circle I was used to at the time. Indeed, the compass incorporates, baked into its architecture, the assigning of spirits, demons, angelic forces,

even deities, to the points of the compass gates as part of an inspired cosmology.

In addition, the seasonal cycles and festivals reveal themselves as one of the earliest incarnations of the compass rose as humankind ever seeks to locate themselves in the world of space and time. In doing so, the information and character of each passage of time, as a node upon the compass round, is possessed of its own quality of light (autumnal gloaming or summer haze) and its especial wind (characteristic of the season, such as northerly in winter).

In working with the directions of the compass, we establish operative relationships with the spirits who occupy these spaces as dwelling places. A radically experiential process, one develops familiarity with the Witch Compass through working it over the space of a solar year and many years thereafter. While it can be conceptualised and intellectualised, its essential nature remains elusive to all but those prepared to engage directly and participate in the compass. After the Witch Compass has been worked deeply, an ontology develops naturally and markedly, revealing a means of recognising spirits and entities that occupy the realms of our worldview, as well as the fundamental basis of the reality in which all is sustained. This revelation exploded the whole subject of witchcraft for me, and I hope to present some working understanding that will do the same for you.

*The Witch Compass, then, represents the first book to explore and examine the fundamental tool of many forms of Traditional Witchcraft. In doing so, you will be introduced to a cornucopia of information, a distillate of experience, and the necessary guidance to steer you toward an experiential understanding. Furthermore, the techniques employed and developed will propel the work of those who engage in it and become a basis of further magical exploration. While much of the discussion will, of necessity, talk around the subjects relevant to the Witch Compass as I have experienced it, you are encouraged to undertake the exercises given in the text and experiment to develop through your own traditions and mythology.*

With the above in mind, the exercises used throughout this work are meant as demonstrative and should be understood as being independent of any particular tradition or system. While the use of names to identify the spirits

of the winds are those that have been used by the author, personal gnosis should be heeded and the call of the spirits acknowledged. While we will be using myths and pantheons as guidelines, it cannot be stressed enough that your personal story will serve you better than any introduced by another. The purpose of the given exercises is to signpost and allow you to locate yourself, orient and become the master of your compass, and navigate the world from a magical perspective of Traditional Witchcraft.

In presenting this work, it is important to note that my involvement with the Ced Tradition of British Old Craft, and my relationship to Griffin Ced in particular, has significantly informed my personal practice and experience, for which I am eternally thankful, grateful, and beholden. Other influences to whom my sincere appreciation and gratitude is due are Shani Oates, Robin the Dart, and, of course, Stuart Inman. We stand upon the shoulders of giants, without whom the modern Traditional Witchcraft coterie of associated traditions would not have developed such rich and fulfilling material, and I must acknowledge and thank Robert Cochrane, Ruth Wynn Owen, Evan John Jones, William G. Gray, Norman Gills, and Ronald “Chalky” White, as well as Doreen Valiente. To all these, I humbly express appreciation and respect. Finally, I must thank my fellow journeymen and women, corporeal and ethereal, who have contributed to my ever-growing experience within the sacred enclosure of the Children of Brân (Y Plant Brân).

## **Significant Influences**

For an understanding of the mythic narrative that informs the methodology of the Witch Compass, in the following chapters I shall be drawing literary inspiration from three distinct but relevant literary influences.

The first is *The New Pagans’ Handbook*, a work composed by Ronald “Chalky” White, a founding member of The Regency following the death of Robert Cochrane in the 1960s. This work, developed by White from the

experience and instructions of his own teachers and influences, outlines and provides a defined narrative of the ritualised and codified myth of the year, which inspires much of the underlying thought of the Witch Compass.

Secondly, reference will be made to the mythic Theme of the god and goddess, as much as they share with and depart from Traditional Witchcraft, published in *A Witches' Bible* by Janet and Stewart Farrar, with insight gleaned from Doreen Valiente. This represents an approach and understanding of the mythic narrative through the so called "Wheel of the Year" and its eight ritual festivals, which, again, may inspire the overarching thesis of the Witch Compass.

Finally, but importantly, the works of Shani Oates, Robert Cochrane, and Evan John Jones, although pertaining to the Clan of Tubal Cain, mark a significant reference point in discussing the compass relative to modern Traditional Witchcraft.

The inspiration for this book has many sources (aside from the three literary sources stated above), which inform to greater and lesser degrees the mythic experience of the compass and the seasonal cycle of the "Wheel of the Year."

A significant influence upon my appreciation of the compass is the current of Sabbatic Witchcraft, particularly expounded in the writings of Andrew D. Chumbley and Daniel Schulke, made available in the outer through the publishing body of the Sabbatic sodality collectively known as the *Cultus Sabbati*. In addition, the information and teachings of Griffin Ced have been invaluable in developing my understanding and practical approach to the Witch Compass in particular and Traditional Witchcraft in general.

Within the vast inky pool of awareness, deep inside the blackened well of the skull, lies Golgotha, the "Place of the Skull," where the cross of the world, reaching out to the four directions, is witness to that seminal sacrifice of self. In this "void place of spirit," the lone light is absolute, illuminating all upon the darkened canvass of our inner landscape where the "Crossroads of the Psyche" joins the hypnagogic dance of wake, sleep, and dream.<sup>16</sup> This infinite imaginal speculum, when attended to, has unlimited powers to enable us to become co-creators within our reality. Furthermore,

it is at the very crossroads of the compass that we may chance to attain that merest glimpse of the quintessential sabbat of the witches.

“If the doors of perception were cleansed,” wrote William Blake (1757–1827), “every thing would appear as it truly is, infinite.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the great poet asserted that humanity has enclosed itself within the cavern of the mind and permitted only the most narrow of openings through which to perceive the world. For many modern witches and sorcerers, these “doors of perception” stand at the crossroads of the compass, the cosmological model at the heart of Traditional Witchcraft. This subtle and profound paradigm utilises the language of narrative, the territory of mythology, and the means of folk magics to affect genuine witchery. By locating the witch within a map, the compass gives direction and meaning, a common language, and techniques for working effective sorcery.

[\[contents\]](#)

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# *Chapter 1*

## *Orienting*

### *What Is the Compass in Traditional Witchcraft*

It behooves us to begin a discussion on the compass with some foundational concepts and definitions as to what is being referred to. Therefore, we should outline at the start what is meant by the Witch Compass and its place within modern Traditional Witchcraft. As there is often, and mistakenly, a conflation between the magic circle and the compass, it is necessary to provide some history in order to discern where the most pertinent distinctions lie. For this reason, the chapter will discuss a brief history of the magic circle and where it intersects the compass, followed by an inquiry into the compass proper. Following this, a brief exploration of the compass in Traditional Witchcraft will provide an outline from which we will begin to engage directly in the work with proceeding exercises.

While the exercises and practices outlined throughout the book are influenced, in greater and lesser degree, by the sources mentioned in the introduction, I must stress that those presented here are either my own or interpreted through the prism of the compass, expressed through tireless study and work.

Furthermore, you are encouraged to take the bones here laid bare and en flesh them through the myth and flavour of their own as becomes apparent to you. Those myths and rituals that are presented throughout the book are necessary in order to teach the compass mythos and are used as illustrative of the function and purpose of the compass, generating the fullest picture. The

intention is that you, having worked through the exercises and gained an understanding of how the compass functions, tap into those bones and enliven them.

In talking of the Witch Compass, we are dealing predominantly with what the ancient Greeks identified as *mythos*—the ineffable, mystery of unutterable truths which can be known only through experiential relationships in symbolism, poetry, and allegory. Therefore, discussions around the compass can sometimes feel confusing and difficult, even alien to our *logos*-centric thinking. Here, *logos* denotes reasoning and materialistic logic or study (as seen in the scientific -ologies: biology, geology, sociology, psychology, pathology, etc.). Indeed, an attempt to confine the indescribable to the systematic “word,” *logos* to the Greeks, is in itself fraught with folly and prone to manifold errors. Like trying to grip water in a closed fist, the tighter we try to hold on to it, the more it slips through our grasp. This means much of the discussion will involve talking around the subject of the compass. Like a hunter stalking their prey, the compass can be tracked only through metaphor, whispered in hushed tones, and will flee at the first clumsy attempts to confine it through definitions.

Following is but brief examination of the Witch Compass. This sets the principal ideas present in this book. For clarity, a discussion concerning the magic circle, as it pertains particularly to modern Wicca, follows. In addition, this necessitates a journey through the ceremonial use of the circle and the cardinal points of the compass as they pertain to ritual use.

Through comparison in this manner, I hope to illumine what the compass is not before introducing what it is and moving to explore the compass and its use and purpose in Traditional Witchcraft.

## **The Witches’ Compass**

A compass is defined as a means of aligning, or orienting, with the cardinal directions, usually by identifying magnetic north; the schema that uses four or more directions for locating; a tool used to inscribe a circle or arc; an instrument that measures distance between two points. This succinctly covers most uses of the mundane compass, but it also provides curious insight into the Witch Compass that will be expanded upon throughout the course of this book.

The first pivotal mention of the Witch Compass in the context of modern Traditional Witchcraft occurs in a letter from an early adherent of modern Traditional Witchcraft, Robert Cochrane, to the Kabbalist and magician William G. Gray. Within this fascinating correspondence, Cochrane dedicated one short paragraph, which begins with his doubts concerning the nine-foot witches' circle, popularly espoused in the work of Gardner and originating in a misunderstanding of Solomonic practice. Contrary to the circle used by popular modern Wicca, Cochrane briefly describes the compass in his letters as being constituted of ancient technology, a rural Craft about which a more mystical science can be decoded.<sup>18</sup> This, then, would appear to be the earliest reference to the compass within a modern witchcraft context.<sup>19</sup>

Continuing the legacy of Cochrane, Shani Oates has discussed these topics at length, including a detailed essay that addresses the very nature of the Witch Compass and Cochrane's introduction of it to a greater readership through his letters.<sup>20</sup>

The Witch Compass is essentially a method of mapping, journeying, and envisioning the otherworld, underworld, or inspirited realm. Often incorporating the physical landscape to trigger certain symbolic, mythic, and allegorical experiences, the compass is a platform for projecting the awareness of the witch to engage in spiritual congress. A ritual utilising the compass might incorporate within it a plethora of smaller rituals and meditational devices intended to affect the transition required to approach the otherworld, while the result can be employed for mystical, magical, or divinatory purposes.

No matter the tradition of witchcraft—and the compass is broad and robust enough to accommodate a wealth of diversity—a Witch Compass does not

“guard” or “protect” in and of itself, as does a Wiccan and magic circle. However, one usually has to “pass the watch” before entry to the other realms may be gained, and traditions usually have their own idiosyncratic means and traditions associated with such admissions. Neither is the basis of the compass specifically to contain “power” or “energy,” it being a vehicle, map, and destination through the mythic landscape. That being said, a compass may be used in witchery to retain and direct power according to coordinated efforts through the inherent cosmological map.

The compass is the entrance to and location within the underworld; it retains both an atemporal quality, as well as that of past, present, and future simultaneously—it is never still and never the same from one moment to the next. It provides the point of departure, egress, and return, and therefore is possessed of the properties of the Wheel of the Year and the mysteries of death and rebirth.

The eight sabbats are mentioned in original treatments of the Wiccan Book of Shadows but, as the Farrars discuss, the rituals for the festivals of the Wiccan calendar are wanting and little information is provided.<sup>21</sup> The Farrars, seeking to find a coherent pattern and overarching theme, utilising the myth of the Mother coupled with the Oak and Holly Kings, developed from a variety of influences their mythic structure of the ritual year.<sup>22</sup>

In 1974, American academic Aidan Kelly began working to construct a workable calendar of eight Pagan festivals through the Wheel for the Year, incorporating (controversially) Celtic names applied to each, introducing Ostara, Litha, and Mabon.<sup>23</sup> Doreen Valiente’s own 1978 book, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow*, references the eight festivals of the witch’s year, although a unifying mythos does not stand out.

Depending upon tradition, the Witch Compass is composed of varying numbers of winds, spirits, or airts. Each of the words for these finds its basis in etymologies that indicate “breath,” as in vital force, similar to qi or prana in many respects. The Gaelic airt indicates, for example, compass point and direction, but also wind with the meaning “to blow” (as from a specific quarter) and is similar in this to the Hebrew ruach. In each of these instances, there is an inference of a vivifying power in motion with the ability or function to cause movement within another. This is, then, an active,

animating, quickening force—inspired and possessed of its own particular characteristics, identity, personality, and influence—in short, a spirit! In this way, ancient poets have frequently inferred the gods and spirits of the winds and their seasonal potency as they bring a spectrum of vitalising or destructive vigour.

Aside from the most obvious four cardinal wind gods or spirits, there are also the three central axis points of above, below, and centre. The combination of the three axial (vertical) and four cardinal (horizontal) points gives a single compass of seven. This provides the obvious potential solution to the riddle of 1734 for students of Joe Wilson’s method of witchcraft: being 1 compass of 7 points made of 3 axial worlds and 4 cardinals.

Alternatively, the four cardinals are joined by another four intercardinal or cross-quarter directions, producing a compass of eight points corresponding typically with the Wheel of the Year and Robert Graves’s mythic “Theme.”<sup>24</sup> This annual cycle evolved from ancient seasonal festivities and folk custom and was channeled through the mythopoetic lens of Graves, adapted and adopted as a loosely based series of roughly equidistant festivals to form an eight-fold calendar of gatherings.<sup>25</sup>

As the Wheel of the Year pertains specifically to the calendrical seasons of time and tide from a geocentric and solar aspect, it serves as an ideal basis of earth-based and Pagan practice. For the Traditional Witch, however, the compass extends beyond the bounds of the earthly plane and incorporates a more shamanistic three-world model, including within its scope the over- and underworlds. In this way, the earthly energies and solar influences upon the seasons are but one aspect of the compass. While the Wheel of the Year ever turns upon its axis, in both the telluric and celestial rotations and poles, the compass always points north.

Within Traditional Witchcraft, one role of the compass is to reconcile the three worlds with each other as a coherent whole, expressed by a singular mythic landscape that spans all three. The Wheel of the Year, then, is located in the here and now, the “middle earth” or Midgard of myth, the material plane. Being the world we most pressingly occupy for the majority of our waking life, it is the crucial point of departure and is worked in order that we may travel the axis mundi—ascending and descending the world tree, pole,

or pillar. In this respect, Traditional Witchcraft shares a more shamanic methodology than the rather formalised ceremonial branches of magic.

The Witch Compass, as cosmology, must by definition span other worlds than this one, but can only work outward from this earthly incarnation. It is for this reason that the mythic witch, that iconic figure of legend and lore, is called most frequently “poisoner” (veneficus), operating in the liminal space between life and death. Robert Cochrane noted that the distinction between witch and Pagan is that the witch “crosses the River, a pagan remains with the quick.”<sup>26</sup>

## **The Wiccan Circle**

To followers of modern Wicca, having grown out of the initiatory tradition founded by Gerald B. Gardner in the middle of the last century, the circle is a primary ritual tool. Attendees at any Wiccan ceremony can see that the leading act of most ritual includes the casting of a magic circle. The purpose of this preliminary ritual, from which further ceremony usually proceeds, is to denote sacred space while serving as a protective boundary, as well as a repository of any “energies” raised within it. This threefold function is the main use and purpose of the circle in Wicca and is inherited from ceremonial magic, influenced greatly by the fraternal and pseudo-Masonic Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (1888–1903).

The creation and maintenance of the magic circle often requires the use of certain rules and etiquettes in order to maintain its integrity, while calling in only those spirits which are deemed integral to the ritual or tradition. The Wiccan circle commonly makes use of the classical elements—apportioning earth, air, fire, and water to the cardinal directions in the fashion of the Golden Dawn.

Philosophically, the four elementals function to classify material nature in terms of their most basic properties. In ancient and alchemical philosophical

thought, the material substance of the world must be reducible to its most essential nature. Therefore, for example, things which are hot, burning, energetic, or else denoting heat must be formed from the elementary property of fire.

## **Gerald B. Gardner (1884–1964):**

### **The Father of Modern Wicca**

Gerald Brosseau Gardner was a retired civil servant, self-proclaimed anthropologist, and member of the Folklore Society. Persuaded by the writings of fellow anthropologist and Egyptologist Margaret Murray (1863–1963) and the American folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland (1824–1903), Gardner claimed to have inherited a tradition of witchcraft whilst in the New Forest during the 1940s. This witchcraft, Gardner claimed, was incomplete and necessitated certain operative structural adaptation in order to become workable and effective. With his creativity and genius for mythologising, supported by some history and ritual experience, Gardner built Wicca as a modern incarnation of the historic and folkloric tradition of witchcraft from the medieval and early modern periods.

When Gardner unleashed his modern witchcraft upon the world, he drew from the works and rituals of his acquaintance, the renowned magician Aleister Crowley. Most pertinent of Crowley's influences in Wiccan ritual is the Gnostic Mass (Liber XV), written by Crowley in 1913 as the central rite of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) and its religious body the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica (EGC).

Another area of significant influence upon Gardner's burgeoning witchcraft was the medieval grimoire tradition, most obviously being that which pertains to the mythic biblical king and prophet, and archetypal magician, Solomon. Indeed, it was commonly held at times over the last two thousand years that the legendary Seal of Solomon, the ring which he used to

command demons, depicted a pentagram now synonymous with Wicca. Gardner, though, might first have encountered this symbol through the legacy of the Golden Dawn. Further, the pentagram is a profound symbol in the mythos of Freemasonry, which is built upon the foundation of the temple by Solomon and his chief mason, Hiram Abif.

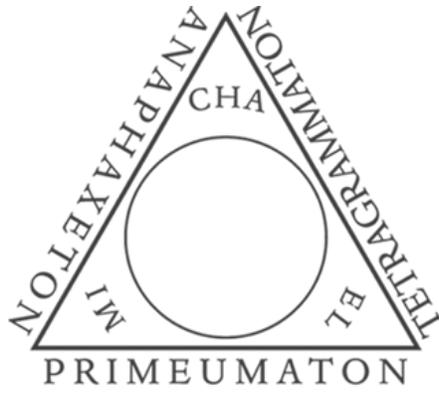
As can be seen, Gardner enjoyed a full spectrum of burgeoning occult thinking coupled with the late flourishing of interest in folklore, esoterica, and magic in the nineteenth century. At the time of Gardner's forming of Wicca, he had interests that threaded their way through Rosicrucian, Hermetic, Masonic, and Solomonic traditions, with friendships that included on the one hand the magician Aleister Crowley and on the other the Druid Ross Nichols (1902–1975), founder of the largest Druid order today (Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids) in 1964. Gardner's influences were varied and rich, culminating in his coalescing of ideas to form what would become modern Wicca.

Within the structure of Gardner's vision of Wicca, the magic circle was also informed from a vast array of sources. Principal among these was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, whose reach and effect on modern magic and Pagan movements cannot be overstated. In addition, certain words and aspects of ritual, such as the words for blessing elements, can demonstrably be seen to derive from the Solomonic grimoire traditions. Within the latter ceremonial practice, the circle is used primarily to protect the summoner from the thing summoned or else to contain that entity for the duration of the interaction. Quite often thereafter, the circle is no longer required so long as amicable terms have been agreed upon with the spirit that has been called.

Research into medieval and Renaissance magical systems had gained in popularity in the late Victorian period and initiates of the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (SRIA), an esoteric order attached to regular Freemasonry, had set about researching documents such as those found in the British Library and Museum. Several prominent members, namely William Wynn Westcott (1848–1925), Dr. William Robert Woodman (1828–1891), and S. L. MacGregor Mathers (1854–1918), formed the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1888, with Mathers proving the most diligent researcher, translating and working on books of Solomonic magic and the

work of Elizabethan magician John Dee, and publishing *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. This latter is an extensive and prolonged ritual practice of devotional rigour which culminates in an initiatory ceremony to obtain congress with demonic spirits, the performance of which occupied the minds of many of the old-school mages, including Crowley (who bought Boleskine House for the purpose).

Convinced of Margaret Murray's theories of an underground continuation of a pagan fertility religion in the form of witchcraft, Gardner presented Wicca to the world. Propagating the notion of this secretive fertility cult, buttressed with the story of the New Forest coven, and replete with structure provided by Crowley's OTO rituals, Gardner furnished his new witchcraft with ceremonies from *The Key of Solomon* and the use of the magic circle (figure 1).

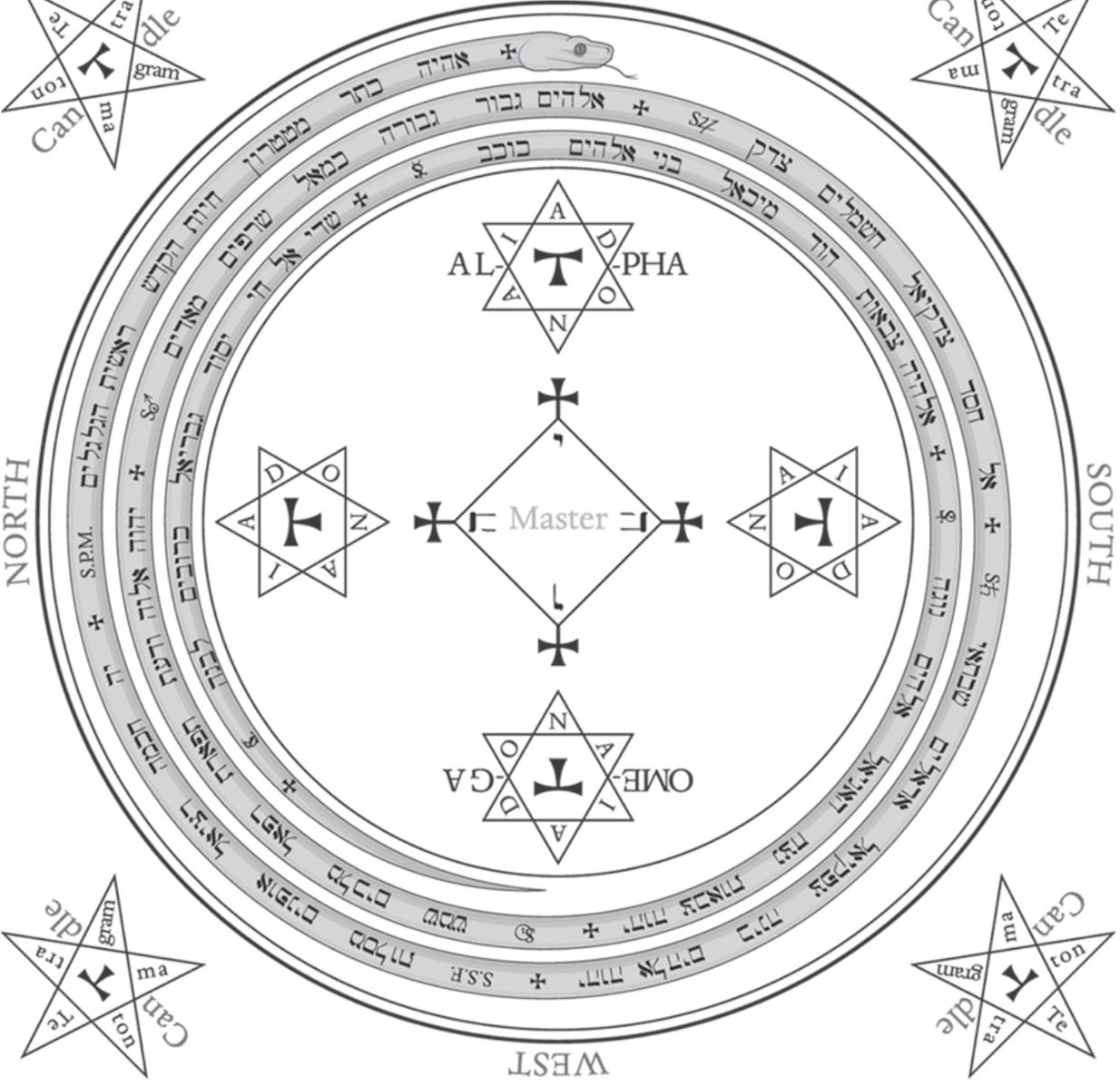


EAST



NORTH

SOUTH



## Solomonic ritual circle (figure 1)

Within modern Wicca, the magic circle is conjured to provide a meeting space between the world of humans and the realm of the gods—a protective sphere and a container of the power raised, as described by the Alexandrian Wiccans and authors Janet and Stewart Farrar.<sup>27</sup>

Patricia Crowther is an influential proponent of early Wicca alongside Gerald Gardner, founding the Sheffield Coven in 1961 together with her husband and friend of Aleister Crowley, Arnold Crowther (1909–1974). Writing in her book *Lid off the Cauldron*, Crowther indicates that the purpose of the circle is as a repository for “magical power,” which is raised and worked within it.<sup>28</sup> More interesting in relation to the Witch Compass, however, is the identification of the circle as being “‘between the worlds,’ both spiritual and material.”<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the Wiccan circle shares at least a vehicular, liminal quality with the Witch Compass, which shall be explored next.

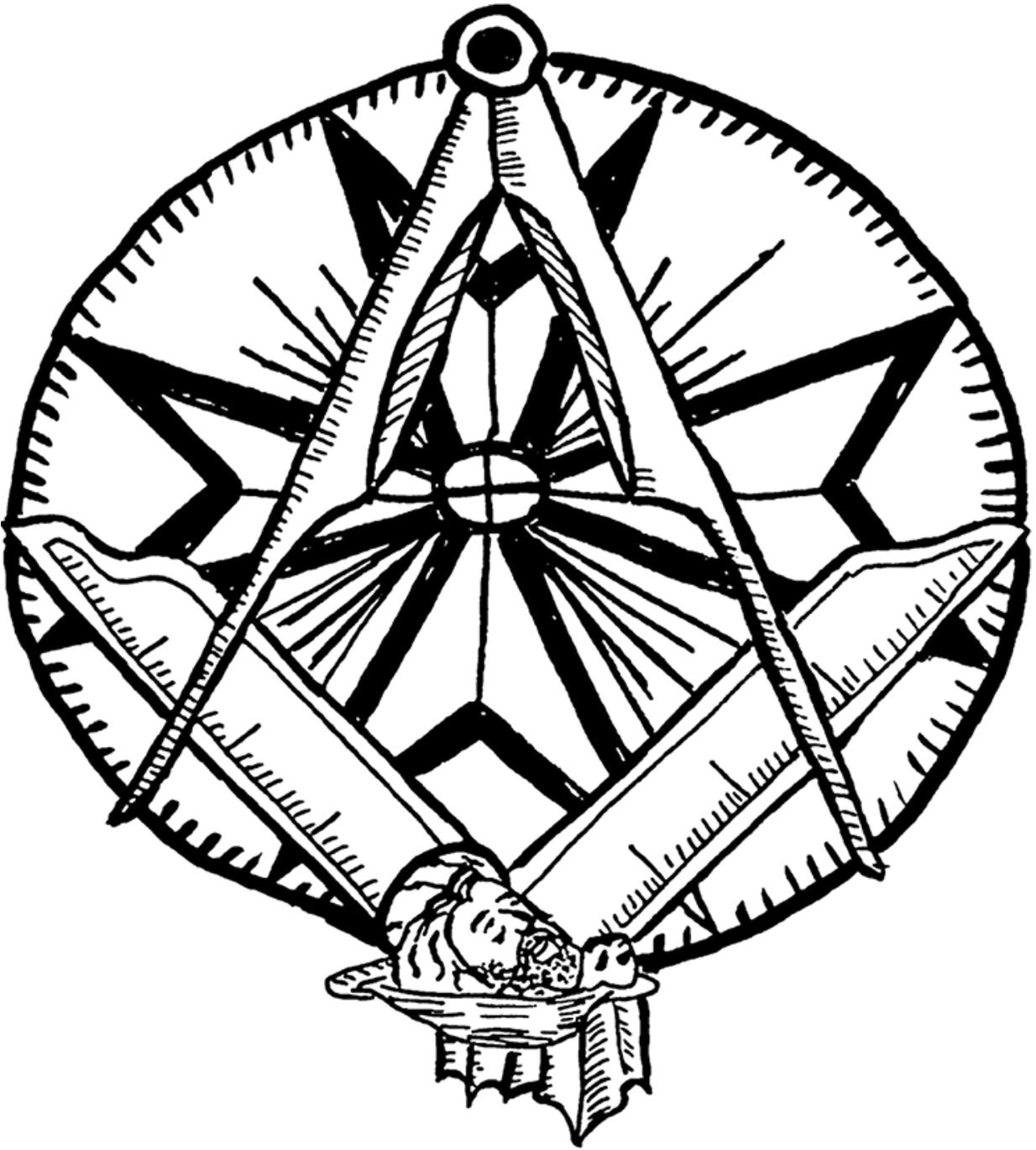
Israel Regardie (1907–1985), the ceremonial magician and onetime secretary to Aleister Crowley, published widely on occult and ritual magic; of especial import is *The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic*, which outlines the entirety of the Golden Dawn system as it was. In his 1932 book *The Tree of Life*, Regardie presents a comprehensive tome of occult lore and magical theory and practice.

Whilst acknowledging the magic circle as a device for delineating that which is without from that which is within, Regardie nevertheless emphasises a function of the circle as a cosmological technology through which the magician’s “transcendental ego” fashions and orders the apprehensible universe about him, prompting the potential for self-realisation.<sup>30</sup> Through this theory, the self at the centre of the circle is tasked with expanding outward to the circumference and beyond to the Ein Sof (the primordial, pregnant void), and becoming infinite.<sup>31</sup> In many respects, this interpretation of the magician’s Circle of Art is more akin to that of the Witch Compass than the Wiccan circle.

## **The Square and Compasses**

One major influence in modern witchcraft, which bridges Wicca and Traditional Witchcraft, is Freemasonry (known as the “Craft”—a term that has been adopted into Wicca), which itself has a difficult and long history both before and since the formal official founding of the first Grand Lodge on the Feast of St. John, 24 June, 1717, at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse, London. At the bare minimum, most people can recognise the principal Masonic symbols: the square and compass, which themselves form perfect angles. These tools are the highest degree of allegorical representations within the system of Freemasonry, which itself makes use of symbolism as an illustrative means to express the mysteries inherent within its tradition.

To Freemasons, the “square” is a “perfect ninety degrees,” or the fourth part of a circle, being a device that locates the four cardinal directions, or cross, of the world. The compass, by contrast, marks the sacred enclosure or boundary, working outward from the divine centre point and inscribing, or delimiting, all which is encompassed within its cosmology or sacred science of the mysteries. The “Square and Compasses” are, then, representative of the convergence of matter and spirit, fixing the volatile, achieving its reification in the Witches’ Compass rose (figure 2).



Square and Compasses (figure 2)

Freemasons recognise the three principal ritual officers who stand for, in one respect, the stations of the sun and cardinal directions. The three offices of Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden are seated at the east, west, and south, identified as the place of the rising, setting, and noontime sun. These officers wear symbolic “jewels”: the square (ensuring angles are true), the level (to keep the horizontal plane and members equal), and the plumb (to measure the vertical and moral compass).

This language of the mysteries of Freemasonry can sometimes be found shared in those certain traditions of witchcraft who keep the stations of the sun and honour the direction of the north as the place of spirit, which is left vacant to represent the seat of darkness and the absence of light.

The direction of the north, in Masonry as in witchcraft, remains dark—as the solar light doesn’t extend to that quarter. This, liberated of diurnal light, reveals the night sky and points to the heavenly centre or pole about which the celestial canopy turns, the mirror of the earthly axial point. Therefore, the direction of the north is both horizontal and vertical, meaning that the axis mundi actually draws a straight line from the terrestrial pole to the heavenly centre through the north (toward the North Star). For this reason, the hinge of the compasses is in the direction of the north—it being at the celestial pole, or North Star, and therefore the centre point (see figure 2).

## **A Journey of the Soul**

One of the most significant aspects of the Witch Compass is seen in the journey of the soul, both as we relate to the world around us and how we find our place within it. In this respect, it also reflects our inner landscape—all expressed through ritual and myth.

Ronald “Chalky” White was a member of Robert Cochrane’s coven and acted in the traditional office of Summoner during that time. After the death of Cochrane, White took with him all that he had learnt and helped form The

Regency as a continuation of some of the ideas developed through Cochrane. An unpublished document of White's, *The New Pagans' Handbook*, has been preserved in John of Monmouth's book, *Genuine Witchcraft is Explained*, an interpretation of various writings concerning the Clan of Tubal Cain and The Regency as an offshoot of Cochrane's earlier coven. In addition, a website preserving White's work in memoriam offers his writings for public consumption, including *The New Pagans' Handbook*.<sup>32</sup>

White commences his *Handbook* by intimating the human yearning to locate himself in the universe and find meaning, employing ritual and mythology as the most effective tools to sustain the soul upon this pursuit. Moreover, White emphasises the immediacy of the direct experience of mythic narrative, the actual and ritualised involvement in the myth as a participant, not simply a considered observer.<sup>33</sup> White charges us with engaging the points of the Witch Compass, the seasonal ritual cycle, as contributors but also indicates that the same should nourish the soul in the process. By identifying the ritual year with the journey of the individual through the cycle, White gave voice to a current within Traditional Witchcraft that emerged from the work of Cochrane and persists today in the Clan of Tubal Cain of Shani Oates, as well as the Ced Tradition (Griffin ap Ced) and Y Plant Brân (Ruth Wynn Owen), to name a few. Here, the magical and alchemical process of the passage through the ritual- and spirit-filled realms of the central mythos enliven the Witch Compass, implying vast potential for creative and sorcerous operation.

In addressing the fundamentals of the Witch Compass, its essential nature, finally, lies in the very fact that it is a cosmological and mythological construct. In its most simple and historic occult form, it provides an index or catalogue of the spirits and mythic worldview that provides a coherent architecture for operating sorcerous works. It is a shifting reality that is built upon our development of relationships with the spirits, winds, or airts that reside at each point, imbuing the character and identity of a particular tide or, as Griffin Ced would say, "quality of light." One thing that can be said: the compass is never still, not being a fixed or static edifice but incorporating the body of the ebb and flow of creation, dissolution, and re-creation.

Ancient cosmological maps as examples of the compass of spirits can be evidenced as far back as ancient Babylonian and Etruscan devices for

augury, such as the Liver of Piacenza (discussed further in the next chapter). This is a device to aid in augury and consists of sixteen houses—divisions which correspond with the Etruscan astrological model of the heavens and mythic map of the gods associated therein.

This chapter has explored the background of the compass through history and elucidated some of the broad meanings associated with it. As a general outline of the Witch Compass, this serves to underlie the chapters that follow and the exercises which will take us deeper into the mystery and experience of the compass proper.

Through the definitions provided, using the magic circle as comparison, it is hoped that you will understand the distinction between the circle and compass a little better. The story is not complete, however, without further exploring some of the detail which can contribute to a living, working compass and its role in modern sorcery.

Herein, then, are the first exercises to develop that understanding and begin to build an awareness of the compass as it is used in some modern Traditional Witchcraft streams. These exercises can be performed once but are best worked with cumulative force, building over time and use to inform a strong basis for competent witchery within the compass. It will be understood that the modern concept of “laying a compass” can be readily performed with diligent and empirical training in the art. Ultimately, laying a compass can become unnecessary when occasioned, as the sorcerer may access this deep cosmology through the paradigm shift it affords and the realisation that the compass is ever present and available to perform witchcraft.

## **Exercise 1**

### ***Associating***

Coming to the work of the Witch Compass, you may have some preconceived ideas. These might not necessarily be helpful in the work that

follows, but they are part of your repertoire, nevertheless. Therefore, it is helpful if we begin by taking stock of what is already known, understood, or thought about the compass. For this exercise, then, we are going to clear the mind and begin working with a notebook that will become a journal and catalogue of the compass and spirits. These will help form and inform the basis of the mythological landscape, as well as the language and means to communicate with those directions. This language will incorporate signs, sounds, symbols, colours, and sensations in order to call, approach, or work with those spirits of the Witch Compass.

It would be beneficial to try to liberate some of those most persistent ideas of the Witch Compass and approach this work with a blank page.

*Take a pen and a piece of paper or your new notebook dedicated to this work. At the top of a new page, write the word “compass” and beneath it begin to list associations that immediately come to mind. In this first stage, don’t pause to think about them, but rapidly get the ideas down as they occur, allowing your mind to exhaust itself of all associations. When you have a complete list of words that arose from your mind in response to the word compass, see if you can group any together. Now, begin to form connections between these ideas and spend some time meditating on them, researching wherever you can, and expanding on the concepts presented.*

*Building outward through etymology, folklore, and mythology, analyse and interpret each association, word, or sentence thoroughly. It is important to take time and allow these ideas to percolate over the next week and give them a chance to manifest through your psyche. Anybody can tell you what a compass means to a witch, but the aim here is to allow you to develop an idea of what it means to you personally.*

This might seem like a trite and simple process, and you may be tempted to skip it. However, I urge you not to, as this is laying the foundation from

which to explore the compass in greater depth, and it is necessary that this begins from a place of thoroughly explored understanding. A fundamental part of this journey is establishing from the beginning a relationship with the compass. As the compass is worked squarely upon the relationships of the witch with the forces in play, how can we hope to form these bonds if starting from a place of uncertainty?

Another thing to note is that there are no correct answers in this exercise. With that in mind, it is imperative that you pursue each of the notes you have made in association with the word “compass,” no matter what is evoked. Sometimes, those small or insignificant-seeming thoughts conceal a wealth of wisdom and may be teased out to reveal a greater part of the tapestry. In forming a series of ideas, allowing the poetic mind to conjure and evoke associations, the rational logos works in tandem with the burgeoning mythos. Therefore, do not restrict your endeavour to the study of hard facts and evidence alone, but give the creative will freedom to explore too. In this way, you may feel inspired to draw, conceive poetic references or rhymes of your own, write a poem, sing a song, or dance. All is grist for the mill, and nothing shall go to waste.

Hopefully, in this exercise, you will see how building familiarity with the compass is the foundation, and how, from the start, it might differ from, and sometimes be akin to, the magic circle.

## **Exercise 2**

### ***Experiencing Other***

Each time we consciously work with the compass, we are building the world anew, and this is a part of the cosmological technology involved in the structure of the work. We each have our own unique outlook on the world, and from this viewpoint we can project outward via the compass. The formation of the compass is based upon familiarity and associations through relationships with the various spirits that make up the worlds, but an important thing to remember is that we start from a place of self.

The compass is expansive and inclusive, incorporating all, whereas the circle serves to contract (forming sacred space), contain (pooling energy), and exclude (as protective ring, thus cutting off all else). The compass works upon the relationships we develop, especially between that of self and other. The secret to working the magic of the compass lies in the experiences that both unite and divide and how we can access and utilise that time between time, space between space.

The founder of Sabbatic Witchcraft, Andrew D. Chumbley, through the body of works of the Cultus Sabbati, wrote of this in terms of Ingress, Congress, and Egress, expressing the dialectic of thesis, synthesis, and antithesis.<sup>34</sup> By moving from the place of the self to that of other (ingress and egress), we expand through the experiential relationship between (congress)—that which connects and divides in creation, dissolution, and reabsorption.

The word other means more than one, or second. If we begin from the position of I, the egoic self, then we are seeking relationship with that which is other than I, and that very relationship is the synthesis which reconciles thesis and antithesis in the experience.

Think, for example, of the meditator and the object of meditation. What connects the thinker and the thing thought about in that moment is the act of meditation itself, the experience that exists in the present moment, intimately uniting them.

For this exercise, consider your relationship to other and othering in your daily life. What is the nature of the relationship that connects you with other; what is the experience that lies between yourself and that which is other?

*In a quiet moment over the course of a week, find a moment when you can be undisturbed and find an item, object, or landmark—something you can physically be with—and allow yourself to experience it. Still the mind and take time to allow the thoughts of the day to dissipate first. Try not to forcibly shove them away, but allow them just to pass on the breath like clouds being carried by wind. When the mind is stilled, consider the item you have chosen to work with. What is the character or nature of the item; what*

*is it that constitutes its essential otherness? Try not to rationalise the process, but feel it, experience it, allow the relationship to exist independently between your self and the other. Allow the item to inform you of its character, nature, or spirit. The word “spirit” means the “essential character,” principle, or nature.*

When you have spent some time on this, take your notebook (or a fresh piece of paper) and jot down the impressions you got from this object. You have just begun the process of working with spirit. Furthermore, you have started your spirit book, which will later expand to incorporate an entire corpus that informs and constitutes your compass as you carry this forward.

## **Key Ideas**

The Witch Compass is a system of mapping, journeying, and envisioning the otherworld.

The compass uses mythos, the ineffable mystery, through symbols, mythology, art, and allegory.

The Witch Compass is composed of varying numbers of winds, spirits, or airts.

Unlike the magic circle, the compass does not limit, protect, or contain energy.

The compass is expansive and inclusive, and therefore accommodates many traditions and uses.

Earliest mention of the Witches' Compass is a letter from Robert Cochrane.

[\[contents\]](#)

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## *Chapter 2*

### *Origins*

#### *A History of the Compass*

In this chapter, some background history leading to the exploration of the compass will give a broad outline of potential origins in cosmological thinking and how humans have created the world they experience around them. This is important to form an understanding of the experiences that are the bedrock which underpins modern witchcraft. The mechanics of the Witch Compass use two key components that are integral to its utility and use: these are narrative mythos and symbolism, incorporating allegory and poetic inference.

Since the Promethean flame was gifted to early humankind, our necessity to bring order and meaning to our existence has revolved around our remarkable storytelling capability. This facet of consciousness dominates still in the head of every human being, each of us possessed of the story that summates our very identity. We are all the lead character in our own story, and this has ever been the case as we each live out our own Truman Show. Furthermore, our mental capacity appears to be most efficient whenever we make use of narrative to cohere our thoughts, such as in memory techniques and mnemonics.

The language of story and myth is symbolism, that repository of meaning that is represented through inference, allegory, or metaphor. Symbolism is used to confer multiple meanings and interpretations, often emotive and

provocative, allowing us to intuit connotations, sometimes intentional and at other times by nature of our personal experience.

Myth and story combine to provide the basis for what has been known as the sacred mysteries, the exploration of the psyche of humankind and the nature of our existence and that of the world around us. Historically, the mysteries have been initiatory and revelatory, imparting their sacred and esoteric knowledge through the use of ritualised narrative and symbolism. The language of the sacred mysteries eludes the Greek *logos*, being rational and logical, and instead is concerned squarely with *mythos*, or subjective, experiential, and often, to the ancient Greeks, the irrational, implying that the mysteries don't have to make sense to the rational mind in order to contain or impart truth.

Modern witchcraft, and Traditional Witchcraft in particular to this book, make some claim to the inheritance of the ancient mystery traditions. In this, it is imperative to approach the Witch Compass with some historical understanding of the methods and techniques that will be used to explore. As we are dealing essentially with a technique in the mystery tradition, it is important to understand that we will be using narrative and symbolism as the principal language and means of traversing the worlds. As we are discussing the unutterable, ineffable, atemporal realms of the otherworld, our rational and logical way of thinking will not carry us very far across the river.

Therefore, this chapter outlines some of the salient points of the history and development of the mysteries as they pertain to the Witch Compass. As a cosmological tool, being the narrative framework that supports our worldview and magical practices, the compass emerges as the architecture that locates us within the world and our consciousness, and it is the story we tell to give meaning to our experiences. This all begins at the beginning ...

## **In the Beginning**

Since time immemorial, humans have sought to locate themselves in the world around them. Somewhere between 35,000 and 45,000 years ago, humankind made its first giant leap in consciousness when humans entered caves with coloured pigments intending to make abstract and natural forms in art.<sup>35</sup> What sparked this leap in our branch of the great apes, who split from the lesser apes around 15 million years ago, will likely remain a mystery. But the die was cast, behavioural modernity had made its great Cognitive Revolution, and humans would never put the genie back in the bottle.

Behavioural modernity are the characteristics most scholars agree upon which mark out humans as distinct from their primate relatives. These include, but are not restricted to, abstract thinking, planning, and symbolic behaviour.<sup>36</sup> The earliest cave art demonstrates each of these key identifiers, evidencing the ability to make symbolic depictions of abstract thought and record that thinking for posterity.

Tribalism in early humans challenged the usual primate troop pattern by introducing the means for expanding the social body, which is otherwise restricted by the number of relationships that can be maintained. Centred around a phenomenal new idea that enabled larger collective cohesion, people began to order themselves around narrative. The remodelling of human social behaviour around a central myth that unified a collective was permitted through the use of storytelling.

The impact of mythmaking, and associated symbolism and narrative, cannot be underestimated, and as historian Yuval Noah Harari has shown, the cohesion that can be produced by the instruments of mythology has allowed substantially larger groups of humans to maintain connection right into modern globalization.<sup>37</sup> The number of relationships each of us is realistically capable of sustaining, according to Dunbar's number, is around 150. In practice, this is likely considerably less—think about the amount of people in your social bubble who you know well and comfortably have regular contact with.

When early humans evolved behavioural modernity, the narrative mythmaking that developed in tandem with expanding tribal assemblies produced a new worldview. From the mists of time, Homo sapiens emerged

from myth, which demanded each member be able to locate themselves within the world at large. The foundational spatial awareness that developed in early humans continues today and is often found in traditional cultures around the world.

Locating yourself spatially in the world and narratively within your social body begins with dividing the space into easily identifiable, fixed points that provide a readily accessible rule of thumb. This elementary principle is an essential aspect of cognitive development in engaging the outer world, being a fundamental aspect of awareness. Earliest man discovered the cardinal directions most readily from observing not intricacies of detail inherent in complex star maps or mathematics of angles, but by the pattern of the sun.

The rising and setting of the sun most likely fixed the earliest east-west axis, with a number of language terms used for the cardinal directions demonstrating that the word for east usually denotes the rising sun and the west its setting.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, the words meaning south also show a solar awareness, with common meanings being midday, the place where the sun turns, or the midpoint of its journey. The north, however, can mean multiple things in sampled languages, including “no sun,” “middle of night,” “North Star,” and “revolves around Big Dipper.”<sup>39</sup> From this early foundation, cultures that developed around the globe worked with a similar pattern, using the central spatial framework to organise construction of dwellings and homesteads. In addition, this formed alongside the earliest cosmologies that were cohering groups around mythic narratives and is reflected in many myths of the ancient world.

As humankind evolved, the directions developed in sophistication to incorporate not only geographical features and the sun but also atmospheric features. Identifying directions by characteristics of winds is an early feature of myth, evidenced in the language of a substantial number of peoples around the world. In addition, seasonality became incorporated into a wind compass. Brown found in his paper that the north contained information that indicated cold, winter, and darkness, while words for the south referred to warmth, summer, and light. Additionally, language terms for directions frequently assume that the observer is facing the east, or the rising sun, when identifying the cardinal points by name. For example, words meaning north

also sometimes mean “on the left hand,” while words for south frequently refer to being on the right.<sup>40</sup>

From these foundational observations of the four directions, mankind developed correlating narratives, which helped them to understand and give meaning to their world. While the ancient layout of cities and settlements regularly correspond to models of favourable directions, the knowledge that could be discerned from the direction incorporated greater detail and information.

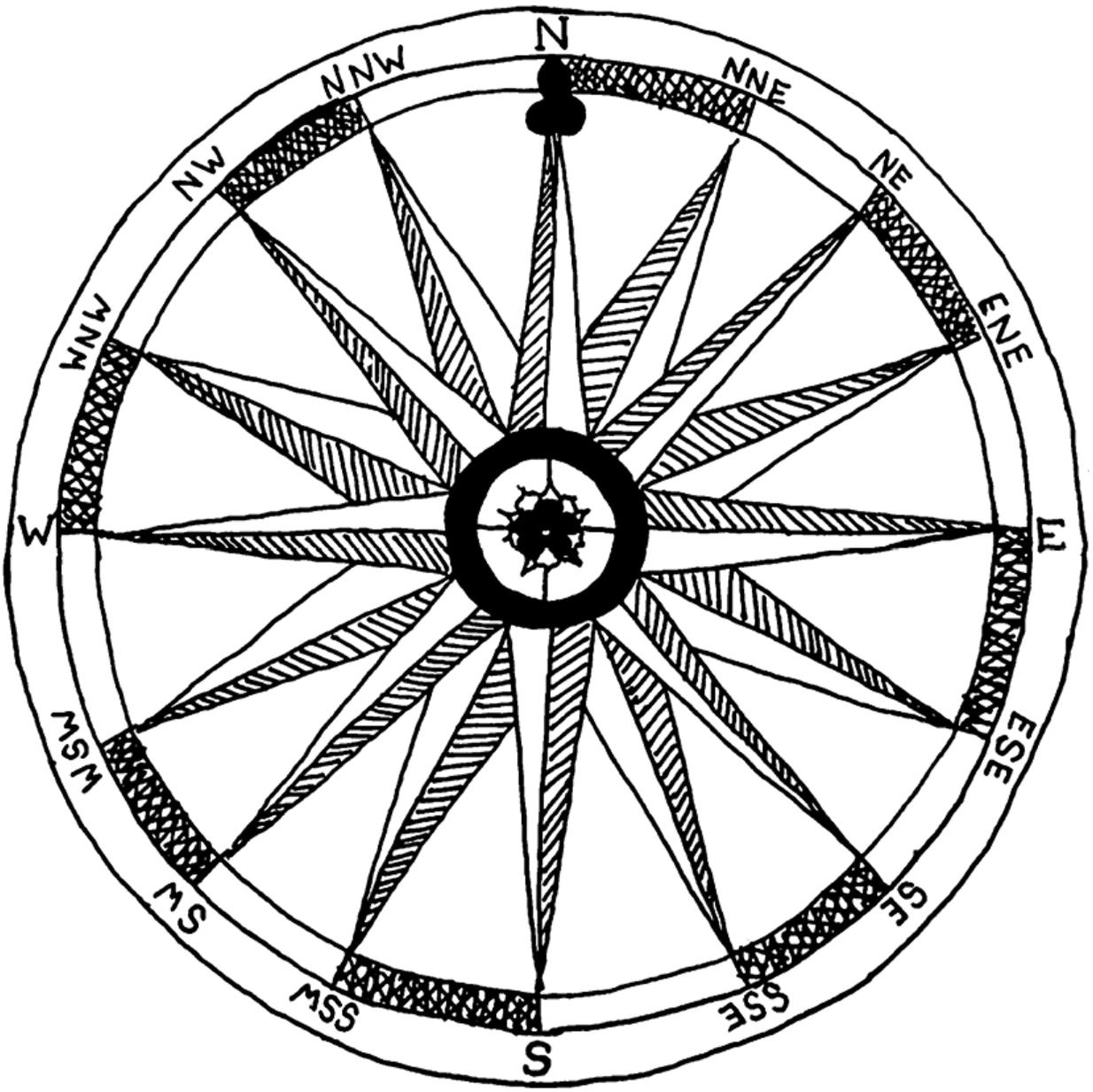
In addition, myths developed that gave purpose for associated phenomena. For example, ancient Egyptians witnessed the sun god Ra being born to the east every morning, travelling in his solar barque across the sky during the day, and disappearing into the land of the dead after descending into the west at night. Here, in the Duat, Ra travels through the underworld before being reborn in the east as the dawn.

Furthermore, in the Hellenic world, ancient Greeks named the wind gods and told their stories, developing a wind compass rose that became populated at each directional point by a particular god or spirit. This enabled them to be able to apprehend the characteristic that could be expected, or conjured, from a particular direction and to access and utilise the spirit for augur or magic. This fundamental of the compass is representative of its earliest form and function and remains today in occult studies—most particularly modern Traditional Witchcraft after Robert Cochrane.

## **The Origins of the Compass**

Around 1190 CE, theologian, scholar, and abbot of Cirencester, Alexander Neckam (1157–1217), continued his otherwise unremarkable literary career with the authoring of *De utensilibus* and *De naturis rerum*. Mainly concerned with natural history and high moralising, this text was intended to preface his commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes. What makes these pieces of

literature significant, however, to the Western student of history is that they preserve the oldest known record that gives account of the magnetised compass in Europe, the earliest such example outside of China. Surprising as it may seem, the magnetic, or mariner's, compass with a needle that points to magnetic north does not appear in European navigation until the twelfth century (figure 3). The magnetic compass had, however, been invented far earlier in China, where it was being used for divination and feng shui, a method of geomancy that harmonises the natural flow of energies in the environment or individual (figure 4).



Traditional compass rose (figure 3)



Chinese luopan (figure 4)

China provides the earliest detailed studies of the magnetic compass, and it is feasible that this knowledge travelled along the Silk Road into Europe, if not in the classical period then perhaps at least by the Middle Ages. It is

commonly thought that the magnetic compass was developed for naval navigation purposes around the same time in Europe and China, supposedly independently of each other.

## **The Luopan**

Early positioning and features of Chinese models, as well as symbols indicating astronomical orientation, suggest that a form of feng shui was in use at least as early as 4,000 BCE, and astronomy, as in ancient Greece, informed these technologies. Cosmographers mapping heaven and earth developed astrolabes and compasses to decipher the world around them. The luopan compass, used in feng shui, represents a cosmological map, utilising star maps and geomantic location. With a magnetised needle, originally a piece of lodestone, the magnetic compass is recognisably similar, or identical, to older Chinese liuren astrolabes. Examples have been found as part of tomb relics with designs that correspond to the first magnetic compasses, dating to between 278–209 BCE and was found as part of tomb relics.

The use of the luopan has been comprehensively surveyed for the Western reader in the monumental *Guide to the Feng Shui Compass: A Compendium of Classical Feng Shui* by Stephen Skinner. In this book, Skinner introduces the first complete European language body of work to give a thorough examination of this Eastern esoteric device.

The typical classical luopan incorporates several rings, which correspond with earthly, heavenly, lunar spheres of influence, as well as markings for four, eight, and twenty-four directions.<sup>41</sup> The accuracy of the luopan is partly due to the meticulous detail in calculations, such as the 24 Mountains system, corresponding with the introduction in 104 BCE of the twenty-four solar terms. This method of twenty-four 15-degree segments of a solar term along the ecliptic is used in lunisolar calendars, helping to keep in accurate alignment with the seasons in agrarian culture.

In addition, the San He luopan is possessed of three 24 Mountain rings. In the lunisolar calendar, the twenty-four solar terms are divided further into three pentads, meaning that there are seventy-two pentads in a solar year. These numbers are significant in regard to the Solomonic tradition, especially the collected works known as the Lesser Key of Solomon, which catalogues seventy-two demons within the Ars Goetia, while the Steganographia, upon which the Ars Theurgia Goetia is based, consisted of thirty-two (8+24). All of these are rendered as rings upon a feng shui luopan and are utilised to divine favourable positions, spirits, and flow of qi, the zoetic breath, or energy of a spirited world.

## **Ancient Reckonings**

In the heart of classical Athens, the Greek centre of learning and philosophy, some time around the second century BCE, an octagonal tower was built. Dedicating each of its eight faces to the winds, it is known as the Tower of the Winds and was constructed to incorporate sundials, water clocks, and a wind vane. In this way, the Tower of the Winds measures and orders time and space.

Around roughly the same time, the astronomer Hipparchus (190–120 BCE) was calculating the motion of the sun and the moon in relation to the earth and is regarded by many to be the greatest astronomer in antiquity. Among his numerous observations, Hipparchus is also thought of as the first classical student of natural history to propose an equinoctial twenty-four-hour day, where each hour measured the same period of time.

With remarkable accuracy, the ancient Egyptians figured the length of a solar year, composed of thirty-six decans, each “ruling” for a ten-day period. Each decan denotes a small constellation, or star group, whose rising upon the horizon marked the beginning of an hour. Every ten-day period sees a new decan (literally “group of ten”) star group appear in the dawn hour, meaning

there are 360 days in a year (36 ten-day periods), and degrees in a circle, with an extra five days being added to complete the solar year.

The origin of the twenty-four-hour day goes back to ancient Egypt. The New Kingdom period (sixteenth to eleventh century BCE) saw a simplification and the addition of two hours to the ten-hour day at sunset and sunrise, making a twenty-four-hour day. However, the seasonal length varied until Hipparchus proposed equinoctial hours.

The calculating of the directions using methods and technologies to observe astronomical and geographical features was both a part of human discovery and ordering of the world. Developing alongside this logical, logos, way of perceiving and reckoning (the sciences), the mythos flourished as the narratives that provide cohesion and meaning. This latter mythologising also enabled the information to be passed not only from one person to another but also through the ages.

Additionally, early compass work constituted mapmaking, charting time and space not only on earth but also through the heavens. Each of the directions—mythologised and tied with celestial markers, constellations which are woven into narratives that have meaning for the people—are imbued with their own inherent feeling, sense, nature, or spirit (breath or wind, pneuma, ruach). Therefore, whilst some are propitious, others are less so; some may be evoked to aid in endeavours, while others avoided. The compass is composed of far greater depth and information than could have been imagined, informing agrarian cycles and aiding in the construction of temples and palaces, timings for anointing chiefs, waging war, harvesting and where to sow crops, and bury the dead.

By the classical period, knowledge and information incorporated into the compass was expansive. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, the period known as the Dark Ages resulted in the loss of a lot of knowledge and learning. It would take a horrible series of episodes known collectively as the Crusades before the Western world advanced.

This new impetus was fuelled in great part by the return of Hellenic and ancient sources of natural philosophy and science, as well as innovations wrought over time, preserved and evolved in the Islamic world. Ironically, it

was not until Western Christianity began to butt heads with its Islamic counterpart that many Graeco-Egyptian works of astronomy, alchemy (chemistry), mathematics, and science were rediscovered in the West. This incorporated many of the leaps and bounds that had been acquired through living tradition within rich, thriving and, in instances such as Andalusia, culturally diverse Islam.

The Western magician, philosopher, theologian, and astrologer had become reacquainted with arcane and technologically advanced knowledge that might previously have been regarded as lost: works such as the *Picatrix* (Arabic, *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, or *Goal of the Wise*), a book on astrological and talismanic magic. Coupled with those works and minds that had survived in the West, a fresh injection of thought among the intelligentsia inspired the Renaissance during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which saw a revival of ancient and Hermetic magical ideas, along with a resurgence in the philosophy of Plato.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Middle Ages had given way to modernity, with a focus upon science and mathematics in interpreting reality and a growing emphasis upon materiality. This evolution ignited the Enlightenment, emanating out of central Europe and France, and ideas became transmitted through secretive sodalities such as the Freemasons, the Rosicrucians, Druid revivalists, and the Bavarian Illuminati, whereas scientific reason witnessed the reassertion of the academy through universities, the Royal Society, Newtonian physics, and Cartesian metaphysics. In the case of Isaac Newton, his scientific and mathematical achievements are now lauded throughout the Western world, while his magical and alchemical endeavours are largely forgotten or ignored completely.

The use of a ritual addressing the four directions can be dated with confidence to at least the time of Babylon. Indeed, Joshua Trachtenberg asserts the second millennium BCE Babylonian precedent for later Jewish magical charms which utilised the same pattern before sleep to invoke protective powers, calling upon four archangels and the Shekinah.<sup>42</sup> The medieval Jewish prayer invoking Michael (at my right hand), Gabriel (at my left), Uriel (before me), and Raphael (behind me), echoing the earlier Shamash, Sin, Nergal, and Ninib respectively, holds a clear influence upon

the later Golden Dawn practice of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram. The medieval Jewish bedtime prayer invoking the archangels finds a medieval Christian counterpart in the Black Paternoster, a magical charm which locates the four gospel writers in the cardinal positions. Considered popish and sorcerous, the Black Paternoster even found a home in Paul Huson's groundbreaking 1970 work, *Mastering Witchcraft*, but is often forgotten among Pagan witches, likely because of its Christian flavour.

Of course, by the Middle Ages, the ceremonial formulas of the "Circle of Art" were already quite sophisticated and drew mythologically and historically from Jewish and Graeco-Egyptian ancient techniques. References to "cabala" abound in the grimoires, and the conjuration of spirits according to a catalogue which, as we have seen, corresponds with segments of timings upon a compass design, grounds our exploration thus far. In examining witchcraft, though, it is pertinent to consider the folk and sorcerous conventions which are shared but are eminently more practical and accessible. Whilst there is precedent for the circle in ancient Mesopotamia, its evolution emerges in the Middle Ages in two distinct formulas: one of which is the province of the educated echelon of society, while the other is available to the working class. These are, namely, the necromancer's circle of conjuration and the simple charming technique found in examples such as the Black Paternoster. This demonstrates that magic-religious utility enables a degree of flexibility in methodology and depending upon purpose. For example, the exorcism of the magician and the banishing ritual of the sorcerer might be seen to achieve similar ends, and through near-identical means. However, the technicality or verbose nature of one might suggest complication, whereas the other could be considered too simple to be effective. These difficulties are overcome by the respective operatives, and the nature of the history of magic in folk custom and learning is quite fascinating and reassuring.

Tracing the route back to the classical period, we must turn to the Greek magical papyri (PGM) for some beautiful elucidation—in particular the text which includes within it a formula for invoking at the seven directions, PGM XIII.734–1077.<sup>43</sup> In particular, we are talking about the instructions at PGM XIII.824–887, which outline the directions for a ritual that has become known amongst Hermetic magicians as the "Calling of the Sevenths," or else the "Heptagram Rite."<sup>44</sup> This fascinating ritual is part of the collection of

Greek magical papyri included in the Hans Dieter Betz translation of the corpus, which includes texts of spells and formulas that date from between the late centuries BCE to the fifth century of the Common Era.<sup>45</sup> The body of papyri is recorded in the classical Graeco-Roman Egyptian world and is a syncretic collection of magical operations which represents a magnificent distillation of magical thinking, technique, and history.

The “Calling of the Sevens” is a particular invocation which involves Greek vowel chants, prolonged and sustained, at each of the directions with gestures to evoke the powers inherent within. Perhaps contributing to the lore of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP) of the Golden Dawn, this represents one of the earliest examples of constructing sacred space for magical operation based upon a cosmological map. As such, it superbly demonstrates ancient compass thinking. The invocations to certain deific forms utilise further vowel chants using voces magicae, seemingly incomprehensible words or letters intoned for evocation purposes, but which likely are corrupted names of gods and spirits.

What is striking, and significant to our study, is the use of sounds to evoke the power or agent of the direction. In addition, it is inferred that the vowel sound, which is essential in language for creating collections of letters to communicate information through words, is intimately linked to the angelic or demonic force of the direction. There is a beautiful mystical account of such association that provides elucidation upon this magical technique, and it is found in a surprising place: a thousand-year-old Tantric work from Kashmir.

The Recognition Sūtras, *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya*, translated with extensive and profound commentary from Tantric scholar-practitioner and Sanskrit expert, Christopher Wallis, provide a revelatory mystical treatise upon the work of Kṣemarāja, an eleventh century philosopher and disciple of Abhinavagupta, both masters in Tantra and Kashmir Shaivism. This astonishing piece of literature, alongside the illuminating contribution of Wallis, provides a succinct yet profound insight into ancient Indian philosophy and practice. During a course of discussion upon mantra-deity, Wallis expounds this elevated aspect of Shaivite Tantric practice whereby the mantras are regarded not simply as sounds but are themselves the vibrational embodiment of conscious expressions of the One Being, especially a

particular aspect of awareness. In the course of framing his interpretation of mantra, Wallis makes a significant association in defining the Shaivite term as synonymous with angels. To understand, we must be mindful that the mantra, in this context, is a vibrational sound best described as sonic light.<sup>46</sup> These mantra-deities are synesthetic beings, possessed of light and vibrations, refractions of the One light, with functional offices, much like an angel in traditional understanding. We are to understand, then, that the sound of the mantra is not a call to summon a conscious being; it is the deity itself.

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It is reasonable, then, to apply the same logic to the Greek vowel chants as used in the PGM, meaning that we may interpret the sounds of the vowels intoned at each direction as the manifestation of the sonic vibration of that god or wind, with the characteristics and function that correlate with that spatial point. This concept is not so surprising in magical thinking through the use of spoken charming. However, this ancient concept seems relatively common amongst the philosophy of the last two thousand years, and Ephesia grammata—Ephesian words inscribed on the cult image of Artemis at Ephesus, Turkey—have been compared to mantra. Significantly, it is the inherent power within the intonation, of the appropriate word or sound as the vibrational, aural form of that power, angel, or spirit. Importantly, again it is the use of vowels which give potent bridging capability and are able to be sounded alone, without consonants, and where the breath is allowed to move freely as the mouth shapes the sound. The fact that these beings are brought forth by the breath renders yet another magical association through the corollary with spiritus, pneuma, ruach, airt, qi, and prana—or synonymous with spirit and wind. Of course, the conjuring of these distinct breathy vibrations—spirits—at each of the seven directions is a clear representation of working a functioning winds-based Witch Compass found in antiquity.

## **Etruscan Remains**

The second-century BCE artefact known as the Liver of Piacenza is a representation of a sheep's liver in bronze. The life-sized object is inscribed with a cosmological map and list of deities, subdivided into site segments. The purpose of the liver is to provide a model for the casting of augury using entrails, or specifically the liver, of animals.

From the Liver of Piacenza, we can discern a sophisticated and spirit-filled cosmology from the Etruscan peoples, who later influenced the Romans. These latter, of course, introduced much of their civilising ideas and worldview to the Western world. Therefore, we can appreciate in the liver an example of the mythical map of the worlds as envisaged by magicians and seers of the ancient Mediterranean.

Massimo Pallottino (1909–1995) was an Italian archeologist who instigated the discipline of Etruscology, the specialised study of the ancient Etruscan people. In his most interesting book, *The Etruscans*, Pallottino produces an illustration demonstrating the Etruscan cosmology, described by the author as “‘Sacred’ Space.”<sup>48</sup> This is rather telling, as it is suggestive of a cosmological model similar to the one outlined and consistent with the spirit compasses of later early modern necromancy and grimoires, as well as the Witches’ Compass. Notably, the pattern and correspondences of Mediterranean and Hellenic deities with certain directions of the compass is comparable with the model utilised in modern Traditional Witchcraft. For example, the placement of Saturn in the direction of northwest, while the overall character of this region is regarded as the domain of “Gods of Fate & of the Infernal Regions.”<sup>49</sup> Equally, the segments of the compass immediately following those underworld characters and Fates as we progress past north emerge from the “Great Celestial Deities.”<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, the southern regions are almost entirely occupied by “Terrestrial Gods and Gods of Nature,” indicating that the direction we are facing, and the place of power and magnetic compulsion, is once more the north.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it is the earth, the “terrestrial” and natural abode that lays at our feet and our back, in the fecund south, while the underworld and heavenly North Star Road lead from the northwest to northeast in the sacred direction we witches face (figure 5). This is why, in many Traditional Witchcraft sodalities, the earth is in the south—the terrestrial realm—while the north is the plane of the airy spirits. Fire is the rising and emerging heat of the sun and spring in



## **Etruscan compass model from the Liver of Piacenza (figure 5)**

### **Trithemius's Steganographia**

When the Benedictine abbot and polymath Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516 CE), mentor of occult writer Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486–1535 CE), wrote his *Steganographia* in 1499, he included details of spirits for their calling forth. In Book 1, Trithemius introduces the necessary instruction that is fundamental to working a spirit compass, namely that the operant must know the proper location, names, signs, and symbols in order to avoid hinderance and harm from the spirit. Without this knowledge, Trithemius asserts, the practice and science to which the book is dedicated will be quite ineffective, even dangerous. There then follows a depiction of a ring of sixteen sections, each divided into three, which are occupied by the name, symbol, and direction of the spirit concerned: a spirit compass. Following a table of names and symbols which populate the compass rose, Trithemius provides an example of locating a spirit, the correct direction, sign, number of subordinate spirits, and authority or use. Making clear that this is a map of the spirit-haunted world, Trithemius provides a solid written record of spiritual technology of the compass type that we may use for reference. Indeed, Trithemius opens with the clear instruction that “it is necessary for every operator of this science to know the locations and names of the spirit-princes, as well as their symbols, lest through ignorance he calls from the North a spirit who resides in the South.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, it is clear that this pattern is arranged in a compass of spirit winds, or directions, being presented by Trithemius “in a circle the sectors wherein the spirit-princes reside, together with their names and symbols.”<sup>53</sup> Comparison between the *Steganographia* of Trithemius and the spirit compass of the *Ars Goetia* makes for interesting study, being evidently mostly derived from Trithemius (figure 6).



*popular opinion that the abbot was involved in black magic. Trithemius responded to the dangerous charge with a condemnation of witchcraft and sorcery in *Antipalus Maleficiorum* (1508), which unwittingly provides a remarkable study of practical witchery and folk magic, as well as a bibliography of grimoires. In another work of steganography written in 1508 and published ten years later in 1518, *Polygraphia*, Trithemius produced a number of alphabets of twenty-four letters, including the oldest known literary example of the so-called “witches’ Alphabet,” or so-called Theban script, attributed incorrectly to Honorius of Thebes and Pietro d’Abano (1257–1316 CE). The use of the Theban script in modern witchcraft is well attested, representing a substitution cipher, while the spirit compass finds a home within Traditional Witchcraft today.*

## **Cunning Craft and Virtue**

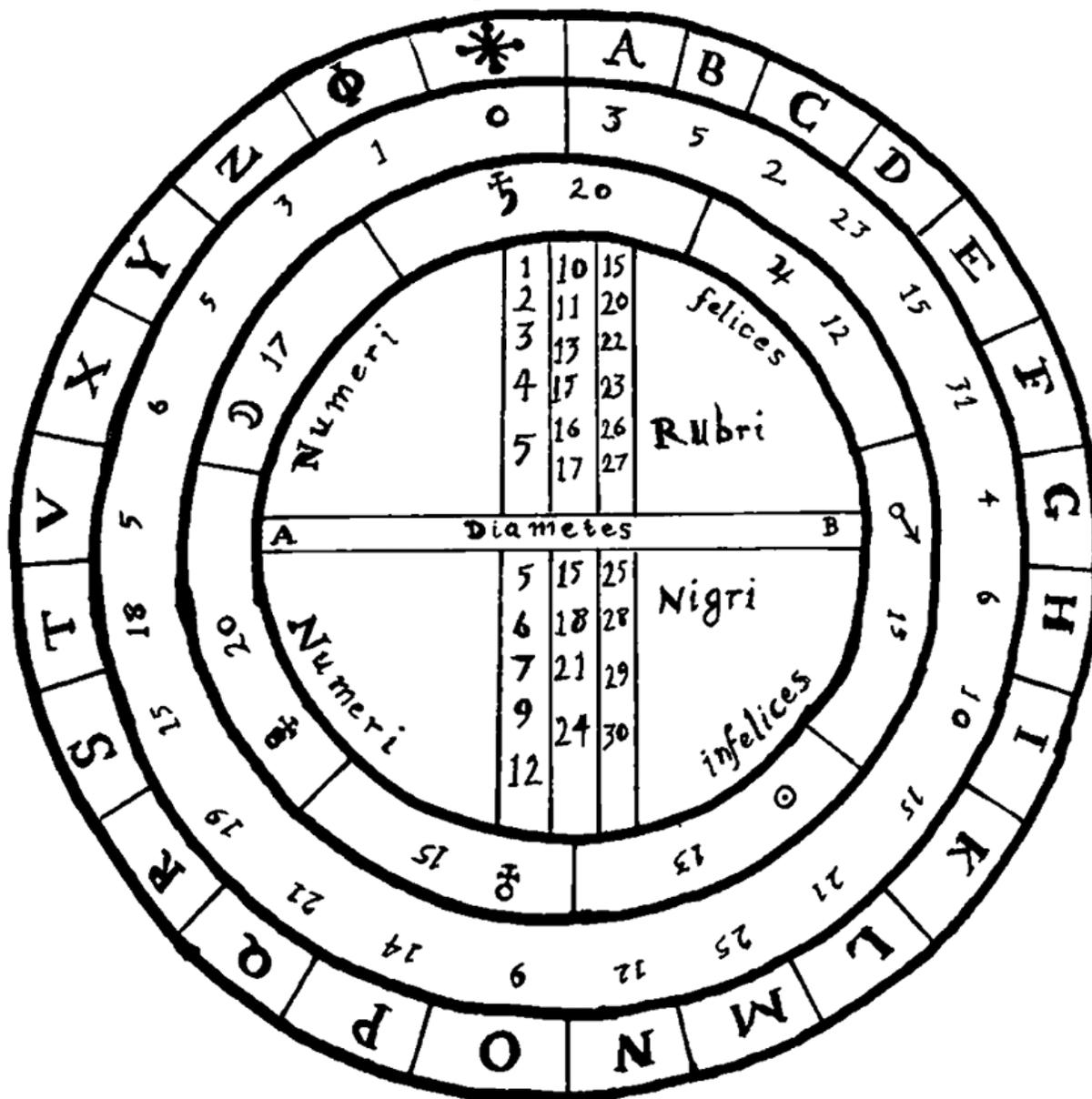
Since the fifteenth century, a group of folk magicians, healers, and diviners operated as sorcerers for hire, fulfilling popular roles in the late medieval and early modern period. These cunning men and wise women made use of myriad techniques of magic, including sympathetic magic, the rule of contagion, and basic astrological, geomantic, and angelic currents of occult practice. The purposes to which they put these loosely based skills included recovery of stolen items, counter-magics, fortune-telling, healing, and acquiring the love of another, while counter-magic was a huge part of the cunning repertoire.

Aside from removing curses or identifying the cause of a curse or enchantment, treasure hunting and love magic appears to have occupied the most part of the average individual’s requirements, indicating a level of anxiety with regard to economic and social security. By far the greatest stock-in-trade of the cunning folk was divination—fortune-telling by any and all means. The purpose of this could incorporate any and all ends, including treasure finding, identifying a future spouse, discerning appropriate timings for ventures, and everything in between.

As the cunning folk were the more sorcerous and lower-class kinsman of the learned magician type, they relied more heavily upon their innate virtue, or innate and inherited spiritual power. In addition, there were occult materials from which they might draw, including folk astrology, geomancy, and cheaply produced literature in the form of chapbooks, or *Bibliothèque bleue*. Amongst these, many mundane items sat alongside an assorted occult miscellany, such as can still be found in the *Farmers' Almanac*—type of publications today: principally, forecasting weather, some folklore and custom, and recipes.

Many of these almanacs, which are still produced today, were invaluable resources to the cunning folk and included an ancient and fascinating inclusion of the Sphere of Pythagoras, or alternately Sphere of Apuleius.<sup>55</sup> This wheel of fortune-type construct commonly comprises an outer ring of seemingly random numbers and the letters of the alphabet, with a quartered inner ring. In the late medieval period, there were many manuscripts using the method of the Sphere of Life and Death, which was the most common and easiest method of onomastic divination (figure 7).

# Sphera Bientis



Sphere of Life and Death (figure 7)

To the lay person, the Sphere of Life and Death would appear sophisticated and give the impression of a learned philosopher, while providing readily available answers that are easy to learn and access to the practitioner. In this

way, cunning folk and lay doctors were able to diagnose and treat patients without the need to learn difficult medical treatise or study. Of course, accuracy and results would be wildly, and ironically, unpredictable. But medical science was in its infancy in medieval Europe, and most common folk would not have access to anything close to effective health services.

The diagram accompanying the tables of the Sphere could be used to calculate various numerological values alongside letters, and the output would provide a computationally arrived-at answer. The 1608 English translation of *The Geomancie of Maister Christopher Cattan Gentleman*, held by the Bodleian Library, provides a fascinating treatise on geomancy and astrological considerations, including an elaborate rendering of the Sphere of Pythagoras. In addition, a diagram indicating “the signs and all the discourses of their said qualities, according to the four seasons of the year” is a tantalising diagrammatical depiction of the Compass, in many ways comparable to that in the Heptameron catalogue of angels of the seasons.<sup>56</sup>

For the cunning folk, the access to small, accessible, and cheap ephemera, such as the *Bibliothèque bleue* and chapbooks of geomancy, was invaluable. These texts treated with readily comprehensible tables for a lay astrologer, using the stars, seasons, and telluric positions and virtues, while giving an air of sophistication. Indeed, the learned *savoir faire* this lent to the cunning folk added credulity, appropriating the air of mystery and knowing.

## **Finding Direction**

From the earliest workings with the cardinal directions, through the Tower of the Winds of Athens, ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, and the Chinese marking of the spirits through the perambulations of the sun, moon, and stars, we arrive at a late medieval prototype of precisely the same fundamentals. This model, concisely compiled in chapbooks and delivered into the hands of the lay sorcerer as a means to compute predictable outcomes, passed through the later cunning folk, developed through the

tradition of Solomon, the spirit compass, and catalogues of demons of grimoiric lore. In this, the cunning folk were able to lay a compass with an alphabet that correlated with numbers, the zodiacal heavens, the winds of the seasons, and the cardinal directions, allowing them to traverse the compass in the most remarkable of ways by the ancient technique of applying mythos. This narrativising, through the skills of imagination and creative impulse, recalled the innate world-creating perspective of our forebears who first found themselves in this reality.

Spanning primitive humanity to the urbane wizard, this brief outline of the long and complex history of the compass provides the necessary background with which we may arm ourselves before we progress to detailed workings. Having explored the regions of the origins and development of the compass, its meaning, purpose, and use, you are better placed to understand how and why the Witch Compass might have arrived at the present representation within Traditional Witchcraft. Now, it is time to spiral outward again and journey to the boundary at the edge of our world.

## **Exercise 3**

### ***Finding Yourself***

When we begin working with an especial awareness of our place in the world, it is necessary to introduce ourselves to a way of apprehending, of being. Our sensate apprehension of the world is the means by which we are experientially cognisant of our position. By developing our ability to “feel,” take an aggregate of the sensate experience and infer our location, we shall develop this ability in the following exercise.

This exercise is quite simple, but at the same time challenging, as it requires you to take the time and make effort. It is not something that you can just choose to do on the next Tuesday evening (or whichever day) you have free and sit down in your room and complete. For this exercise, there is no need for materials other than your notebook and pen, but you do need to find out the timings for sunrise and sunset and arrange your schedule to include a day

when you can have the span of time available. The principles of the exercise are simple yet profound in your mythological psyche. In order to carry this out successfully, you will have arranged a couple of important things.

Firstly, locate a space where you have a good, clear view of the entire panoramic horizon. You want to be able to (as best as circumstances allow) turn 360 degrees and maintain a good perspective of the horizon. It is imperative to find this location beforehand and be comfortable there, free from interruption and distraction. You don't want to have to find a suitable location ad hoc, and you will need to be free to commit a period of time for this exercise. Furthermore, the site should be as easily accessible as possible so that you can visit at certain times in the day, or else spend the entire day unhindered.

Once you have identified the location you are going to work at, get hold of an almanac, diary, or online resource to find the timings of the sunrise, noon, sunset, and midnight for your chosen location. Mark these well in your notebook before you head out to perform this exercise.

You might also spend some time considering the day that you undertake this. For example, is it a Sunday? In which case, the first hour of the day is traditionally given to the planetary hour of the sun and is solar in character. Similarly, a Tuesday would begin with the hour of Mars, and so on. It is not necessary to know the planetary hours, but as part of your preparation, you might like to note these down for future reference.

Similarly, and again not compulsory, you may think about the moon location and phase on the day you plan to do this exercise. Likewise, the season, the influence of the earth's relationship to the sun, and the fecundity. Weather patterns expected and astrological phenomena are also areas you could research. Experiment, learn as much as you can from an esoteric and occult perspective, and then see what happens when you undertake the exercise. Remember, your journal is a most excellent tool in these exercises. Even if it might not seem relevant now, after many years of practice and observation, patterns will almost certainly emerge that allow you to expand your perspective to incorporate a broad view, revealing greater secrets and illuminations.

*When you arrive at the appointed day and hour, be present at the location you have selected for the first light of the day, the sunrise. Arrange yourself so you are comfortable before the sunrise occurs. If the weather is inclement, have a blanket or waterproof poncho prepared so that you aren't distracted by the conditions.*

*When you have made your situation suitably comfortable, sit calmly and empty the mind. Observe the horizon facing the first glimpse of golden sunlight as it crests the skyline. You are simply giving yourself permission, perhaps for the first time, to sit and watch the sunrise, being present in the moment. Allow nothing to distract you; just allow intrusive thoughts to take a step back while you are present in the moment. You can give the thing that just popped into your head the attention it deserves later after you have allowed yourself to attend to the present moment. All you need do is be aware, experience the sun as it heralds the dawn, and absorb the atmosphere. This must take as long as it takes, and when it is past, you can give those other thoughts and demands all the regard they demand.*

*When the sun is risen, record in your notebook the sensations, ideas, or feelings that occurred. Note the time of the year and the compass direction in which the sunrise actually occurred. The sun moves throughout the year and will rise higher in the compass, toward the northeast, in the summer months when there is more light. In the portion of the year that has longer nights, the sun will rise in the southeast and remain for a shorter time only.*

As you have probably figured out, the next part of the exercise is to do the same for noon. This time, face the direction of the sun, which should be at its highest point due south (or north in the Southern Hemisphere). Please, do not look directly at the sun, as this can cause damage to your vision. However, you can bathe in the light with eyes closed if it pleases you. You

may be seated or cross-legged for this, as with sunrise, but it is customary to feel as though the energy of the sun commands a standing salute, as though mimicking the fulness of its potency. Again, make a note of the ideas and sensations, the presence of any spirits or impulses which happen at this time.

At dusk, you should take yourself to the same location and prepare yourself as for dawn. This time, however, you are going to seat yourself comfortably facing the western portion of the compass. Again, the weather might be cooler in the evening, so make adjustments as required. Traditionally, dawn and dusk are liminal times, between night and day, and are the time when fairy folk are most likely to be seen. Therefore, be in full attendance of the light as it sinks into the horizon and is absorbed back into the cold earth, swallowed up by the gaping maw. Remain in silent meditation as the solar power diminishes and relinquishes its daylight to the black of night. Notice any changes in the hue or quality of light, from morning brightness to orange or pinky haze of dusk, to the inky blue of evening. Allow the night to wash over you as the final spear of light is cast from the edge of the western horizon.

At midnight, you might be reluctant to be present at the location you have chosen. This is understandable, and you are advised not to put yourself in a position of increased risk. Unfortunately, there are always predatory people about, and the midnight hour might not be safe for being alone in isolated places. Therefore, please do not do anything that will put you or others in danger. You may continue with this exercise safely at home, with the lights turned out and clothed in darkness.

Whether in your special place or simply at home, sit and meditate as before, facing the north. This time, you will likely find a serenity and emptiness that comes more easily, or else a barrage of spirits which are eager for your attention. Your purpose here is as with the other points of the compass: to attend to the hour, direction, and quality of light. In this, you will find that there is an entirely different character than that of the others. Simply let midnight come and pass, attending to nothing other than the moment. When this is done, record well your observations and pass immediately to bed.

When you awake, it is pertinent to write down any dreams you may have had and can recall. After you have done this, review the previous day and try

to summarise the whole compass of the diurnal rhythm as it was experienced by you.

## **Key Ideas**

The language of story and myth is symbolism.

Early humans found social cohesion through narrative, bonding through shared, collective mythologies and cosmologies.

Mythology provides purpose and meaning to life.

Spatial and cosmological models locate us in the collective worldview based upon reliable events, such as sunrise and sunset.

The earliest compass models are Chinese and were used to identify spirits and harmonious flow of qi, or vital energy, force, breath, or wind. Through a broad cosmography, this developed into feng shui.

Calculating and observing astronomical and terrestrial events relied upon recognisable, equidistant fixed points—the cardinal directions—to order the world.

Combined with calculating time, usually settling upon twenty-four hours, the compass incorporates the complete worldview of ancient peoples.

From the Etruscans of the second century BCE through to Trithemius in the late medieval period, the compass has been a convenient means to catalogue and locate deities and spirits through correspondence with the directions.

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## *Chapter 3*

### *Magical Horizons*

#### *Where We Choose to Meet the World*

This chapter will start by addressing some of the philosophical ideas pertinent to the further understanding of the technology of the Witch Compass. The compass is the boundary or place where worlds meet. The country is projected out from the self in the centre in order that we are better able to work those interactions and relationships where our identity meets that of the other. This is the liminal space where the spirits and the I dances with the other.

Through boundaries, we begin to see how the world around us is experienced, helping us to find our centre and think about new horizons—building upon, in particular, Exercise 3. The previous chapters have relied heavily upon history to give background, but here we will begin to deeply explore the compass and our place in it. From here, we shall develop a way of being in the world and interacting with it through a perspective governed by our compass. Furthermore, these techniques help to develop skills that, in turn, offer insight into how we might begin to be more effective in our space.

### **Establishing Boundaries**

A boundary is the place where you choose to meet the world. This succinct statement must be borne in mind throughout the subsequent discussion if anything is to make sense. In terms of what has been described thus far, it is imperative to understand and carry forward this simple concept.

The definition of a boundary is the point that divides and delineates, denoting the limits of one unit of space and another. But, more than that, a boundary is where you choose to meet the world. It is the line where you, the silent self within the cave of the skull, reaches out into the sensible world and encounters the other. It is here, this liminal point, where we interact and create the world around us.

We establish boundaries all the time in our daily lives. Some boundaries are invisible, like social constructs; some are implied, as in a queue; while some are extremely visible, as in the Berlin Wall. In addition, we delineate boundaries for multiple reasons, not all defensive or, indeed, psychological. What remains consistently true, however, is that it is through these boundaries that we connect and relate to the world that we encounter. It is our personal limit whereby our world of self engages the world of other, an established bounds and perimeter, as well as the inferred or explicit rules which apply.

We are not always at absolute liberty to establish all of the rules of our boundaries all of the time, and a good many are dictated by environment, physical factors, latent psychology, and other beings. These all coalesce to influence, to one degree or another, how we perceive the boundaries that abound. However, our boundaries always inform our worldview—in regular flux as we interact—and serve to contain and preserve our reality, as well as reflecting that reality's interplay whenever it rubs against that of another.

A good example of a boundary specifically and ritually established is the magic circle in some forms of modern Wicca, witchery, and ceremonial magic, as discussed previously. Such a conjuration explicitly underlies the purpose of the circle: to form a boundary that preserves, contains, and protects. Furthermore, it is to be a boundary between the worlds. These parameters are programmed into the construction of the circle, defining its

operative function and purpose while it exists. These particulars are, in fact, aspects of your personal compass in every area of your interactions with the world, and you are free to instruct the conditions of your boundary—how you choose to meet the world—as you please.

Recall that the world we experience through the five senses is, in fact, an unknowable construct devised by our mind from continual streams of data. It is well-known that our brains receive vast amounts of information from each of our senses at any moment, much more than can be processed in the speed required of it. So, when the brain receives that data, and in order to process it at lightning speed and to react and respond safely, it must rapidly make use of the most relevant or pertinent information at the cost of some of the rest. In order to give a complete worldview, the brain then accesses a database of past experiences of similar or identical proportion and overlays the new or important details from the senses. An analogy is early stop-frame animation where the background is a static painting, while the moving characters receive the most amount of detailing. In this way, the brain makes the most efficient and rapid interpretation of the information delivered from the senses and creates the world in our minds. In short, the world you are experiencing is an hallucination occurring in the brain and based upon the experiential data being streamed from the five senses where the body meets the world. And so, the boundary of the world which we each perceive extends outward from our head and encompasses what the five senses receive, combined with intuition and inspiration, and the world is fashioned from our mind.

What this means for us is that our five senses are a part of our boundaries in and of themselves—between the world as it is and our vision of that reality. The senses receive and deliver information for clearing by the brain. In Tantric terms, these aspects are the “five impressions” through the sense organs which become our means of experiencing the world. These five tattvas (“that-ness”) belong to a single plane and could, conceivably and for our purpose, be laid as a five-pointed star within a circle, the senses corresponding to the points of the pentagram.

This is one type of boundary that exists between our self and the world, encompassing our identity from the worlds beyond and belonging to the

other. Indeed, it is through this boundary that we preserve our sense of self, as distinct from other, protecting the egocentric worldview and containing the I that bridges the worlds outside of ourselves. We can see how this might relate to the magic circle as in the example above, becoming a protective repository where we meet the world.

During the coronavirus pandemic in the United Kingdom and around the world, people were instructed to maintain a distance of two metres between themselves and others. This is a boundary governed by society's mores, imposing an area of "pass not" around the individual. The laws of this boundary are implicit and suggest that another body should not pass the invisible barrier into the space around you. As with most boundaries, this is a construct that is established in agreement, either with oneself, a select few, or a greater number—even by law if necessary. There is an understanding of what shall occur at this boundary and the possible consequences of not fulfilling that necessary contract. In this case, once set out, the remit of the boundary does not require reiterating each and every time, either for yourself or others, although it is continually reinforced through our interactions, made concrete in reality through conversational reaffirmation.

Similarly, and of a different kind, a magic circle is made manifest by the physical and ritual act of delineating the boundary. Its terms are made clear, its purpose spoken in the conjuration (sometimes the duration included), and the limits expressly marked and affirmed.

## **Boundless Boundaries**

Some boundaries are unbounded, as in the yawning void or pregnant abyss, such as Ginnungagap in Norse mythology or Ein Sof in the Kabbalah. More specifically, we can identify the unbounded boundary with the Thelemic supreme deity Nuit, who represents the circle of limitless circumference, infinitely expanding and immeasurable, and whose centre is everywhere. By contrast, Nuit is partnered with a male regent, Hadit, who is recognised

as the infinite minuteness at the centre of everything. Nuit is all matter; Hadit is all motion. Thelema is the magical system of Aleister Crowley (1875–1947), derived from the received text Liber AL vel Legis, The Book of the Law. For the Traditional Witch, one way of looking at this would be that She is all that is occurring as Fate, while He is the motion revealed through Time as the force and measure of change.

In terms of the Witch Compass, the boundary is defined by our perspective and how we choose to engage the world. As a witch, we are concerned with being masters of our own destiny, working to engage directly in Fate and ensuring that we are co-creators of the world around us. In order to do this, we must be conscious of, and work toward, maintaining a world which is conterminous with our paradigm. The boundaries which we set are defined by our own parameters, and as we are each the centre in our world, the compass goes always with us. In this sense, it is paradoxically both expansive and individual, ubiquitous, and idiosyncratic. The reason for this is that there are certain fixed parts which inform how we can engage the world, such as the sun always rising in the east and setting in the west, which are anchors we can navigate by. However, by being aware of these, we are at liberty to consciously choose which palette we might want to colour with in order to best express our inner selves.

## **Finding the Centre**

Finding the centre is an important part of orienting yourself within the Witch Compass. In essence, the compass is a way of cosmology, of fashioning or re-creating the world about you and bringing it into being in order to work with those forces in play. It is, in many respects, a microcosm of the macrocosm—as within, so without. As discussed, we perceive the world, or worlds, as external to us; they are outside of us, viewed through the window of the senses and envisaged in the mind. So, we maintain the centre space of all boundaries we form about ourselves. However, the world we perceive external to ourselves is equally a projection of the world that

we conceive of inside ourselves. The communication and relationship between our sensate experience of the external world and the inner realm that we project outward are of equal import.

The seven directions of the Witch Compass (forward, behind, right, left, up, down, and centre) are underwritten by the three planes, or dimensions, of existence—that is, breadth, length, and width. These are only enabled to stand, however, upon the fixing of the midpoint, the essential centre which is the linchpin about which the rest are determined. The centre, then, is frequently associated with the throne, the holy of holies, the seat of sovereignty. In common mythology, it is usual to see placed here a sacred stone, such as the Greek omphalos near the Pythian Oracle at Delphi or the Lia Fáil, “Stone of Destiny,” at the Hill of Tara, Ireland. The latter is a megalithic standing stone which marked the coronation of the high kings of Ireland. In Celtic legend, the Stone of Destiny is said to cry out when the rightful king touches it, while it has the legendary power to rejuvenate him and bestow long reign. These remarkable powers are, of course, synonymous with sovereignty and the point at the centre whereby the right of authority is achieved.

An omphalos is a Greek term literally signifying navel, indicative of the centre’s power of birthing and sustaining. In this respect, its potency is cognate with that of the Lia Fáil. The idea of the navel recalls the root or source, and is associated with the chain or cord which connects through a series of ancestral blood. This bloodline link through inheritance and birthright by sacred blood connects ultimately with, and is grounded in, the earth as mother of all. The chain of ancestral line may act as the umbilical of the world navel. This is strong mythology which can be evidenced in myriad stories of cultures the world over.

In medieval Europe, Jerusalem was regarded as the centre of the world, and consequently, the Holy Land frequently appears at the heart of maps from the period. Amongst the legends as to what constituted Jerusalem as the world centre is the location of the Ark of the Covenant, being the sacred pact between God and his people, as testified upon the stone tablets received by Moses. Additionally, the stone upon which the Ark rested, or else the foundation stone of the Temple, is also considered to be the

omphalos, marking the stone hub about which all events unfold in their turn.

Indeed, the Temple Mount, as the location for the sacred Temple of the Holy of Holies, the most sacred place on earth according to biblical accounts, was bought by King David at God's behest. The site chosen to be the home of the Shekinah, the feminine indwelling presence of Yahweh, was the circular threshing ground or Araunah.

## **Standing at the Crossroads**

The centre is a position we take with us wherever we go, ourselves always being the midpoint of our own worldview. We each look out, or have the impression such, from our own central point of awareness where the self resides. This means that we encounter multiple crossroads throughout our daily activities, and the possibilities inherent with each abound. When we access our internal compass, we are better able to observe and identify the qualities of each direction, thus enabling a more informed decision of our choosing.

When we look out from a centred position, we have a panorama of boundaries available to us. Of course, some of these are fixed, as previously discussed, and should be becoming apparent. For example, the sun will rise in the east wherever you are, and the inherent qualities associated through history and mythology will be present at this direction. In this way, you can discern the character, type, and quality of the spirit which stands at the point of the boundary in any given direction. Indeed, you are going to be building your own catalogue or spirit compass of such. However, when you move from the place of the centre, you take into account those factors at the boundary of your compass that are balanced with a degree of certainty, such as magnetic north. With full understanding of the centre, one moves in a way that is better positioned to determine how you will meet the world there at the boundary edge.

When you are at the centre, you are attuned to the boundaries about you, assessing the spirits and character of each, and empowered to move with purpose to each direction and engage that boundary on your terms. The directions provide stability and structure, but how you choose to work with them, and how they represent to you, are determined by how you approach and apprehend them. The centre, then, is the prime direction for personal sovereignty and how you choose to encounter the worlds around you.

When working with the Witch Compass, the cosmological map and mythic landscape come into view. From the centre, the whole span is available, and when we walk toward a particular direction, that world is traversed. If, for example, you are inclined to divination, then the powers of the western wind are often the most appropriate depending upon the techniques employed—water and mirror scrying would be good here. If you wished to explore the underworld and have an encounter with Hades, then you would move through the North Star Road. Part of being a witch is being attuned to the world around you and, in doing so, being better able to navigate with sovereignty and exercise choice. Thus, where we meet the world is the boundary that we choose. If you wished to invoke a spirit of youth and virility, then the east would be the wind that could be called in. The ability to choose where we come into contact with the world is programmed through the remarkable techniques of the compass and its inherent mythos.

Of course, from the perspective of the centre, we are enabled to access any of the directions made available to us. This is the place from which we move to the boundary of our worldview, projecting toward the horizon. If the boundary is the place where we choose to meet the world, then the centre is the place we move from, which informs those key aspects that the boundary will possess.

When we stand at the middle of the crossroads, we have four paths laid out before us, meaning that we enjoy the luxury of infinite potentiality, all possibilities being immediately accessible. However, once a particular direction is selected, those possibilities that were to hand a moment ago are unavailable. The centre, then, avails itself of potentiality that is not accessible from any other direction—it receiving all who attend to it. The centre acts like a lens, bringing whatever we bring to it into focus. Just as

the eye has available to it all that turns about, it also brings clarity and attention to whatever is within its purview.

The centre is also an axis, about which all turns as a wheel with its many spokes. In this manner, the stone, being solid, firm, and robust, is the pin which remains steadfast in the revolving seasons which weather its surface. It changes slowly over many years as the winds alternate in their efforts to leave some imprint. It bears the marks of each passing year, the tides etching their symbols and patterns as they pass, forming the character of the pivotal pillar even as it holds fast, grounded.

When we project ourselves outward, we also interact in the outer, the other, through the proximity of the boundary of the self, the I perspective. Therefore, the boundary that we maintain about ourselves is at once informed by the information received from beyond, whilst being a canvas upon which we project from within. Where these two meet is where we connect and converge and where relationships outside of our self are made manifest. If we hold our centre with strength and sovereignty, we have chosen to meet the world on our own terms and within the compass of our own boundary. From establishing how we meet the world, we are in an infinitely better position to influence that world. And isn't that an underlying definition of witchcraft?

We can choose as our centre whatever we wish, being blessed with the gift of free will. As such, we are fortunate enough to be engaged in the creative act of the world. Additionally, we must remember that not choosing is also itself an option, as even our lack of choice is an elective position. Here, the crossroads become a useful symbol as denoting three or four roads conjoined, the meeting place being the centre of possibility—the place where that choice becomes most available. As we maintain the centre, we stand on the threshold of the four roads that lead away, holding in that time and space the choice, the ability to move in any direction. The centre is the place of choice; it is the decision-making fulcrum about which specifics dance upon the horizon. Only when committed to one path or another does the choice become restricted, defined, and determined.

# Encompassing

All about the centre, the world spreads out in every direction into the horizon. In this way, the centre is encompassed, placed within the circular space which orbits the self. All around is the boundary described by the outer perimeter of the visible, where the land and sky meet as far as the eye can see. Turning on the spot, the world is a circular place, our senses reaching out in all directions to perceive our reality bounded by 360 degrees.

When something “encompasses,” it bounds the central tenet or position in a round, a circumference. All the boundaries discussed so far encompass a central idea or place. Often, the extent of these boundaries, especially those abstract constructs such as social distancing, are supported or built upon rules—the qualities which constitute the boundary.

A mythic horizon, utilising our creative narrative, anchored in the mundane world, is fashioned around us. Just as the false horizon in aviation provides reference points to orient and measure in the sky, so the compass provides the same function for the witch through the worlds. The reaches of the boundary of the compass work across more planes and layers than a one-dimensional circle, incorporating within its folds the middle, lower, and upper. Therefore, the boundary that is the compass is where we meet the world of spirit and, as such, is the reference and measure of those spirits we subsequently encounter. Indeed, it becomes as a colour wheel which indicates light quality upon a spectrum of spirits, enabling us to identify and work our witchery.

When it comes to tangible world boundaries, we are confined by the limiting nature of our sense perception. The empirical world as we encounter it extends only as far as the eye can see and all other impressions are bound by the limits of the other sensory abilities. The horizon, then, when we look out and observe, extends to the edge of the world we conceivably know. When we work our compass, we are fashioning our mythic horizon—a worldview of our choosing—deliberately and

purposefully laying out the coded information through a language and perspective that allows us to navigate the landscape of other that is worlds beyond what we regularly perceive by the five senses alone. In working upon a mythic plane, neither simulated nor artificial, we enable ourselves to identify other possibilities which unfold before us, making themselves available to us for use. The horizon is used to orient, being the plane on which indicators suggest certain qualities or attributes, characters, and spirits. Grounding this in place through the linchpin of the axis mundi, we are better able to navigate the worlds.

This idea will unfold naturally through use and understanding. For now, it is important to realise that the horizon that encompasses the centre is a boundary which can be used, being made up of reference points established by language and coded through symbolism and mythology, anchored in the mundane. Throughout this book, I will introduce some examples of a language and symbolism that can be employed. However, there may be myths and legends, symbolisms and allegories, that appeal more to you. These are encouraged, but in order to build a firm foundation based upon understanding the tech of the compass, the exercises given here are best worked in completion before working on your own. There are myths and symbols that are inherent within the lore of witchcraft, and indeed the world at large, that cannot be ignored, such as the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. However, there are some areas of manoeuvre where personal myths may vary and differ. Here, the basic and fundamental elements and symbols will be alluded to and used to enable you to work a full Witch Compass.

## **Exercise 4**

### ***Standing at the Crossroads***

The idea of centring is to bring your awareness consciously to a time and place that is here and now. This means you must release your grip on those things which otherwise occupy your thoughts, from the pressing matters of

the day to the habitual frets and worries that constitute your thoughts. Centring requires being grounded in the moment, a relinquishing of all else for the now. We cannot project the horizon, the boundary of the compass, without first being fixed at the centre of the crossroads.

In bringing yourself to this quiet-minded place, you have placed yourself at the crossroads, the midpoint where possible roads lead away in the various directions. You have located yourself in time and space and allowed the threads that weave about to make themselves aware to you as you slip behind the curtain. Allow the directions of the crossroads to roll out before you, making no judgment or decision which will immediately collapse the crossroads and determine but a singular path. For this moment, you are simply allowing each road that meets at the centre where you stand to simply be as they are.

When you have established yourself at the centre, become aware that you are always at the centre of your world, that wherever you are, the centre is there too. This is something you can take with you and access at any time, like overlaying a heads-up display, becoming aware of the centre and the crossroads horizon around you.

*Finding yourself in a quiet place—outside with a good view of the horizon around you whenever possible—take a comfortable seated position. Face whichever direction feels appropriate and close your eyes. Now bring your complete attention to your breath and simply observe as you gently inhale and exhale. Don't try to control your breathing or monitor the length of breaths. All you are doing is simply attending to the breath, giving your complete awareness to the centre of your being through the gentle rise and fall. As thoughts arise, calmly allow them to pass without judgment or shifting your attention from your breath. Once more, understand that you are not allowing frustration to interrupt your centred meditation. Persistent thoughts will press against your mind, and that is okay. Allow them to arise and disperse; you don't need to give them your attention. All is present within you in the here and now, the current moment, and it is a place of stillness, tranquility, and abundance. Allow yourself to simply be. All*

*thoughts can reside in the centre, but your attention is focussed and disinterested, simply centred and relaxed.*

When you are ready, open your eyes and stand, gently casting your vision to the extremities of the horizon about you. If you are fortunate enough to have an outdoor location with panoramic views, great. Otherwise, you can make subtle adjustments in the exercise by using visualisation and imagination to fill in the gaps of the distant horizon where your vision is blocked by buildings, objects, or walls.

*Having brought yourself to your centre, slowly begin to turn on the spot, casting your eyes out toward the natural horizon. As you move, observe the horizon and take in the fact that wherever your eyes rest is the same as the limit of your compass. Notice that the experience of the skyline, the sky above, the land beneath, is being projected inside the dome of your head and that all this is occurring inside of you. Is the horizon the limit of your visual or sensory field, or is it the boundary of your imagination, or perhaps both?*

*When you have turned once and are again facing the same direction as you began, take a moment and allow the senses to just perceive the circular world you have taken in around you. Follow every sensation, keeping the mind trained on it like a hawk upon its quarry, and allow passing subsidiary thoughts to pass without judgment. These thoughts are the lapwings that will lead you astray, farther from your quarry. For now, be at ease in the peace of the centre and simply observe the sensory stimulus which is within the sphere of your external and internal compass.*

As you become better able to observe the senses of the world that encompass you, try to feel and experience whether this occurrence is

happening within you, or without, or both. Where is the experience of the world encompassing you located within you? Is it in your head or somewhere else entirely? In doing this, try not to reach out to the stimulus that ignited this inspiration, as that would immediately lead you off down one of the paths which extend out from the centre, and the potentiality of the point will be lost for the singular thought. Instead, try to remain open and aware, simply observing, conscious of where such occurrences are experienced.

Practice this exercise whenever you can, preferably at the same time every day. It need not be a longwinded process, and soon you will have developed the skill to centre yourself in different circumstances. When you have sufficient experience in practicing this, it is useful to test your ability by moving from a quiet place where you won't be interrupted to a busy location, such as a bus or train, where there are myriad sights and sounds vying for your attention. A wise person once observed that a hermit meditating in a secluded mountain is skilled indeed, but if they can't achieve the same level of focussed meditation whilst in the bustle of rush hour, then they haven't really exercised the skill to its fullest potential. By regularly learning to bring your attention to your centre and remaining in that still point, even if only briefly, you carry with you the skill to centre and assess the boundaries before deciding how you intend to meet them. The purpose of the exercise of centring is to build a strong core from which to exercise choice in how we meet the world.

## *Scouting the Cardinals*

This part of the exercise will build upon the previous practical work, and you are going to start building an experiential impression of the spirits of your compass, starting with the cardinal points. Therefore, noting them will be a part of your spirit book and help you to build a reference with which you work.

In this exercise, therefore, it will help to have your notebook to hand so that you can write down any references or ideas without having to stop the

practice. When something occurs to you, simply note it and allow it to pass. You can go back to it after the exercise and research, study, and work with it, but during the meditative exercise use a notebook to exorcise the idea and continue. The time will come to study what these mean and how they contribute to your compass.

Take yourself to a location that allows you a good view of the horizon or skyline. This could be difficult if you are housebound but not impossible if you have access to windows. You don't necessarily need a full, uninterrupted 360-degree view, and it helps if there are features which break up the compass. Ancestral practitioners of similar techniques often used markers on the landscape as locating points, such as prominent mountains or natural dips in the skyline. Outdoors is best for this practice, in nature where your view is permitted to extend farthest and you can sense nature about you, feel the wind, smell the air, hear the birdsong.

*Find yourself in your centre as per the last exercise, grounded and established in the present. Allow your thoughts to rise and fall without pursuing them or passing judgment. Don't allow any frustrations, excitement, or distraction to dominate your internal panorama. Just simply be in the centre of your world, a place of peace and sovereignty where you are open to all potentiality about you, while calmly neutral. Remember that the centre is the point of expansion. Open to the centre is all potentiality, all possibility available to be expanded into.*

*Note obvious markers upon the landscape or horizon that align with the cardinal points of the compass and remember them before you commence. Now, as in the first exercise, begin to turn slowly upon the spot, your vision resting on the panorama.*

*As you turn slowly, stop at the first cardinal direction you arrive at (this can be roughly identified, but it helps to take a compass bearing beforehand).*

*Begin to reach out with your senses and feel the direction, stretching outward from the centre to take in all the information that you perceive and receive. Don't let your thoughts colour the impressions or try to analyse, categorise, or otherwise constrain. Simply observe and let the impressions arise within you, all the while keeping your awareness fixed at the centre. Your attention is reaching out, like a scout sent out from your castle to gather information, while your perception remains sovereign at the central axis.*

*In doing this, you will note that you are purposefully excluding all other directions in order to focus attention upon the one you are working with. However, you are not spiritually journeying to that cardinal direction, nor following the path with your awareness, but merely allowing the information to come to you. You are acting as a receiver positioned at the centre of the crossroads of the compass, open to the information and experiences that your awareness is delivering to you.*

*As you feel the direction through your senses, start to identify how you feel about it. Does it make you feel warm or cold, comforted or restless? How is your mood affected by the direction; what kind of thoughts are passing through your mind—are they critical and analytical, or poetic and ethereal? What bodily sensations are you aware of? It could be that you feel a headache, or a discomfort in the belly, or butterflies and a tickling, or relaxed serenity. It is likely that, if the sky is clear, the sun in one direction will be much warmer than its immediate opposite.*

*Finally, try to identify an overall impression of the direction—its character and its personality. Once you have allowed your attention to observe all of the above and feel ready, return your attention back to the centre, recalling your scouts.*

*Take a moment to ground yourself in the centre again before moving on to the next cardinal direction and performing the same awareness experience.*

You may find that it is more beneficial to work with one of the cardinal directions per day rather than doing all four in one go. It is also useful to take some time to record the experiences in your notebook before moving to the next. Remember, now is not the time to ponder deeply, but simply jot notes while they are fresh, exorcising them from your mind like building a report of free association from the information the scout has returned with. There will be ample time to study and cogitate what you have received.

Another thing to remember is that you are not trying to feel a particular location or genius loci; the intention is not to feel the spirit of the land. Rather, you are working with the spirit of direction. So, while your chosen spot will have features that affect your sense impressions, and you will experience these, it is not necessarily the landscape that you are feeling for. A simple thing to help with this is to recall that a magnetic compass has the cardinal directions on it wherever it is in the landscape, as north remains north everywhere on the earth—just as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.

## ***Research Phase***

Finally, when you have completed the above centring and scouting the four cardinal directions, fix a time and place where you won't be disturbed to analyse and study the impressions you have received. There will be some pertinent thoughts that really resonated with you during the previous work and synchronicities that merit further investigation.

Be critical and discerning. Healthy skepticism is an invaluable tool in your armoury for personal gnosis. The internet is an obvious and abundant resource but incorporates as much speculative thought as it does good information. Obtain for yourself a good, reliable book of symbols that can

be referred to as a base to expand knowledge of your experiences, such as *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* by Barbara G. Walker, or *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols* by J. C. Cooper. This latter book I always keep on hand and is of inestimable value. Often, you can find that a meaning ascribed to a symbol gives voice to your personal experience and opens new doors or reveals networks that expand your journey.

*On a separate page of your notebook, draw a circle and section off each of the four directions you have worked with. In each segment, record some of the distilled key ideas that express the overall sense of the direction. Use colour, symbols, patterns, images, sounds—every corresponding experience you felt at the direction that you feel encapsulates the essence of its character.*

*When you have done this for each direction, distill these impressions further to a single word, sentence, image, or idea that represents the spirit of each. You should have four words, phrases, symbols, images, poems, songs—whatever, which concentrate, for you, the spirit of the direction. Record this well. This alchemical process of distillation—reducing and refining the essence of the spirit—will make available to you the ability to eventually call the spirit of the directions, summon the winds, and know with absolute certainty that they will come and how you will recognise them.*

In a later chapter, we will explore further the rulers of the cardinal winds, or kings. For now, you are starting to build an experiential relationship with them and have identified them without preexisting discrimination or biased perspective. You are in possession of a word, colour, sign, sound, or all four, which is your idiosyncratic and most potent means of accessing them—developing a language that speaks to and calls the spirits of the four winds.

## Key Ideas

A boundary is the place where you choose to meet the world.

The compass demarcates the boundary or place where worlds meet.

Some boundaries are unbounded: the void or abyss, Ginnungagap, Ein Sof.

A boundary is at the circumference but is projected out from the centre.

Boundaries are defined by perspective and how we choose to engage the world.

The centre, or omphalos, is the heart of the crossroads, the axis mundi, North Star Road.

The axis mundi rises through the worlds.

You are the centre of your own world.

The boundaries that delimit your world are projected outward from your mind, informed by the five senses.

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## *Chapter 4*

### *Journey into Myth*

#### *Turning the Wheel and Treading the Mill*

The essential power that drives the compass derives its energy from its underlying mythology. That is, the narrative story that winds its way around the boundaries of the compass and is focussed at each point or direction and seasonal festival. In addition, there are the mythic landscapes which populate the heavenly realm, the otherworld. These represent the heroes and ancestors who have passed into the realms of myth, the sanctuary of the underworld that is projected in the stars above. In this way, the Traditional Witch makes use of the inherent seasonal mythos of the terrestrial realm, whilst working the magic of the otherworld against the backdrop of the celestial abode, fixed upon the axis mundi, the world centre. Following the path of the pole, the witch travels from the earthly domain along the North Star Road to journey to the land of the otherworld and to work with Fate. This is an essential aspect that defines Traditional Witchcraft: the traversing of the realms to cross the river which separates the quick from the dead, as explained by Cochrane. The Pagan marks the seasonal celebrations alone, while the witch crosses the boundary that separates life and death, and (crucially) returns. The compass, being holistic—a complete worldview—incorporates this dual aspect that is reflected as the friction generated between the Wheel of the Year and the cosmic mill.

## The Wheel of the Year

In its simplest form, the wheel is a tale that may be summarised succinctly as the mythic “Theme” indicated by the poet Robert Graves. Conveniently, this “Theme” suggests five key stages. These, then, produce the points of a pentagram and the Five-Fold Goddess of Graves’s system, which in turn affected the reckoning of traditions that followed in the footsteps of The White Goddess. These stages, when laid upon our Witch Compass, provide markers—nodes of power—that can conveniently correspond with seasonal sabbats. Thus, by narrativising the myth of the year, we bring the compass to life and are enabled to find our way into those key stages of the story. In this way, the compass is map, vehicle, and territory of the mythic landscape.

These thematic stages are “Birth, Initiation, Love, Repose, and Death” (figure 8).<sup>57</sup> As these relate to seasonal festivals, we can readily apply them to the compass in a convenient manner through the modern Wheel of the Year. Indeed, this latter is considerably influenced by the work of Robert Graves, whose impact upon the modern Neopagan and witchcraft movements is inestimable.



**The Five-Fold Goddess (The White Goddess) (figure 8)**

The work of Robert Graves, exhaustively located within his groundbreaking and difficult book *The White Goddess*, is much scorned in this century but was extremely influential in the last. While the factual and historical veracity of *The White Goddess* might be challenging, to say the least, it is imperative that we understand the author as poet. Indeed, the facts of Graves's ideas may not hold up to scrutiny, but that is to forget that he is apprehending the

ineffable, the mythos, which shrouds the mysteries and the truth of which cannot be measured through logos.

Alongside the Five-Fold Goddess, the Wheel of the Year also reflects her masculine counterpart, and Graves adds here the “antique story ... of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the God of the Waxing Year.”<sup>58</sup> This neatly provides a basis of four cardinal points upon the compass, corresponding to the winds and tides as well as the seasonal markers of the sun at the solstices and equinoxes. Furthermore, Graves greatly embellishes a Frazerian concept (expounded in James George Frazer’s seminal work, *The Golden Bough*) of the duelling twin Gods of the Waxing and Waning year.<sup>59</sup> This ever-swapping pair mirror the half of the year when the sun is in the ascendant, thus “waxing,” and the opposite portion, which sees the creeping darkness of post-summer and winter ensue, “waning.”

In its most essential form, the Witch Compass moves with each season and tide, with the festivals of the year being a hinge from which we can work. These form nexus points or knots as upon a garlanded cord (figure 9), where the energies of the seasons and tides coalesce at the four cardinal and four intercardinal directions. This gives us a completed wheel of eight spokes, which overlays the Witch Compass perfectly. The knots that bind the wheel are:

Candlemas/Imbolc (second of February)

Lady Day/Ostara (twenty-fifth of March)

May Day/Beltaine (first of May)

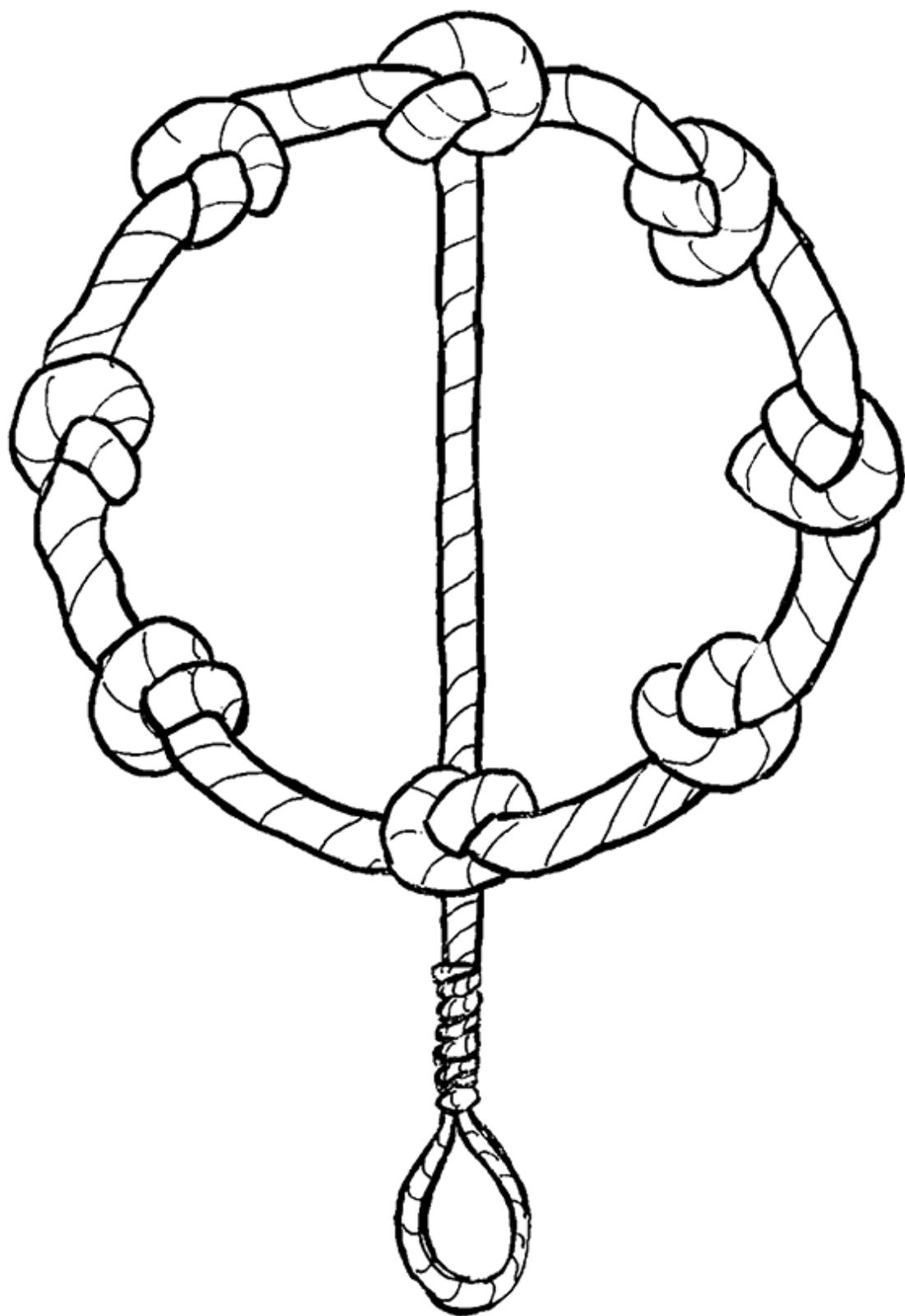
Midsummer’s Day/Litha (twenty-fourth of June)

Lammas/Lughnasadh (first of August)

Michaelmas/Mabon (twenty-ninth of September)

All Hallows’ Eve/Samhain (thirty-first of October)

Christmas Day/Yule (twenty-fifth of December)



## **The Nine Witch Knots (figure 9)**

These eight spokes provide structure for our compass and give support to the axis and horizon we have worked up to this point. Furthermore, and corresponding to antique design, directions of the compass are aligned to the festivals, giving a wheel of eight spokes to the ritual calendar year. Now, we have a pattern to operate with in order to begin to acquaint ourselves with the compass and its functions, apprehending at each of the eight festival days the agency of the spirits, characters, and identities which we encounter there. In this way, we are familiarised with the mythic landscape, which is inherent within each direction and is overarching, taking in the whole. It is through this familiarity that we may later come to engage the directions of the compass to affect our magic for divination, communion with spirits, and more. Understanding from whence a spirit or character of energy belongs within our mythic compass, we are equipped to fruitfully engage and work in harmony with time and space. Furthermore, we are enabled to actively participate with the grinding of fate in the unfolding through time.

## **Exercise 5**

### ***The Nine Witch Knots Charm***

Within my own tradition of witching, the Nine Witch Knots Charm expresses the mechanics of the Witch Compass. It is a device that introduces the narrativising of the compass through the energies and seasonal pathways and turning of the Wheel of the Year. This is reflected in the waxing and waning tides that weave throughout, from the first knot to the last. One may see the movement through the various stages, represented through the directions, winds, and traditional feasts or sabbats. Sometimes, you will hear Traditional Witches refer to the ritual nodes on the Wheel of the Year as “knots,” suggestive of those found on a witches’ cord (figure 9). Indeed, the cord may be used in this manner as a meditative device to evoke the spirits of the tide or sabbat and the corresponding direction or wind. Alternatively,

each passing through of the cord, completing all of the knots, would incorporate the entire compass and Wheel of the Year.

Provided here is the charm in full, with accompanying traditional discourse to demonstrate the rigour of the compass in accommodating such forces and mythic journeys as a part of the ritual sojourn upon the seasonal cycles and tides. In this, the annual cycle offers up a convenient and satisfying structure upon which to hang one's compass, as I discuss at some length in the subsequent chapters. It is hoped that, through the sharing of this charm, you will be able to see the use that mythos and narrative plays in the mechanism of the Witch Compass and how this may be employed as a worldview, cosmology, and map of time and tide. Through triangulating using this simple rubric, which expresses a profound cosmology, one may locate and move toward the boundaries of the compass that express the spirit of that direction. For example, we would commence the ring of knots at Candlemas (or Imbolc) on or around the second of February each year.

Following the charm, we will take a journey through mythology and how this applies to the Witch Compass. It is the mythos—the mythic narrativising of the compass with the use of corresponding symbols and ritual acts—that brings it alive and empowers our witchery. By enlivening the compass in this manner, it is transformed from a mundane device that orients us to a map and embodiment of the otherworld. When we engage in the mythic narrative which bounds the Witch Compass, we are able to harness those magics and work with Fate to bring about necessary change.

Note: The Stafford, or Staffordshire, knot mentioned in the charm is the basic overhand knot, named after the heraldic device of the English county of Staffordshire.

## ***The Charm***

*The first three knots are for increase and gain,  
the fourth being both of boon and also of bane.*

*The next knots three are for wane and decline,*

*While the eighth celebrates the light divine.*

## ***Knot the First***

Take you a hempen cord, or else a rope of good length. When Candlemas Bells shew 'pon the frozen ground, those Fair Maids of February dancing the spring, take up the cord. When the northeasterly blows, a Stafford Knot fashion and purse thine lips as though to whistle. Through the loop that is formed before tightening the tie, whisper the charm and seal the knot:

*Out of the mound, serpent queen rose*

*Speckled maid, snake of hazel grove.*

*I will not harm the Queen,*

*Neither will She harm me.*

## ***Knot the Second***

Upon thy compass cord, orient to the east of the dawn's first light. When day and night being equal, fasten again the Stafford Knot and afore the loop is sealed upon it, whisper the charm of the east wind:

*O Morning Star, light of the East,*

*Eternal shining, sun of righteousness;*

*Come ye, Lucifer, to illumine the hearts  
of all who in darkness now dwell.*

### ***Knot the Third***

When the May Blossom blooms its maiden white bouquet, and merrymaking abates, take once more your hempen cord and prepare the wind that waits. With pursing lips, and half drawn knot, charge full the loop with breath. Whistle the wind through that knot as it is drawn closed with the following charm:

*O lusty May with Flora Queen,  
The balmy drops from Phoebus sheen  
Prelucent beam before the day,  
By thee Diana groweth green,  
Through gladness of this lusty May.<sup>60</sup>*

### ***Knot the Fourth***

As Sol climbs higher in the noonday sky, Apollo's empyreal journey reaches the welkin summit. This is the time when the cord should be taken from its place of safekeeping and knotted upon Summer's southern wind, Tubiel's blessing to fasten fast:

*At topmost peak of heaven's hill,  
Bold Summer King, honour to thee,  
Dark shadow looms as sun stands still,  
Lord of Death must soon come to be.*

### ***Knot the Fifth***

The knotted cord now passed its midpoint, the waning tide doth hold the sway. To the winds of waning now we move, as the reaper stalks the corn with his sickle blade. When the harvest has commenced, the Stafford Knot shalt thee tie. Between the ends of the knot, breathe the charm and make it tight:

*In the ripening of the seed,  
Its quickening is received,  
But by the stalk that holds the crown,  
Shall Summer's lord be cleaved.*

### ***Knot the Sixth***

When the nights have been made equal to day, when the scales are upturned by Her will, 'tis time to hold the knotted cord once more. Under the squalls of the Western wind, with moon high and sun low, show thou the open knot which you will seal upon this eve. As the wind passes through the hollow loop, chant the spell and close the cord upon the zephyr:

*Day and night, sun and moon,  
Old and young, bane and boon,  
Start and end, light and dark,  
Summer, Winter, owl and lark,  
Now the balance of scales must tip,  
And close this wind in fated grip.*

## ***Knot the Seventh***

Now is the time when the birds have flown and the winter king is in the woods, stripping naked the trees and bringing slumber to the beasts. The Northwest brings a clearing wind, opening the way to the crisp cool night. Before the gaping maw of the mound, fashion thou the seventh sacred knot and whistle the spell as the cord is bound:

*To the High Sabbat, of masters four,  
Cometh the huntsman from mound's open maw,  
Gatherer of souls, to his hame does he drave,  
From the east to the north, escort of grave.  
Hoarder of souls, night's cold breath,  
From south to the west, stalker of death.*

## ***Knot the Eighth***

The eighth knot is sealed upon the winds of chaos and change, the mystery out of time. Take up your cord and prepare, for when the cold hollow tomb has become the birthing womb to capture the vagitus wind of the newborn light and the crowning of the year:

*Dark and dismal cavernous Night,*

*Death's abode, secreting light,*

*Star-studded cloth of heaven's high bower,*

*Venus heralding dawn's coming hour,*

*Bind now this the eternal knot,*

*which compasses round this divel's plot.*

## ***The Nameless Knot***

Now thou hast walked the wheel of the year, binding the winds in the knotted cord. Eight are they all as a compass rose, bound in a circlet of hempen thread worn about the waist or the neck. When girt at the waist, the wearer becomes the centre, the axial spirit which commands the Airs. At the heart of the compass, betwixt heaven and hell, wear thou the airs tied in each knot. Whenever the need should arise, a wind may be loosed and its spirit un-leashed. When the cord is unbalanced, its knots out of kilter, so too will its gait be uneven. Ever mind, this should be remedied lest the compass become precarious and unwieldy.

The final knot, standing out of time, should be secured when the winds are in equipoise. When a wind blows that hath no direction, which flurries and blusters from all and none, you may lock the knot which binds the lot. Take you the cord and recall ye this charm as the loose end is fastened upon a slipknot—for the Nameless Knot is most surely a noose, whose meaning and use is yet to be told:

*Tie a knot to catch a wind,*

*The devil in a bind,*

*Take it with you e'ery day,*

*Nine knots of fate entwined.*

## **The Basic Myth**

During the mid-twentieth century, a handful of groundbreaking books were published concerning mythology and Western understanding as it relates to a psychological tool of consciousness, applying meaning and purpose to human lives through history. In 1949, literature professor and expert in comparative mythology, Joseph Campbell, published his seminal *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. In this groundbreaking book, Campbell makes the case for a singular “monomyth,” which informs the structure of mythologic narratives from the Buddha to Christ. This “hero’s journey” is an initiatory adventure that incorporates archetypes purposefully intended to relate to the hearer of the story and overlay the myth upon their own life, resolving and healing many aspects and attaining the “boon,” which is returned to the mundane world and, in some way, improves or realigns things.<sup>61</sup>

The journey that the hero takes in Campbell's "monomyth" is reflected through the mythology of various characters in historical legends. For example, the myth of Arthur has enjoyed a resurgence in the Western Mystery Tradition of the latter half of the last century. We could associate the life journey of the legendary hero Arthur with the compass energies from his conception and birth, through his initiation by drawing the sword Excalibur from the stone, his wedding with his love, Guinevere, his later years in repose, followed by his demise at the hands of his son (god of the new year), and subsequent death. You will see that the italicized thematic markers in this tale indicate the stages of the Five-Fold Theme of Graves and can be ably located at the boundary knots or nexus points of our compass. Indeed, corresponding with seasonal festivals, these can serve as acts upon an annual ritual mystery play, providing initiatory and revelatory meaning and purpose.

Campbell's book proved to be remarkably influential and even impacted popular culture when a young George Lucas incorporated the theme into one of his first major motion pictures, *Star Wars* (1977). The influence of Campbell upon modern Neopaganism continues, from the work of Ronald White and the Cochrane coven to contemporary Pagans and Druids.

In *The Book of Druidry*, founder of the Order of Bards, Ovates & Druids, Ross Nichols, discusses at length ancient burial mounds, megalithic monuments and our ancestors' preoccupation with locating themselves in the mythic landscape. This involved the arranging of burial chambers in alignment with directions, as well as astronomical points of concern. In relating these to the modern mythos and festival year, Nichols explains that the "continual concentration in the past upon directions and their significances seems to be the basis of the awareness men and women can now develop in meditation."<sup>62</sup> Within this same book, Nichols expresses the nature of the eight-fold year system as being both ancient and modern, the days acting as markers to orientate a cyclical pattern (as opposed to linear), commencing with Candlemas (second of February) and associated with "ploughing the first sod ..." asserting that this was the date when "[the] Scots year used to begin."<sup>63</sup> Together with Gerald Gardner, Nichols is frequently credited with giving structure to the Wheel of the Year and providing a workable eight-fold pattern to the cyclical compass. Indeed, this same pattern is reflected in the work of Ronald White (*The New Pagans'*

Handbook) and in some ways in that of Evan John Jones (*Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed*).

Also commencing their ritual year at Candlemas are the Farrars in their collected work, *A Witches' Bible*, which brings together their earlier works *Eight Sabbats for Witches* (1981) and *The Witches' Way* (1984). In this tome, Janet and Stewart Farrar indicate that the “framework” of the ritual calendar year is common, but they expand at some length upon the accompanying narrative which gives it spirit.<sup>64</sup>

In *A Witches' Bible*, the introduction establishes the mythic pattern of the year, which is reflected in the compass, acknowledging the “Theme” of Graves and the assistance of Doreen Valiente. The latter, it must be recalled, was a member of Cochrane’s coven and may have derived a good deal of her understanding from immersion in this tradition—combined with her own experiences and genius, of course. Using the pattern of “Birth, Initiation, Consummation, Repose, and Death,” the Farrars reflect the journey of the goddess as the “fecundity cycle as the Earth Mother and in her lunar phases as the Queen of Heaven.”<sup>65</sup> In this, she is constant but “changes her aspect,” faces, or masks that are experienced through the seasonal tide.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, the god (here the Horned God) is dramatically narrativised through the cycle of a year in his aspects as the Oak and Holly King, God of the Waxing Year and God of the Waning Year respectively, and the journey of the sun hero from his rising, achieving the peak of Midsummer, and death and rebirth at Midwinter.<sup>67</sup> In this, the Horned God shows his light or dark face as appropriate to the twin aspects of the year. As a seasonal mythic cycle, this works well and demonstrates how dramatised ritual can be located upon the Witch Compass to great effect.

In this way, the pattern devised by the Farrars serves to ably allow a Traditional Witch to work with the energies evoked at each sabbat knot, being familiar with the mythos that underwrites the compass. Without this myth of the goddess and god in an endless annual dance through mythic narrativised drama, the compass would be sterile. However, the application of such an art allows the compass to become a vehicle for translating the worlds that are pertinent to each aspect, accessing the spirits of the Horned God and Goddess that are to be found there in this scheme and to work with them.

As a founder of The Regency, a traditional Pagan sodality formed after the death of Robert Cochrane in 1966, Ronald “Chalky” White, together with his colleague George Stannard, was integral to the formation of the myths of that group. At the very foundational level, a similar mythos as that used by the Farrars was employed. This would be expressed annually at “The Reading of the Festivals of the Year,” which outlined the myths of the goddess and god pertinent to The Regency. This statement of the ritual mythos reflects both the character of The White Goddess and, to some extent, that later worked by the Farrars in their version of Wicca.

“The Reading of the Festivals of the Year” was undertaken at Advent, which marked the start of the ritual year for the group.<sup>68</sup> This dramatic narrative outlines the seasonal rituals, divided between the myth of the goddess and that of the god, and provides the basis for seasonal dramatic cycles of mystery plays. These dramas enacted the ritual mysteries of the spirits of the cycle and the journey around the year, and they bred familiarity with the mythic cycle. Therefore, the attendees were initiated into the compass of The Regency, being attuned to the energies and attendant spirits of each festival.

Furthermore, the members of The Regency worked the seasonal festivals as an allegorical journey, representing in microcosm the journey we must all take in macrocosm.<sup>69</sup> The ritual year, being the single life span of the hero, permitted the attendee to experience and work through their own life patterns and share in the mysteries of life and death. As a journey of the soul, the diligent use of allegorical mythmaking and symbolism was employed to great effect.

Through developing a group’s mythos, the compass functions as the system upon which the narrative hangs. In this way, the nodes of the compass at each of the eight directions, or winds, are possessed of the individual spirit pertinent to that tide and time. By journeying in this way through the wheel, the Traditional Witch ensures that they are continually experiencing every aspect of the compass. By doing this, the witch is enabled to build and work with these powers for long operations or access them for short workings.

You are encouraged to seek out your nearest ritual festivals in your locale. We are fortunate to live in times where Pagan, Wiccan, and Druid groups regularly convene to mark the eight festivals of the Wheel of the Year. As a

Traditional Witch, and perhaps like the cunning folk of the past, we are able to take advantage of all techniques and philosophies available to us in the furtherance of our work. It is important to note that you do not need to adopt a different belief, religion, or practice and can remain on the outskirts. All you are doing is attuning to the seasonal turning of the wheel in time and space—the very mechanics of the compass as a paradigmatic tool for shifting awareness.

Furthermore, by becoming familiar with the spirits that dwell in the domains of the directions through seasonal observation, you are better able to call upon those through the appropriate symbolism and allegory when required.

## **Exercise 6**

### ***The Festivals***

It is beneficial to have a clear understanding and visual of the festivals when working with this technology. In particular, this is as they pertain to the eight-fold Wheel of the Year as spokes, or knots, upon the compass. Taking a blank page in your journal and a pair of compasses, inscribe a circle. Note in doing so that the instrument that defines and delimits the circle is the compass, not the other way around. This metaphor reaches deep into understanding the Witch Compass. The parameters, boundary, and narrative structure of the circle is being defined, laid out, by the compass, which moves about the ring while being fixed at the centre. This centre, in turn, is located above just as the stellar pole is found through the direction of the north among the stars, being the axial point.

Take a moment to reflect upon the wisdom in this simple allegory. In previous exercises, you were at that null point, the centre, and turned about you to face the horizon. As the compass marks out the limit of the circle about it, so you extended from the centre to the horizon and fashioned the boundaries at the edge of the circle. The compass, then, defines the boundary and is bound up with inherent mythos, narrative, spirits, and gods which are the architecture of the whole. By providing this narrative structure through

mythos, the witch is better able to locate within the mythic landscape and navigate through, working by and with the parameters of the compass.

Now, returning to your page, take a ruler and make eight lines projecting out of the centre at equal distance from each other until you have a wheel of eight segments. Within each segment, write your preferred festival name. The traditional names for the festivals are as given above (i.e., Candlemas, Lady Day, etc.), but you may feel an affinity with the more popular Wiccan or Celtic names. For the purpose of this exercise, it doesn't matter which you choose, as this is personal to you alone.

## **The Cosmic Mill**

Many Traditional Witches refer to a technique called “treading the mill,” which again finds its earliest account in the correspondences of Robert Cochrane. The allusion with the mill is with the grinding out of fate and the turning of the heavens about the earth, together with the earth's own rotational spin, acting like millstones. The association of the celestial canopy with fate is as old as astrology itself, since the first humans gazed upward at the tent of stars and narrative force gave meaning to the cycle of patterns, corresponding with the events on the earthly plane.

As a cosmological tool, the compass is not restricted to the telluric level and extends up and down through the axis mundi at the centre to the North, or pole, Star. This “North Star Road” is the path that many have alluded to when expressing their experience of travelling between the worlds, traversing the world tree, pillar, column, or pole. In this way, the heavens operate the celestial abode, the stars cast as the bones of Dame Fate, and reflecting upon the fate of those upon the earth below.

The mill, therefore, refers to the cosmic mill—the mill of fate—and is a particular allegory for the force that manifests in time and space, ever turning and grinding out our destiny. Therefore, it is an essential aspect of

the Witch Compass, and it is only through acknowledging and understanding the patterns of the mill and working with the same to effect change that we are ever truly able to work magics. Without working with Fate, any attempt at sorcery relies utterly upon chance alone.

As with the Wheel of the Year, the mill, then, is a counterpoint to the compass, as it functions across the worlds into the otherworld. The axis mundi, the world centre that we discussed in the previous chapter, is at the heart of the compass, as it is in the earthly plane and the heavenly. While we place the centre of our compass when we are working it upon the earth, its celestial pole is always the point upon which the stars turn: the polestar. Therefore, the axis mundi always works through the direction of north. This is an essential thing to remember with the Witch Compass, inferring that the place of power is to be found in that cardinal, magnetic point. The compass always points north, and it is this direction that orients, giving a fixed location around which the world is fashioned.

For this reason, esoteric orders and lodges, following the Masonic pattern, usually only have officers for the quarters of the east, west, and south. The north is commonly devoid of a human officer, as it is the dark abode of the hidden company, the so-called “Secret Chiefs” of the Golden Dawn or Dion Fortune’s Society of the Inner Light, for example.<sup>70</sup>

In 1969, professor of History and Philosophy of Science at MIT, Giorgio de Santillana, and professor Hertha von Dechend published *Hamlet’s Mill*. Like Campbell’s work, *Hamlet’s Mill* is concerned with mythology, although focussing more pertinently on archeoastronomy, and marks an important landmark in considering mankind’s mythmaking in the historical context of star maps. Encoded within mythology, according to the theory, is knowledge of megalithic culture, relating to the precession of the equinoxes and astrological ages, principally through the narrative of a millstone and protagonist, such as the titular hero. In this theme, the myth of the mill reflects the motion of the heavens and grinds the fates of men. Indeed, the association of astrology through the mythic zodiac has ever been concerned with the expression of fate through the cycles of the stars, down to the agrarian seasons and the earthly tides. Throughout the book, as with Campbell, a single ubiquitous myth is revealed which relates the idea of the

heavenly mill, which rotates about the celestial pole, grinding out man's fate.<sup>71</sup>

The myth of the zodiac and the heavenly legends associated with it provide the otherworldly backdrop that relates the hidden portion of the compass. Where the mythos of the Wheel of the Year follows the progression of the turning seasons, the reflux in the heavenly mill reflects the journey of the hero into the otherworld. When we work with the compass—and in particular its aspect as the mill—we are, therefore, grinding fate.

While many groups and individuals prefer to simply walk out a pace step, there are means and ways for working the mill that refer specifically to a type of the compass. Indeed, it is through working with Fate that the witch performs their work. Therefore, the “treading” of the mill is a little disingenuous and not half as easy as it sounds. Indeed, the grinding of the mill requires effort—physical and spiritual—in order to create significant push as impetus to create change. The cosmic mill would not be so easily halted. Different groups vary in how they approach this mystery, but it is an important aspect of working the compass. You are advised to observe the guideline to work terrestrial energies clockwise and tread or work the magic of the mill in the anticlockwise direction.

When working with the compass upon the terrestrial plane, reflecting the turning of the seasons and the tides, it is natural to work in the direction around the compass that nature seems to us to function. As this is essentially governed by solar forces, it is, therefore, wise to work in the direction that the sun appears to move about the earthly centre—that is, from east moving clockwise around the compass.

Conversely, the mill represents the otherworld domain, and according to lore and custom, time and space are reversed in this realm. When it is night here on the surface of the earth, it is day in the otherworld. When the earth is in summer, the otherworld is in winter. This reason would be sufficient to alternate the direction of working the mill except for another important factor. The heavens, the ink-hued, vaulted ceiling of the sky, appear to move from right to left (clockwise). If we are working to effect change by engaging the mill of fate, then we must turn against it. Indeed, the act of witchcraft is anciently defined by its transgressive art, turning against the

usual boundaries and challenging the norm. Therefore, the Traditional Witch works the magic of the mill backward in a widdershins direction, being both of the nature of the otherworld and generating a disruption in the relentless grinding of fate. In this way, the witch works the backward step in order to introduce adjustments to the patterns being woven by Fate, the true goddess of witchcraft.

## **Finding the Mythos**

There are many myths and narratives which inform the Wheel of the Year. Modern Paganism and Wicca have utilised a good many, from the descent of Innana into the underworld to the annual journey of Persephone into the underworld, only to return each spring. Indeed, mythologically, there is similarity between these two myths, separated by time and culture, in that they were both celebrated at key points throughout the year as allegorical of the deities' bringing of fecundity to the earth and annual return to the otherworld. In this way, the mythos gave meaning to the seasonal processions and could be directly engaged by all participants. Further, these can be seen as annually reflecting the lifetime of each participant and contribute to our own understanding of our place in the scheme of things.

The latter myth formed part of the Eleusinian Mysteries in the Hellenic world of our ancient forebears. As an initiatory cult of Demeter (literally, "the mother"), thousands of participants experienced the divine revelation every year in a tradition that survived for two millennia. In the spirits that will be introduced through the course of this book, the spirit of Candlemas can sometimes be known by the name Core. This angelic spirit is found in The Heptameron and reproduced in Barrett's The Magus and is assigned as an angel of the spring. Of course, this is appropriate, as Core is another rendering of the Greek kore (Κόρη), literally "the maiden," and an epithet of Persephone in her aspect as the spirit of spring and the return of life to the earth after the barren winter (brought about by her absence from the earth).

This interlude is to demonstrate how mythos informs the structure of the compass and its relationship with the seasonal markers that have been called the Wheel of the Year. These are expressions of the spirit, character, identity, or mood of the tide and time—the fundamental expression as an experience of that moment, itself a pause in the ever-turning cycle of the year. As such, the annual mythos forms a most basic narrative structure that binds our Witch Compass, allowing us to access the power inherent within each knot, or festival, upon the cord. Within each knot of the year is tied its own particular magic and spirit, which is loosed in its own time by the passing of the seasons. The witch, however, may elect to unleash the power of that knot in order to utilise its magic. But first, like the witch who tied it, the wind must first be captured—and this means we must turn with the Wheel of the Year and our mythos.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Arthurian myth predominated and many saw the compass in terms of the Round Table, each knight possessing a characteristic in each direction. The theme of Arthur's continual battle with his shadow and son, Mordred, illustrated the twin light and dark halves of the compass. Arthur's death and return to the cave on the isle of Avalon is a myth of death—returning to the womb awaiting rebirth—and is easily placed within the compass.

Take the time here to feel for your myth, ever minding the pattern or theme, and experience the four directions you have become aware of so far, letting them speak to you and tell you which hero they call to. Research and read *The White Goddess* and *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. These seminal works, although difficult and contentious, are essential reading to understanding the compass and the modern witch cult.

You will notice that the theme, or pattern, of the myth follows a fairly similar narrative structure, and it is this that underwrites our compass. The essential nature of the compass narrative follows the rising or birth, marriage or consummation, conflict, and return to the barren and dark underworld before life springs anew with fecundity and vigour to repeat the cycle. Remember, Graves's Five-Fold Theme previously discussed outlines this basic myth perfectly.

As you learn more, you will also find that certain cultural idioms are more resonant with you than others. These are what you are looking for here as you research the mythic theme, which is the landscape and map of the compass.

## Exercise 7

### *Finding Your Mythos*

For the following exercise, you should plan which myth you think you have an affinity with and speaks most to you. Identify with it as much as possible as you run up to performing this exercise.

*Find a location outdoors where you won't be disturbed for some time, and when you are comfortable, centre yourself as before. Bring your presence of mind to the here and now. Allow thoughts to fall away as gently as they arise, just as the breath rises and falls.*

*Begin to turn slowly around on the spot, feeling each direction as you go, experiencing all impressions that arise spontaneously. Close your eyes and reach out with your feelings into the horizon, sensing for the limits of your compass boundary as you rotate. You should become gradually aware of the knots, bumps, or nodes of the boundary where the directions are most potent. Open your eyes and check to see if the directions you sensed were in alignment with the cardinal and intercardinal directions.*

*When you can feel the compass around you, turn slowly again until you arrive at the first cardinal direction and pause there.*

*Now, experience the direction as if you were the hero or mythic figure you feel an affinity with. Invoke the spirit or god that you have identified with this particular direction, inviting them in and assuming the characteristics and identity of that particular essential nature. If it is spring, invoke, for example, Core, the maiden: take into yourself the power of new growth, rising sap, the new dawn, piercing yellow-white light, brilliant green of new shoots emerging, melting ice and snow, the sound of songbirds, the scent of new green growth, buds upon branches, and snowdrops heralding the return of life.*

*Now, begin to “see” from this new perspective: What does the landscape feel, look, taste, smell, and sound like? What feelings does it evoke within you, and what actions, if any, are required by it? If you are working, for example, Arthurian myth, assume the disposition of Arthur in this directional space and allow yourself to become aware of all impressions and experiences of the entire mythic landscape as the king at that particular phase of his life/myth. What is the sentiment, the intuited spirit at this time and space?*

*Allow the invoked spirit to speak directly to you and of their compass point, which is a place all its own upon the mythic landscape of the compass. You may be given a symbol, sign, or sound with which this spirit might be called upon in the future. Remember that a spirit is the character or identity, and any sign given through this exercise will link directly back to that, evoking those feelings and thoughts.*

*When you have finished, record all that you can remember in your notebook. At a later time, when you are able, sit with your notebook and research, study, and think about those experiences. Can you locate the experience in the mythological record? Can you identify the mythological landscape? You*

*can refer your experience to the Wheel of the Year and Graves's Theme to know where upon the compass you can find the God of the Waxing and Waning Year. Have fun with it.*

There are many myths which relate to the Wheel of the Year, and most will reveal themselves with a little research.

In your notebook, return to your circle of festivals and begin to take notes as to how your experience of the mythos fits with each upon the Wheel of the Year. You are now adding a mythic level to the narrative of your compass, where you previously had correspondences you had built through intuition. The directions are becoming enflashed with symbolism and myth.

## **Exercise 8**

### ***Feeling the Tide***

In this exercise, you need to think about the current tide or season. Refer to your diagram of the Wheel of the Year and find which festival is approaching. This is necessary, as the virtue and potency of the time and tide will always be most available at that time as the year turns.

Taking the mythos that you have been working with and the spirits which have called to you in the previous exercise, note which face of the myth is showing at this season. Research seasonal traditions—good books include *The Sacred Ring: Pagan Origins of British Folk Festivals and Customs* (1995) by Mike Howard, or *A Harvest of Festivals* (1980) by Marian Green. Explore the local folk traditions associated with the seasonal festival that is happening soonest and, perhaps, make a plan to attend some public events. In Britain and Europe, we are fortunate that the folk revival has ensured the continuation of many customs, especially in areas such as Wales and Cornwall. America, too, has many local traditions as well as a rich heritage of customs from around the world preserved within its peoples. There is a

host of seasonal practices available, and the diligent witch will search them out and find utility in them. This can be as simple as attending a public enactment or custom and imbuing yourself in the essence, taking in the vibe and mood of the moment, and storing it in memory for later use.

Research might reveal something more aligned to your Witch Compass than you expect, as these customs and traditions are almost always associated with the seasonal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth in some form or another. In this manner, we connect with the mythic landscape of the compass as it progresses through the cycle of the year, as overlaid on the Wheel of the Year. Many such folk practices hide within them keys which can be used upon the compass to great effect. Immerse yourself in the tide, building as strong a relationship as you can, always being mindful of the mythos you are developing with your personal Witch Compass.

## **Key Ideas**

The Witch Compass is driven by its underlying mythology.

Narrative most often takes the structure of the eight-fold Wheel of the Year.

The Traditional Witch crosses the boundary that separates the quick and the dead, entering and returning from the otherworld.

The cosmic mill is worked counterclockwise to effect change, working with Fate.

The mythology of the mill is found in the zodiac and the stars—constellations of ancestors in the otherworld.

As the Wheel of the Year turns in the material world, it is polarised by the cosmic mill in the heavens. In the construction of the compass, these represent the upper and middle worlds as twin wheels on an axial pole, the world tree, or pillar.

When we work magics, we must engage with Fate through the turning of the cosmic mill, which in turn is reflected in the manifest world.

[\[contents\]](#)

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58. Graves, *The White Goddess*, 20.

59. Graves, *The White Goddess*, 20.

60. Kenneth Elliott, ed. and arranger, *Musica Scotica II: Sixteenth-Century Scots Songs for Voice & Lute: Editions of Early Scottish Music* (Glasgow, UK: University of Glasgow Music Department Publications, 1996), 75.

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## *Chapter 5*

### *The Four Kings*

#### *Anchoring with the Wind Gods*

Working with the four kings of the Witch Compass is essential in providing the fundamental architecture to the whole mythos. So far in this book, we have explored the ideas and philosophy of the compass and its basic construct—the mythos and how it applies—and started to apply an idiosyncratic appearance and symbolism to allow personal access. This chapter gets to the meat of the subject, working with technical occult ideas and details that underpin the entire operational mechanics of the Witch Compass.

Therefore, there are certain names and ideas presented that are used by the author in his own operations of the Witch Compass. These are here given as teaching aides and may be used directly or else understood as examples. You are encouraged to explore and realise your own approach to the compass, but those names and spirits given here on in are accessible and may be used to get a flavour and experience of the compass.

In this chapter, you will be introduced to the four cardinal rulers: the Watchers—the spirits or gods who stand at the four points of the compass. Through thorough examination of the occult lore and technology of the four demon kings (as distinct from the more familiar archangels of other systems), we will engage them directly—for it is only through experiential knowledge (gnosis) that we can claim any true understanding.

As calendrical markers, the solstices and equinoxes form important indicators for the four cardinal directions and are long associated with the chief points of the compass. These pillars are foundation stones for the mythic world, supporting each quarter of the sky, and are found in mythologies the world over. Indeed, etymology of the word “cardinal” indicates a “hinge” or “that upon which something turns” or else a thing that is “important.”

The significance of the cardinal directions is often attributed to the zodiacal signs, termed cardinal, which mark the turning point of a temperate season, designating the character of the tide. The sun and the stars are our most ancient tools in orienting ourselves, and the corollary of the directions with the cardinal signs is a clear example of our ancestors’ ability to convey information and technology through narrativising, creating the myths which express this truth. Once more, we see that the cosmic mill and the Wheel of the Year grind against each other as the celestial circle turns about the annual seasons of the earth—“as above, so below.”

The deities at the cardinal points in Western mythology originate in the ancient, pre-classical wind gods that informed the directions and seasons. Sometimes depicted as winged men, these could also be associated with horses, reflecting the equine nature of the Indo-European ancestors. The ancient Greek god Boreas is the chief of the wind gods, located in the north, and brings the winter and cold winds of change. As well as being the chief wind god, Boreas also keeps a stable of twelve horses at his command, recalling the horses of the ancient mythic Divine Twins, youthful horsemen, who traverse the diurnal sky (the Dioscuri, the Alcis, Hengist and Horsa, Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel).

The antique and ubiquitous model of the three worlds—celestial, earthly, and chthonic—appears throughout early religious and shamanic cultures and is reflective, perhaps, of the three castes, *idéologie tripartite*, of the social structure of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) societies—a hypothesis expounded by Georges Dumézil (1898–1986). Accompanying the three worlds, the four pillars usually denote the four corners or cardinal points of the compass.

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| North           | East           | South           | West           |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Winter Solstice | Vernal Equinox | Summer Solstice | Autumn Equinox |
| Fomalhaut       | Aldebaran      | Regulus         | Antares        |
| Man/Angel       | Bull           | Lion            | Eagle          |
| Boreas          | Eurus          | Notus           | Zephyrus       |

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The four aspects of the Tetramorph, the Cherubic/Kerubic four fixed zodiac signs, were related to the changing seasons.<sup>72</sup> The four constellations of Taurus (east), Leo (south), Scorpio (west), and Aquarius (north) in turn correspond with the Persian “Royal Stars”—the principal stellar foci located within them, known by the names Aldebaran, Regulus, Antares, and Fomalhaut respectively.<sup>73</sup> Here, they become identified in witchcraft with the “Watchers,” the biblical angels who are set to watch over man and beget the witchblood on woman.<sup>74</sup>

The four guardians, or Watchers, will be familiar to Wiccans, witches, and magicians alike. Commonly, they are called to witness and guard the rite, often to stand beyond the bounds of the circle and the limit of the temple. The Watchers are usually summoned as protectors of the magic circle of art. What may be less familiar, though, is the potentiality of the compass within which the circle resides, providing a window into the other worlds. Here, we may travel outside of the protective ring, the receptacle of power, to the realism of the Watchers themselves. The Kerubic principles in their modern magical usage can be traced to the system of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and are thoroughly expounded within the corpus of the ceremonial work published by the late Israel Regardie. Regardie wrote a thorough exposition of the philosophy, lectures, and rites of the group, simply titled *The Golden Dawn*. This book was originally a four-volume collection published between 1937–1940, and the Kerubim are introduced early on as guardians of the temple, which should be affixed at their proper stations. However, attempts to align all magical currents to a single system sometimes forces a fit rather too much. For example, in the Golden Dawn system, the elements, zodiacal fixed signs, and Kerubim suffer somewhat from a distinct asymmetry. The Kerubim, in this system, is represented by the eagle, corresponding to the element of water, and the zodiac sign of Aquarius in the west. However, modern astrology and occult studies might find this a more unlikely fit, as the sign that is depicted in most astrological wheels shows Aquarius occurring during the season of winter and being an air sign. Therefore, the following astrological correspondences are more appropriate for our Western traditions:

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|        |         |          |        |
|--------|---------|----------|--------|
| Leo    | Scorpio | Aquarius | Taurus |
| Summer | Autumn  | Winter   | Spring |
| Fire   | Water   | Air      | Earth  |

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When we arrive at modern Traditional Witchcraft, Robert Cochrane mythologised the kingdoms of the four Watchers in a cosmological narrative known today through a document he shared with his clan titled “The Basic Structure of the Craft” and thoroughly expounded by its current Maid.<sup>75</sup> The purpose of this present discussion, then, is not to repeat or dissect at length the model or map that Cochrane and Oates have waxed lyrical upon, but rather to explore the possibility of the mythic landscape.

The four cardinals—their symbolism and correspondences—remain important in occultism and arrived in the medieval grimoire tradition with a rich legacy. Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa in his comprehensive sixteenth century *De occulta philosophia libri tres* (Three Books of Occult Philosophy) makes extensive reference to the four winds and the assigned princes of angels. John Dee, working perhaps from Agrippa, includes in his diagrams similar attributes and characteristics, and the classical elements are also associated with the four directions. However, it is interesting and necessary to note that, according to ceremonial magician Aaron Leitch in his 2005 *Secrets of the Magickal Grimoires*, it is the directions that are worked, not the correspondences that are placed there.<sup>76</sup> This important point is one to always bear in mind, being sure to observe the spirit and not the characteristics, nor to confuse the two.

In medieval demonology, expressed through the extant grimoire texts that have been preserved, studied, and used by modern practitioners, the position of the four chiefs and kings cannot be overemphasised. The position of these rulers at the four cardinals is the most useful reference point to approaching the demons or spirits of the compass. In addition, the close association of necromancy and demonology with witchcraft, together with the making of pacts and calling up of demons, is a clear and concise corollary. Whilst texts invariably differ in the position of the chiefs and kings, while others use different names altogether, there can be synthesised a useful working model which places Lucifer in the East, Beelzebub in the South, Astaroth in the West, and Asmodai in the North, with corresponding kings beneath these chiefs being Oriens, Amaymon, Paymon, and Egin respectively.<sup>77</sup>

Many of the medieval and most of the modern practitioners set out some certain rules with regard to approaching these four rulers. These will be noted here, as they bear a striking resemblance to similar experiences of the Witch Compass. Firstly, it is proper to face the direction of the demon or spirit you are approaching. If they do not respond or become difficult, their chief or king can be named as a kind of prompt. Also, when approached by an unknown spirit or demon, such as in a dream, one can approach the kings to discern whose rulership they are under and, therefore, which direction they hail from. In this way, you can get an accurate index of the spirits and demons as they are in the hierarchy of the chiefs or kings.

There is a lot one can tell from where a spirit comes from, and that is an important aspect of the Witch Compass. If, for example, a spirit approaches from the east, you have a ready inventory of symbols, associations, and language by which you may recognise the basic character and intent of the spirit, including its ruling spirit. If, for example, the spirit were to become unruly, the king of that direction (in whose domain the spirit resides) may be approached to bring them to task.

By having a thorough and experiential relationship with the spirits of the compass, you can readily identify a spirit or demon even when they are being unfaithful by certain key attributes of which you have acquired knowledge or experience.

## **The Song of the Cherubim**

I have already discussed the Tetramorph and the Kerubim, but these merit a little closer inspection as they pertain to the four rulers of the winds.

The four Kerubim, identified as the four fixed signs of the zodiac, represent the four constellations which stabilise the zodiacal signs which girdle the earth. The word “zodiac” has its root in PIE, developing through the Greek *zoe*, meaning “life,” and *kyklos*, “circle,” translating as “circle of life” or

“circle of living creatures.” It is worth noting that the Kerubim, biblically, are frequently called the “four living creatures,” or as applied in the Book of Revelations, Zoa. In witchcraft terms, this is pertinent to the Sabbatic term Azoa as found in the writings of Andrew D. Chumbley (1967–2004) and is the antithesis of zoa. Another curious etymological point of note is the biblical name of Adam’s wife, Eve, from the Hebrew Hawwah, meaning “a living being,” and rendered in Greek as zoe.

## ***East and the Vernal Equinox***

Among the ancients, the bull is a mythic beast of sacrifice and often accompanies the first king, who is scarified to order the world, as in the case of Norse Ymir and Auðumbla, a primeval cow in the Norse cosmology. Designated the “Bull of Heaven” in ancient Mesopotamia, who were the originators of much of later astrology, Taurus was the constellation in which the sun rose at the vernal equinox between 4000–1700 BCE. Therefore, the ox or bull is associated with the Kerubim of the east, being the sign of Taurus. The Watcher of the East is Aldebaran, the “follower,” known in Greek as Lampadias or “torch-bearer,” possibly suggestive of the dawn light.

## ***South and the Summer Solstice***

The Greek hero Heracles, indicating the “glory of Hera,” also called in Hesiod “glorious hero,” suggesting the “glory of the year.” In this latter capacity, Heracles would appear to be the champion of the annual cycle under the aegis of Hera who, according to the mythology, despised and challenged the hero. In addition, Heracles also fits the capacity of the Divine Twins in the PIE myth, having in contrast to his celestial nature a mortal twin, Iphicles. Along with the twins, one divine and one mortal, Heracles and Iphicles are joined by their sister, Laonome, meaning “law of the people.” This completes the PIE model, which is all entirely reflected in

the Labours of Heracles as he completes his twelve trials, corresponding with the signs of the zodiac, again paralleling his place as the “glory of the year” and child of the diurnal sky father, Zeus, and the goddess of the year and seasons (particularly spring) Hera.<sup>78</sup>

The first labour of Heracles is the slaying of the Nemean Lion, whose golden hide was impervious to mortal weapons. Having strangled the lion after subduing it with his club, Heracles skinned it and wore its golden skin thereafter, assuming the solar mantle. Therefore, we can see the solar journey as implicit in the myth of Heracles and his journey through the twelve zodiacal labours, paralleling the months of the calendrical year and the solar stations at the cardinal points. The brightest star, and the Royal Star or Watcher, found within the constellation of Leo is Regulus, the “little king.”

### ***West and the Autumn Equinox***

Scorpio is the sign that is associated with the autumn equinox and is linked astrologically with three animal forms. These are the scorpion, Scorpius; serpent, Serpens; and the Kerubic face of the eagle, Aquila. Amongst these constellations is Ophiuchus, the “serpent-bearer,” which may depict a hero, Heracles or Apollo, battling the serpent and standing upon the Royal Star Antares, the “heart of the scorpion.”

Common themes which occur around the time are balance and judgment, evidently reflected in the equal light and dark which happens at the equinox. However, unlike the vernal equinox, this marks the lengthening of night, the triumph of darkness over the light of day.

### ***North and the Winter Solstice***

Aquarius, the Water Bearer, was known originally in Babylonian star lore as the “Great One” (Gula) and was, according to Gavin White, considered to

be the god Enki (Ea) pouring from overflowing vases and represented the “increase in river flow and rainfall” during winter months in the Bronze Age.<sup>79</sup>

Whilst the Royal Star, or Watcher, of this direction is Fomalhaut, the principal star of Aquarius, the (water) man, is the star Alpha Aquarii, known by the traditional name Sadalmelik, meaning “fortunate king.” This is interesting given the situation in the Midwinter solstice, mirroring the summer solstice, which is marked by Regulus, the “little king.” Echoing, once again, the Divine Twins and even perhaps the paradigm of the Oak and Holly Kings, this is demonstrative of the priestly and the temporal kings who swap places biannually, as well as the folk tradition of the mumming play enacting St. George and the Turkish Knight.

## The Castle

The origins of the castle in the witchcraft of northern Europe incorporates the spectacular mythologies of the Holy Grail, Celtic legends, medieval Christian mysticism, and the most ancient cosmological systems. An oft-misunderstood concept, the castle informs a large part of Traditional Witchcraft since the 1960s, made popular perhaps through the subsequent publishing of the works of Robert Cochrane. Of course, its origins lie somewhere in the magic and mysticism of the distant past, filtered through diverse cultural influences, coalescing in the medieval romance tradition and arriving, finally, in our collective cultural mythology and folklore.

Surprisingly, the perennial philosopher of the Traditionalist School, René Guénon (1886–1951), in the collected edition of his writings, *Symbols of Sacred Science*, the essay “The Zodiac and the Cardinal Points” begins with a discussion about the arrangement of ancient cities within a fourfold pattern that incorporates a division of social groupings, sometimes called a “caste.”<sup>80</sup> Within this fascinating discourse, Guénon notes that the cardinal directions are often associated with the classical elements, seasons, and

colour “emblematic of the caste situated at that point.”<sup>81</sup> Whilst it might seem incongruous to associate the outmoded social caste system with the cardinal points of the compass, there is much to learn in this as cosmological map.

Etymologically, the words “castle” and “caste” find a common origin in Proto-Indo-European \*kes-, signifying “to cut.”<sup>82</sup> We may find, then, a common source for both “caste,” as in separated or “cut off” from other adjacent tribes or social groupings, and “castle” as a place set aside, to delineate or demarcate land and mark it out as sacrosanct.

Once again, we see the idea of boundaries being developed as the sacred enclosure, temenos, which is separated or cut off from the mundane and profane outside. Of course, we can establish the sense of being “cut off” when we observe inner and outer worlds, the construct which occurs in our mind and the idea of the world outside of us.

The sense of the inner and outer world reaches a mystical peak for the wider European awareness through the work known as *The Interior Castle*, written in 1577 by Teresa of Ávila, a Carmelite mystic nun. The symbolism of *The Interior Castle* draws powerfully upon the identification of the inner (as distinct and “cut off” from the outer), where the castle represents the soul and its seven mansions, which are achieved through prayer, virtue, grace, and mystical practice—similar to the Merkabah tradition of Kabbalah, which gives us the Hekhalot system and informs both books of Ezekiel and John of Patmos’ *Book of Revelations* as visionary devotional works.

Importantly for family and clan-based traditions of witchery, the castle represents a place of gathering for its members, the tribal home, hearth, and centre, where both corporeal and discarnate ancestors may meet. In this way, it shares a meaning with town and village as the enclosure of a tribe or family, set aside and separate in both space and time. Furthermore, folk tradition and medieval romantic symbolism have woven an otherworldly aspect to the castle, identifying it as that which is difficult to obtain and houses an esoteric treasure—the Grail itself.

Representing spiritual attainment, the castle often contains a boon, such as the Holy Grail, and sometimes an imprisoned person who has relevance to

the individual—an ancestor, lord, princess, bride, or mother.<sup>83</sup> The quest for esoteric knowledge, too, is symbolised within the castle, and the bridge, therefore, is often included within the mythic landscape which precedes the attainment or testing of the castle proper.

In some instances, an opponent, such as with the Rex Nemorensis

of James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, must first be overcome in order to gain access or initiation into the mysteries of the castle. In order to pass the guardian or castellan, certain requirements, including familial adoption or vouching, must be fulfilled before the castle is won. In other incidences, the castle is assailed as in the Middle Welsh poem from the *Book of Taliesin*, *Preiddeu Annwn*, or "Spoils of the Otherworld," which recounts a raid upon the otherworld castle led by King Arthur and with similarity to the invasion of Ireland by the British King Brân. For the medieval Grail hero Percival, it is the castle of the souls, Corbenic, and the mysterious castle appears infrequently and in visionary form when the aspirant is prepared. Furthermore, the correct question must be posed once the interior is won, demonstrating the enquiring mind which is the only sure way to win the mystical and esoteric wisdom contained within.

Much of this discourse is preempted by Robert Cochrane's "The Basic Structure of the Craft," which outlines a cosmological map which includes four castles standing at the cardinal directions.<sup>84</sup> Each is ascribed a ruler, or king, and the domain is described with some detail pertinent to the four castles outlined in Indian and similar civilisations' cosmology. As we have seen, this same model might be thought to refer to the tribe, type, or "caste" which presides over the nature of each of the directions, moving through the annual cycle of the seasons. As Cooper outlines in *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols*, "caste" is represented by the square as a pattern of the cosmos envisaged through the cardinal directions. Furthermore, these are associated with the four seasons, elements, and "emblematic" colours, which are then assigned the typical caste allocations of the Varna (Hindu) division of society by caste.<sup>85</sup>

In occult lore, the castle is four-square yet encircled. It is enclosed, containing the familial and tribal ancestors, the essence of the socio-magical culture at its spiritual hearth. It is aligned to the cardinal and intercardinal

compass points, cosmological watchtowers, and the seasons of the year. Finally, it is measured with the castes, peopled by the embodied expressions emblematic of the mythological character which comprises the lands of those compass points, fixing the axial castle at its heart.

To better understand the four castles of the rulers of the cardinal winds, following are some illustrative descriptions.

***The Castle of the East – The castle of the east is governed by Uziel, often envisaged as a young man with gossamer wings. About him is an ethereal, golden light that dances playfully around his quick-moving form as the “Light Bringer,” the herald of dawn and the “morning star.” This realm is the kingdom of the intellect, principles of divine light and love, the element of fire, and the spirit of quickening. The season is spring, its time is the dawn light, and its colour is red.***

***The Castle of the South – This castle is home to the “twin,” Hébol, who is often depicted as a shepherd or hunter and often horned with antlers, but also ram’s horns. His countenance is earthy, the woodwose or wild man, the fulness of nature. However, whilst Hébol represents the abundance and fruiting of nature, he is also the lord of death, like Osiris, and is sacrificed at this time to enable the harvest (of souls) and commence the gathering-in period.***

The apple is his symbol, and the five-pointed star at its heart indicates the five-fold cycle. The season is perpetual height of summer; it is the midday tide of the scorching sun, Sirius (Sothis) the dog star, and the colour of white light.

***The Castle of the West – The castle of Mēniel is seen in the reflective surface of the waters of the moon. Mēniel is a priest-king, presiding over necromantic rites and the liminal space between the land of the living and the dead. This castle is a place of sleep—Hypnos, the land of Nod—and spiritual growth, particularly of the psychic realm. The season is autumn, the tide is dusk, and the colour is grey or green.***

***The Castle of the North – This is the castle of Arddu, who is sometimes called Kerbaro, and is the chief of the winds. He is also called Hweyu***

*(Vayu), “the spirit that blows,” and he is the dark “twin.”*

Often seen as the hermit with a dark hooded veil, shards of starlight emanating occasionally from his dark appearance, wielding the celestial pole as a crosier, the serpent entwined upon a staff.

He is the god of mysticism, magic, death, and power; his abode is the Spiral Castle in the heavens beyond the North Star. To him are all things sacrificed, and he sacrifices all. His is the chaos and the ordering which begets the world anew. His is the pregnant void. His fruit is the pomegranate, his season is winter, the tide is midnight, and the colour is deepest black.

## **The Kings of the Witch Compass**

The Witch Compass itself is composed of the spirits that stand at the four winds, being in a state of flux and reflux, a perpetual interplay which brings into being the experience of the cosmos. This cosmic dance, the interplay of the winds with each other, form the loci of conscious experience that are approachable as the spirits. As independent, impressionistic, and intuitive personalities, the spirits formulate our experience of the world in our every moment.

The compass aligns and points us north, orienting our participation and apprehension in and of the world—in all instances, anchoring our worldview and causing a map or territory which affixes our experience. Without these necessary linchpins, our lives would be made up of a fluidic morass of effervescent confusion. The four winds, the directions of the compass, fasten our outlook and provide the architecture from which we may correctly position ourselves to better relate experiences in consciousness. Just as a sail without a mast is just a flailing, amorphous cloud, so is our awareness of the world when we are unable to square and centre ourselves with perceptual crossbeams. The four winds provide just

such a crossbeam which allows us to catch the winds and harness the creative essence they bestow.

As I discuss the Witch Compass, it becomes incumbent to utilise certain language in order to express or teach its underlying values and meaning. However, one must understand that this is done so for illustrative purposes. As mentioned previously, we will be making use of names and associations of the author, through years of work and experience. Nevertheless, these are personal and are used in order to represent the workings of the Witch Compass. For this reason, you may approach the work with these spirits and find great resources, and that may conform with your own experiences. However, if you diverge from the names and spirits presented, that, too, is demonstrative of an understanding of the form and function of the compass.

However, it is imperative that you do not approach this work with baggage, that you don't bring any notions to the table and attempt to make the compass fit your predisposition. There are certain elements that are essential to the nature of the compass as we each experience it, such as the fact that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. This is an unquestionable truth of our collective understanding of events as they occur and are contextual, universal aspects of the compass that are not subject to personal biases, and they remain true for us all. However, our idiosyncratic tastes, psychology comprised of past experiences, and desires should not be imposed upon the compass itself.

In approaching the Witch Compass, we must understand that terminology often comes preloaded with meaning and association. Frequently, a word or name can summon within us a response that is, perhaps, not itself pertinent to the intended purpose. Because of the common associations that are rife in the occult world—often contradictory, bestowed with tribalism and difference, or just flavoured by a particular aesthetic—it is common to see Traditional Witchcraft use unfamiliar, sometimes deliberately concealed, or otherwise elusive names. In addition, the prevalence of transgression and inversion as an important aspect of witchcraft is especially pertinent here.

One such example of the intended ambiguity within witchcraft is the name for the Craft itself, which sometimes gets called the Nameless Art, purposefully removing any attachment to preconceived forms or systems.

Another example is the propensity for Traditional Witches to refer not to any particular sets of gods or spirits but, when pushed, to summarise the principles as best they can as the “Old Lad and Lass.”

Because names have attachments, we try to avoid such influences from impeding our progress in the spiritual endeavour wherever possible, releasing any potential incursion by our rational mind to dominate or determine our experience prior to attainment of gnosis. It is preferable to undertake a rite or journey and experience the raw interaction prior to any rationalising which might otherwise seek to cage the spirit in the bounds of definition.

For this reason, it is necessary to approach our work with the Witch Compass with an open mind and without preconceived ideas, allowing the personal gnosis to develop. Only when this avenue has been thoroughly explored may we resort to researching and formulating theories, meanings, and purposes, allowing ourselves to confirm or jettison aspects of the experience itself. We must be discerning and ever mindful of confirmation bias. No matter how much we may want an experience or to interact with a certain deity or pantheon, the witch ensures that the canvas is blank before undertaking any work of the art, allowing whatever emerges to come forth.

## **Witchcraft Is a Transgressive Art**

As with much of the old ways of witchery, there is a strong odour of transgression, inversion, and reversion which permeates the art. Witchcraft and sorcery are not most at home within the ceremonial setting but are to be found at the crossroads of force, form, and function—the beating heart in the dirt and the land. Being eminently folkish in nature, witchcraft arises within the bosom of the common folk. It is heralded by the spirit of rebellion and opposition to the shackles of bondage which society, economic circumstances, or religion have long subjected the common man

to. The cruel treatment of the peoples provides a fertile ground in which latent stirrings of witchery and cunning craft may emerge.

Witchcraft was branded as a rude cousin by the more privileged, aspirational ceremonials of the intelligentsia, who regarded the crude and necessarily pragmatic folk magics as “low magic” and somehow dull or lacking sophistication. Nothing could be further from the truth.

While this author contends that the inner reality is an intrinsic aspect of our outward experience—all being one in the fulness of consciousness—there remains an imperative for the modern witch to get outside and mingle with the dirt. This means, fundamentally, that there is an inherent sense of fear, of danger or risk, which accompanies the more potent, primal, and radical of magics. (Please take note that this means the need to take yourself entirely out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself but not by placing yourself or others at risk of harm.)

Only by the most demanding experiences can we learn and evolve our witchcraft, and this means removing ourselves from the familiar, the crutches of the ego, and the comforts of our lives. Therefore, the Traditional Witch purposefully evokes certain motifs which reflect the lore and idea of the witch, thus summoning the transgressive, antinomian spirit of the cunning craft. Subject to this are certain aspects which many might find difficult, including working with the “Devil” as the folkloric Witch Father, or “Man in Black of the Sabbath,” as well as Cain as first sorcerer, and the Nephilim or Watchers, fallen angels of biblical and apocryphal works. In the medieval magical worldview, these beings mingled effortlessly in a syncretised worldview that sees Lucifer and Diana as related aspects of witch kin, and angelic and demonic kings worked in the summoning of the otherworld king Oberon, as well as members of the fairy host.<sup>86</sup>

With all of the above in mind, following are the names of the spirits we shall be working with upon the Witch Compass. Some readers will immediately be filled with an aversion to these spirits, while others may not be aware that witchcraft has a long association with demonology and necromancy. At this point, they may feel unfamiliar to you, or else they could evoke certain feelings or thoughts, but it is important that you do not act upon these at the moment.

|          |   |           |
|----------|---|-----------|
| Arddu    | - | North     |
| Astoreth | - | Northeast |
| Uziel    | - | East      |
| Tubiel   | - | Southeast |
| Hébol    | - | South     |
| Azrael   | - | Southwest |
| Mēniel   | - | West      |
| Samael   | - | Northwest |

These names identify the spirits inherent within each of the wind gods and are informed by the most primal ancestral forms they have taken throughout the hoary mists of time. These are raw, powerful, primeval energies that are experienced in many guises throughout cultures and times beneath the masks of local and familiar deities, spirits, and ancestors. However, these titles maintain the essential nature of the spirits themselves. Therefore, it is imperative not to try to discern these masks or attempt to uncover any single culture or history behind the name. They are to be experienced naked and in absolute truth. For this reason, these names purposefully elude definition and restriction, being more of a spectrum of personality reflected throughout the stations of the compass rather than static and specific.

Within Traditional Witchcraft, we work with the spirits against the background of the compass as a means of locating ourselves in a mythic landscape and identifying the presence which is always around us. It is important, at this stage, to remember that we are always at the centre of our compass, and therefore, the winds are always available to us. Indeed, it is important to consider that they are within as much as they are without. As we have discussed, the world we think we perceive is, in fact, occurring within our mind, and therefore, the winds are to be found deep within the dark cave of our head. This pool of potentiality, like a cosmic soup with the material and ingredients to fashion all the worlds, provides us with the essential experiences in order to apprehend a magical world.

Robert Cochrane once remarked that the distinction between the witch and the Pagan is that the witch crosses the river, a comment that I interpret to indicate that witchcraft is fundamentally concerned with traversing the worlds and passing through between the familial reality and the otherworld.<sup>87</sup> This, then, is the most basic characteristic of Traditional Witchcraft in all ages, and our ability to switch between the worlds—“as above, so below,” between within and without—is our strength. For this reason, following are techniques that have worked in the past to orient the witch to magical thinking within the compass, positioning our mindset within a worldview that partakes of the Witch Compass.

## **Exercise 9**

### ***Daily Adorations***

The Golden Dawn system of magic introduced a ritual procedure of daily solar adorations that has been adopted and incorporated most famously into Aleister Crowley's tradition of Thelema. This rite, known as Liber CC, Resh vel Helios, fulfils a number of useful functions and demonstrates the flexibility and pragmatism inherent within Traditional Witchcraft. This is the age-old custom of making use of the most accessible and useable material that is available to us. Therefore, the use of the solar adorations is not used as part of a generalised approach but aligns with the principles and fundamentals of our philosophy.

Whilst it is perfectly appropriate to utilise Crowley's Liber Resh ritual for the above purposes, I have adapted a ritual that is, perhaps, more comfortable to the witch. It is advisable that you try to familiarise yourself with the rite and make an effort to perform the appropriate adoration at the same time every day. It helps to mark the timings of the rising and setting of the sun, and there are many good apps available that can provide you with accurate times for your location. Indeed, there are several good Thelemic apps available today which make this quite simple. If you would rather not use an app, consider setting a personal alarm at the times you have designated to correspond with the directions and winds.

### ***Rubric:***

At dawn, or when first rising from slumber, face the east and place your palms together at your chest in prayer as you invoke:

*Hail to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of morning,  
Upon the wind of Uziel.  
As thou travellest the skies aloft,  
Thou risest up on the peaceful wave-crest  
Like a queenly maiden in bloom.*

At noon, face the south and, opening arms broadly, invoke:

*Hail to thee, sun of the seasons,  
From the realm of Day,  
Upon the wind of Hébol.  
As thou travellest the skies aloft,  
Pouring upon us gently and generously,  
Glory to thee thou glorious sun.*

At twilight, face the west and, palms facing each other outstretched to the horizon, invoke:

*Hail to thee, sun of the seasons,  
From the realm of Evening,*

*Upon the wind of Mēniel.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft,*

*Thou liest down in the destructive ocean,*

*Without impairment, without fear.*

At midnight, or before retiring to bed, face the north and, clasping your arms about you, invoke:

*Hail to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of Hweyu,*

*Upon the wind of Arddu.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft,*

*Thy steps are strong on the wing of the heavens,*

*Thou art the glorious mother of the stars.*

Daily solar adorations are a superb method of daily practical magic that bring the witch into alignment with several factors. The first, and most obvious of these, is the sun and its transition throughout the day. Superimposed upon this ritual act is the basic mythos of the sun's journey from its rebirth at the dawn, coming into fulness at noon, before sinking into the underworld, Amenta, where it travels through the land of the dead at midnight, before being born anew.<sup>88</sup>

Obviously, this daily mythos reflects the greater solar journey through the Wheel of the Year, where the dawn corresponds with the direction of the

east and the vernal equinox, noon represents the sun at its height at Midsummer in the south, dusk or sunset reflects the autumn equinox in the west, while the north is the dark midnight which occurs in the north at Midwinter. Therefore, the daily adorations are a microcosm of the compass which encompasses an annual cycle.

As you can see, the daily attuning with the cycle of the sun, instilled over time, tunes us further to the greater passage of the year. You will also have noticed that, in doing this, you align yourself with the cardinal points of the compass, meaning that we are practicing a ritual which familiarises ourselves not only with a mythic journey of the sun—which influences the greater compass of the Wheel of the Year—but also with the four kings of the wind gods.

## **Exercise 10**

### ***Journey to the Castles of the Four Kings***

The use of imagination in magical work has a long precedent and is explored in the mysticism of the philosopher Henry Corbin (1903–1978). As we have discussed at some length now, the world we apprehend about us is, in fact, a reality created by the mind and projected within the head. Indeed, what appears in the mind can be as real as anything that we perceive as being external. Therefore, the work within our imaginal has a direct effect upon us should we use the power of the mind to imbue these with a sense of the real. Visualisation has received some poor treatment in Traditional Witchcraft circles in the past, but the use of mind journeys through the mythic realms not only has a restorative, healing, or magical faculty but can provide us with familiarity of the worlds that spin about us through the Witch Compass.

Therefore, these exercises use the power of visualisation in order to introduce you to the four kingdoms of the wind gods of the Witch Compass. Once again, it is emphasised here that these primal experiences are intended to approach the essential nature of the spirit, and any masks or guises the

gods may present should not be mistaken for the wind itself. That being said, it can be useful to gather a collection of associations and, from the common ground, discern where the truth may lie, like an imagined Venn diagram where the relationships of similar and related spirits reveal something of their mutual nature.

There has been a lot written upon the subject of visualising techniques and path working, sufficient that it would be remiss to cover extensive ground here. Rather, you are referred to the wonderful work of Nick Farrell in *Magical Imagination: The Keys to Magic*, which explores the use of techniques of the imagination and path working as magical experiences.

For the best results, it would be necessary to have a suitable person read the visualisation whilst you are sat with eyes closed, undertaking the journey. Alternatively, you could record yourself reading the path working. Finally, the hardest but most liberating experience is to memorise at least the pertinent symbol, images, and progression and work through it under your own careful guidance. This last can be a fruitful experience when you are released of the shackles of time, the discomfort of listening to your own voice, or the embarrassment of having to invite a friend or colleague to read to you. However, it is also the most fraught with danger, accompanied as it is with the wandering of the mind and the disappearance of time, focus, and intent. This method requires discipline and prior experience of such techniques and is not recommended for those who are not advanced in magical meditational techniques and work.

Always ensure that you have turned off your phone and television and eliminated all distractions that would seek to grab your attention and pull you out of the journey. You need a place that is comfortable, but I do not recommend lying down or using your bedroom, as mental association prompts the mind to sleep, and we are not looking to dream but consciously travel in the imaginal. If you would like to further charge your inspired journey, select a time of the day appropriate to the castle you are seeking entry into. Alternatively, you can also use the day or season that is appropriate. You can undertake these visualisations as frequently as you desire, as familiarisation only reinforces the experience and helps anchor you with the Witch Compass.

The following visualisations are to be used when you find yourself in a comfortable seated position, eyes closed, and body relaxed, free from distraction. Allow your thoughts to settle and observe your mind still as an undisturbed pool, glasslike and reflective.

Within the journey, there is always a moment when the narrative gives pause for you to experience, and this is so that you are free to ask questions, receive boons, or otherwise interact with the spirit. Remember at this juncture to remain in communion until the time is right to move onward, to be polite and courteous, and to respect the spirits you encounter.

Perform the journeys one at a time with several hours' interval between. This allows the experience to settle and sink in, permeating your inner landscape. When you have familiarity with the journeys, you may decide to do them one after the other, creating a compass round in one sitting. However, this is not recommended in the early stages, as there is so much to undertake in each.

After each session of journeying to the castles, it is important that you locate yourself back in the physical realm and your body. Therefore, at the end, open your eyes when you are ready and slowly start to move your arms and legs, gradually moving your body into awareness. Only stand when you have regained your senses and are sure of yourself. Eating and drinking, preferably something sweet or salty, and placing your hands upon the ground serve to ground and fix you back in the physical reality.

## ***The Journey East***

*In the darkness of your mind, you see a single spark of brilliant white light, a pinprick in the blackness. Focus your attention on the point of light and as you hold it in your mind's eye, see as it slowly begins to grow larger, pulsating with each breath, rhythmically expanding until your whole vision is filled with shining light.*

*As the fog of the light swirls around you, you can make out a yellow glow behind the blur. As you focus on the glowing orb, it becomes gradually more defined until a disc of golden light is before you, perfect in shape and form as it hovers before you in the brilliant light of your mind. As you look at the orb, it begins to grow and engulf your vision, pushing the brilliant light out until your view is overwhelmed and a scene is before you.*

*You are standing upon a lush, green hill looking out across endless meadows bursting with colours of wildflowers like a carpet before you, reaching out to the horizon. You notice that the golden hue of the sun touches every part of the scene you take in, bathing all in a yellow glow. The azure sky above is cloudless, and a slight chill remains in the cool air despite the warmth of the sunshine that seems to reach everywhere. You begin to move toward the horizon, where the light of the sun is sitting upon the emerald green of the land. As you move, approaching the sun, you notice that there is something within it that is coming closer to you. Gradually, you begin to see that it is a person, and they are heading toward you, the sun crowning them behind and obscuring your vision in light. Eventually, the figure is close enough to touch and you behold a young man, his golden hair dancing gently in the breeze, his sky-blue eyes hiding a mischievous nature, and a broad grin as bright as the dawn itself. He glimmers in the golden light, as though bathed in the sun's aura about him, and you notice great feathered wings behind him as though emerging from his shoulders. Smiling, he utters a single word to you and extends his open palm to you and you see something being offered. You take it and he begins to speak, words that only you can hear.*

(Pause for a few moments.)

*As the words vanish into the air, like butterflies descending, you feel a great warmth in your heart, from which a soft glow radiates around your whole body. You give your thanks to the spirit, and as you bid farewell, you see them sink backward into the sun. As the sun absorbs the spirit, it expands once more, growing until your vision is engulfed in the solar light. Just as the light fills your mind, it begins to dissipate in a million sparks of light, like a beautiful firework explosion of stars, leaving the darkness of your mind once more pristine in its eternal blackness.*

*Take some time to regain your senses and return to the room where you are sitting. Open your eyes and begin to move your arms and legs until you are back in the world once more. Eat and drink something sweet or salty to ground yourself.*

## ***The Journey South***

*Bringing your mind's eye to the place of darkness about you, a perfect void of blackness, you sense an earthy odour about you, like the smell of the leaf floor of a forest, dank bark, and pine wood mingled with turned soil. Your senses slowly develop an awareness of a grove growing around you, emerging upward like a mirage in the heat of the midday sun beating down furiously. As the fierce rays of the sun hit the leaves and trunks of the trees around you, the scent of the forest is enhanced, increasing with each breath. Your mind is intoxicated by the bombarding of your senses: the overwhelming smells of dirt, moisture, and leaf mould, the dense wooded floor itching with life, everywhere around you seemingly teeming with living nature. As this endless vision of wooded ecstasy swamps around you, a pattern begins to slowly emerge through the leaves. You sense a face peering through the fronds and blades of the leaves, skin dark and textured like bark, the smell of animal musk, damp fur, piercing the woodland aura, the hint of sweet death underwriting the continual motion of life around you.*

*As the hard, angled face appears before you crowned with bloodied antlers of a king stag and framed with leaves and petals of the wild wood, you see deep green eyes fix you in their gaze. A sense of raw, organic life fills you, together with the iron tang of blood, the shock of red, and the knowledge that life thrives on death. This notion emerges in your mind like a creeping ivy, and you begin to discern patterns and meaning, forming like sentences in your head. These sentences form and impart a message that you instinctively understand, and through the vines, you communicate with the wild nature spirit.*

(Pause for a few moments.)

*As you give your thanks for all that you have been given, you sense the creeping vines move away, as though roots and stems are retreating from your mind. Gradually, the leaves and bark, earth floor, and wooded canopy fade, and the scent of the wild gives way to crystal-clear air—your mind left in a state of emptiness once more.*

*Take some time to regain your senses and return to the room where you are sitting. Open your eyes and begin to move your arms and legs until you are back in the world once more. Eat and drink something sweet or salty to ground yourself.*

## ***The Journey West***

*With your mind resting in the pool of blackness, clear and pensive, waiting quietly, you become gradually aware that there has been a light present all the time but unobserved. You slowly start to understand that this light has always been there, not hiding, always available. In awareness of the light, you realise that it surrounds and encompasses you, wraps all around you and holds you in its strength. It feels mature, wise, reassuring, and a sense of ease overtakes you like the rest after effort. A feeling of accomplishment, completion, and achievement emerges beneath your thoughts, a sense of a deed done coupled with an apprehension of something unspoken. You feel overwhelmingly the notion that you are being measured and weighed somehow.*

*As you are filled with this awareness of fulfilment and repose, you see now that the light has shrunk to a tunnel reaching out into the distant beyond. The pool of your mind is like a flowing blackness before you, and the tunnel of light projects out across it as a pointedness spanning the river of memory. You reach out with your perception along the tunnel, and the sense of expansion pulls your mind across the stream of memory. With your mind's eye, you reach down into the dark liquid and take up some of its fluid impressions and are immediately projected into a memory from your past. As the memory unfolds, familiar and relived, one of the people begins to speak directly to you, and you are immediately conscious that you are experiencing one of your memories, and this voice is your guide.*

(Pause for a few moments.)

*You give your thanks to the guide, and the memory fades until there is nothing left except the oozing expanse of the river and the tunnel of light that stretches your awareness out. As your awareness withdraws back across the stream of consciousness, you see that it is now a sea, a vast expanse of ocean that is both memories and dreams. The tunnel of light springs back like a spring, until it is all around you, submerging all in its*

*soft shimmer. Once more, the light returns into the blankness of your mind, its presence felt but not overtly obvious in the stillness of your mind.*

*Take some time to regain your senses and return to the room where you are sitting. Open your eyes and begin to move your arms and legs until you are back in the world once more. Eat and drink something sweet or salty to ground yourself.*

## ***The Journey North***

*Finding yourself in the darkness of your quiet mind, you sense a stillness all around you. Simply remain in this space, detached from the world.*

*Whenever a thought arises or an intrusion from the outside beckons, return your attention gently to the stillness. Allow your feelings, emotions, and all thoughts to sink into the quietude. Only the purest of serenity may reside here, resting in perfect tranquility. A harmony of emptiness is your mind, the infinite potentiality of all things moving unobserved beneath the glasslike surface of your awareness. Only in absolute stillness of thought, feeling, and senses can you reside. Here, in a completely blank state, the mind utterly at peace without holding any thought, sensation, or feeling, you find yourself in transcendence.*

*Through this sublime position, the voidness of mind invites softly to the voice in the silence. Only when all the sounds are silenced may we perceive the soundless, the voices of the many becoming the voice of the One.*

*Without expectation, without anticipation, without desire, allow your mind to attain nothingness. When the ego struggles in its death throes, you will witness the enragement of thought against no-thought, and the war is won in complete absence. Allow the dying echoes of the ego to be stilled in the silence of perfect transcendence.*

*When you are ready, take some time to regain your senses and return to the room where you are sitting. Open your eyes and begin to move your arms and legs until you are back in the world once more. Eat and drink something sweet or salty to ground yourself.*

This last meditation is the most difficult and the hardest castle to approach, and perhaps not what you were expecting. There are many path workings that lead to the northern kingdoms, but to work true magic in enacting the work of the first sorcerer, Cain, we must accustom ourselves to the sublimation of the ego.

## **Key Ideas**

The four kings provide fundamental structure to the compass, “squaring” it.

The kings are celestial markers that fix the seasonal tides of spring, summer, autumn (fall), and winter.

The kings have been identified in the mythos of the Tetramorph (lion, bull, eagle, and angel), as well as the four winds, and the Royal Stars, Grigori, literally “Watchers.”

As heavenly “Watchers,” the kings connect the Wheel of the Year and the cosmic mill.

As such, the “Watchers” (kings) are “fallen” angels of Traditional Witchcraft, star beings that manifest their power on earth through the seasons.

The castles are the domains or realms which have various correspondences and characteristics in occult lore.

We can attune to the four kings through the cardinal directions, seasonal cycles, and daily adorations of the sun.

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87. Cochrane and Jones, *The Robert Cochrane Letters*, 140.

88. Amenta is the symbol used by the Egyptians to signify the sun sinking beneath the horizon into the Duat underworld, realm of the dead.

## *Chapter 6*



### *The Language of the Gods*

The language of the compass is symbolism and allegory expressed through the narrative and landscape of myth. This is such a rich and fruitful expression that it incorporates signs and sigils, sounds and song, colour, scent, and even sensation and emotions. The totality of this language communicates the essential nature of each spirit and the kingdom from which it hails, imparting a great deal of information in exchange. In building our experience of the compass, those who operate and engage in the mythic landscape build a language of the gods, by which communication with the deities, spirits, demons, and angels of the compass is enabled.

The seasoned witch can draw upon a wealth of experience that informs how they apprehend and affect the compass, allowing them to relate and move

within the mythic landscape. Each direction and its inherent wind, spirit, or airt has its own associations and correspondences that attune us to their character and expressions. This dictionary of symbolism and correspondence will be accumulated over time, and the work already committed to the journal will become expanded into a map of the otherworld. Through this, navigating the magics of the compass, moving through the mythic landscape, and working with the winds will build stronger compass relations.

In order to introduce the concepts of the compass and facilitate an experiential understanding, this book will again be using the names, signs, and language of spirits that the author has used. These will equip you with a complete system in order to grasp the technical detail of the compass. You may find that these winds and spirits correspond with your own compass. But you may find that spirits prefer you to call them under a different name or through alternate symbolism, sounds, colours, etc. Guidance should always be observed from the spirits whenever it is given, and all this book can hope to do is to signpost and direct you to a better understanding of this complicated and profound subject.

The outline that has been developed in the previous chapters and exercises will inform the basic structure of the compass through the Wheel of the Year. As the wheel and cosmic mill turn, the stations of the sun—through solstice and equinox as well as cross-quarter sabbats—each emerge with their own language. If you have worked through the previous exercises, you should be able to refer back to the diagram of a circle with the festivals in an eight-fold pattern together with your work upon the mythos that fuels the compass and wheel. Each of these develops its own array of symbols that are used to call upon that particular quarter or wind. This pattern of symbols and signs is referred to as the language of the spirits and gods, who do not use the common tongue as we do. Using symbolism and allegory is the means of communication of the spirits, and so we must build a vocabulary of such—and this is what we have been doing.

The word language comes from Proto-Indo-European \*dnghu-, which means “tongue.”<sup>89</sup> As the tongue is the organ which shapes the breath (pneuma, spirit) and gives it form, it is the creative agency that manifests

ideas into the physical world. As spirits seldom have use of breath as we do, their “tongue,” or creative agency, is the pure form of allusion and symbol, poetic inference. Hence, in the ancient world, a muse was a creative spirit that possessed the poet and poured forth through them.

As we progress around the Wheel of the Year, taking our annual sojourn with the sun as it works its life journey from birth to death, each directional wind holds within its own compass—compasses within compasses in a repeating pattern. These lesser compasses, or realms of spirits, as it were, are accessed through mystery plays—ritualised mythic narrative. Using this method, we may evoke the spirit of the world—the kingdom of the wind god approached—appropriate to the direction and the season. The stations of the Wheel of the Year, or “knots,” provide key access points for our witchery in which we may savour the heady fruit of the season, partaking of and imbuing ourselves with the experience of the mythic landscape when it is most potent. Of course, we are able to access all parts of the Witch Compass—the greater compass—when we need, but that access is granted only by the experiential knowledge gained from having been fully immersed in the spirit. For this reason, engaging the seasonal stations is of particular importance for building our understanding and experiential knowledge of the Witch Compass—familiarising ourselves with the lands of each airt. When the season is right, the potency of the spirit is at its most evident, and therefore, the energies are easiest to achieve and work with. In addition, successive visits accrue the means to summon those energies through the compass when we need.

For example, if you wanted to work divinatory magic, the winds of the west and northwest, corresponding to the autumn equinox and All Hallows’ respectively, might be beneficial times when the energies of the spirit would be potently affecting the nature of the divination. Marking the season and using this technique at the appropriate time serves to teach you the means to use this magic, whilst introducing you to certain spirits, signs, and methods which may be of use in the future. Established relationships in this respect mean that you may even be taught ways to work from those in these realms, giving you a way to access that potency when needed.

In this example, it would mean that you would be able to draw upon the divinatory skills, through the spirits and their relationship, of those airts even when you are outside of the season. This is usually achieved in a number of ways, such as surrounding yourself with the symbols and ambience of the season of All Hallows' whenever casting for divination or scrying, using the energy and spirits of the direction outside of All Hallows'.

Another example would be using the spirit of new beginning to enact a piece of magic to kick-start a new endeavour. Whilst this kind of energy is strongest around the time of Candlemas, we can still approach the resident spirits under the rulership of the king of that airt to undertake this work. You might spend some time using the colours or objects associated with the time, plant some meaningful and appropriate seeds, or use a spring clean to renew your psyche. Of course, the strongest time for such work is during the tide of Candlemas, and it is when the season is in this realm that we may strengthen our relationship with the spirit of the airt and learn ways to work with the experience. The Witch Compass provides a host of means to access different magical skills, but these are all made available through the regular journey around the Wheel of the Year—the mystery plays or ritual which are a necessary part of Traditional Witchcraft.

When we speak of the language of the gods, we are talking, in fact, about the system of communication for the spiritual, the divine. In order to commune with the spirits of Traditional Witchcraft, we need to have a viable and universal cipher with which we can engage directly and comprehend those correspondences. The Witch Compass is exactly such a mechanism, providing a vocabulary of symbolism and meaning that enables the witch to engage in dialogue with the spirits.

The attainment of the knowledge of the language of the gods is achieved through experience and regular use. Just as you have to expose yourself to another language in order to better comprehend and become fluent in it, you must acquaint yourself directly with the compass as a means of communication. However, as a holistic technology, the compass is interacted with as a mythic landscape, meaning that the means of the language, the structure of that vocabulary, is expressed as an experience of

the realm itself. This is an important distinction to understand, as the symbol, colour, scent, touch, or taste is the very real and living expression of the spirit you are interacting with. The place it takes you to is the territory, as well as being the map by which you may navigate.

When approaching the Witch Compass, we must note a couple of significant factors which come into play at all levels. First are the twin aspects of quickening and wane, growth and decline, living and incorporeal, mortal and eternal—all of which impact upon our sorcerous endeavours. The second thing to consider, which draws from and is imbued with the first, is the relationship of the wind and its neighbours, particularly that of its opposite or twin.

When discussing the Divine Twins in Traditional Witchcraft, we must take into account the brothers Cain and Abel as representatives of the Oak and Holly Kings now popular amongst Neopagans and Wiccans and witches. We should acknowledge the especial place which the pair holds within the cultus of Traditional Witchery, the polarised nature of their relationship, which is informed from hoary mists of ancestral vision and echoes throughout times and peoples, especially those descended from the Eurasian Steppe who migrated out and took with them language, the wheel, horsemanship, and bovine agriculture, mostly sometime around 4000 BCE. For all of the above reasons, Cain and his sacrificial brother, as well as the third brother (Seth, in the biblical case), who feature heavily in Proto-Indo-European myth and cult, is acknowledged as first sorcerer and progenitor of the witchcraft, ancestral father of the mysteries of all witchery.

The proto-myth of the Divine Twins echoes, then, throughout the Witch Compass and is inflected and inferred upon every aspect. Hence, the magic of polarity is a fundamental part of the flux and reflux of the traditional mechanism of this technology. Context provides further clarification and brings certain masks or aspected visions into focus, but the overall structure holds true to this system of operation.

Many forms of Traditional Witchcraft and magic operate from a position of Panpsychism. Unlike animism, which maintains that all things have a soul, Panpsychism understands that consciousness is the fundamental and pervasive basis of reality. This philosophy is based upon the appreciation

that awareness is the basis of all realities and all that exists in reality, positing that there is the experience of all things and there is the experience of experiencing all things. In this metaphysical paradigm, the philosopher Thomas Nagel expounded in his 1974 paper, “What Is It Like to Be a Bat?,” that there is an “experience” of what it is to be a bat. While humans appear to be the only mammals who explore the experience of being—metaphysics—Nagel outlines a type of understanding that “conscious experience is a widespread phenomenon.”<sup>90</sup>

Within some traditions of witchcraft, we might understand this as the fundamental basis of reality being composed of energy, packets of information expressed as waves and particles. Furthermore, we are attuned various ways to receive some of that information, where our brain interprets and creates a version of reality based upon it.

The well-known Zen koan asks: If no one is around to hear a tree fall in a forest, does it make a sound? The answer is that it does not—sound is the product of aural sense receptors incorporating vibrations in air into a construct of a reality. If there are no aural sense receptors to interpret the sound waves and translate that sensate stimuli into experience, then there is no “sound.” Rather, there are the waves passing through fluctuations in air generated by the fallen tree.<sup>91</sup>

However, research has shown that plants communicate with each other in complex ways and that there is likely an experience of what it is to be a tree, which radically changes how we understand the reality we perceive. This means that, to paraphrase Nagel, there is something that it is like to be the tree that falls, and there is an experience within its falling that it likely can communicate in some way. This view expresses the spirit-haunted world which we inhabit—one that is possessed of individual, independent centres within the expansive sphere of consciousness, experiencing itself through each of us. As Christopher Wallis outlines in *Tantra Illuminated*, “The unbounded Light of Consciousness contracts into finite embodied loci of awareness out of its own free will.”<sup>92</sup>

The experience of the spirits of the directions within the Witch Compass provides us with a language that we can use to express and interact with

those spirits. The most immediate and fruitful method of communication can be found in colour, which has a long tradition in occult studies. Of course, this is not as simple as overlaying a colour wheel atop the Witch Compass.

Colour is defined as the characteristic properties of light which stimulate photo receptors, conveying visual information which is part of our experience of reality. Griffin Ced, who holds regular classes in Traditional Witchcraft in North Hollywood, has described these aspects of spirits as “quality of light,” indicating that the colour and quality we perceive is fundamentally more than a mere aspect, but is the spirit itself. This chimes perfectly well with Wallis’s sonic-light definition of mantra-deity, which he corresponds with the original angels. In this way, the information imparted by the light, which in turn is interpreted as colour, conveys the spirit itself, and our experience of this is the very essence of our relationship.

Colour is an extremely powerful tool for communication, and most humans enjoy a spectrum of potentiality, each part of which imparts different sensations, making us feel different ways. We often simplify this language, referring to warm and cold colours, for example. But the truth is, this is a personal and profoundly deep experience which occurs within each of us. That is to say, what appears to be an external influence is actually, and crucially, a relationship that is occurring within us.

How we perceive the spirits of the winds, or airts, depends upon our sensitivity to them, and to some degree, we all possess this ability. The way colour makes us feel is inherently connected to certain experiences, and we might be able to intuit which of the cardinal points on the Witch Compass are possessed of which colour. For example, north might be readily identified as being black, the place of midnight and winter, the blue-black inkblot of deepest dark.

Modern Wiccan writings often operate on an elemental basis for the cardinal points and sometimes can struggle, therefore, to understand that Traditional Witchcraft systems aren’t usually especially concerned with the elements in this way. One of the reasons for this is that Traditional Witchcraft is essentially a spirit-centric paradigm, operating on the basis of relational interaction with the winds or airts. For this reason, it is common

to see colours more regularly associated with the directions rather than classical elements. That isn't to say that elements can't be attributed, but they are not the primary concern here. Moreover, it is more important to identify which colour—quality of light—resonates and you can feel, or experience, at each direction than the intellectual pursuit of placing an element. The fact that colour operates on a spectrum introduces a range of possibility that the classical elements otherwise do not always allow.

## Sacred Symbols

The language of symbolism and allegory is important to almost all understandings of magic, accessing a means of depicting and apprehending the more fluid and intuitive, creative modes of experience. Symbols, it should be noted, are words or other means of depiction which convey more than literal understanding. Allegory, furthermore, makes purposeful use of symbols in a narrativised form to divulge a much richer sense of meaning and perspective.

Symbolism works in many fascinating and useful ways, providing us with a more complex, nuanced, and artistic expression of experience. Languages in the past, and in many cases still today, contained double meaning and poetic inference, being beautiful in a generalised way.

One example of the implicit meanings conveyed by a single word is the Old English root *trēow* that gives us both the modern words “true” (also “truce,” as in loyalty, faithfulness, grace, and covenant—*troth*) and “tree,” both descended from the PIE *\*deru-*, which can be used in many languages to pun on the double meaning.<sup>93</sup>

Furthermore, a richer, more colourful language has the ability to conjure greater images and deeper meaning without recourse to literal thinking. Symbolism enables access to lateral thinking, giving our creativity the

flexibility to apprehend and express an experience that otherwise is too fixed, specific, or restricted in literal terms.

Symbolism, then, is the language of the creative, the imaginative; it is the domain of artistry and border-free frontiers. It is holistic, enabling a greater sense of meaning and making available possibilities that the everyday seeks to eradicate, driven as it is for the need for detail. If we went about our everyday lives in a permanent state of generalisation, we would rapidly be in trouble: driving all over the place, unable to do the most basic of tasks such as making tea or complex jobs such as performing surgery. This is not, we note, a distinction of brain hemisphere attributes, as both are required. Rather, it is the need to utilise both, being a harmony of individualised and holistic. As above, so below; as within, so without. What we are looking at is a paradigm shift, a change in perspective that incorporates a magical worldview. Also, it is the necessary ability to shift as required, stepping between the worlds.

Therefore, it is through symbolism as expressed in allegory, words, inference, signs, sigils, illustrations, poetry, colour, and scent that we shall explore the compass and develop our language. When we have a familiarity of language, we are then better able to construct words—literally spells—which summon the forces or spirits in our sorcery or else identify a spirit in divination.

With that in mind, let us look at the points of the compass and the symbolism and ideas behind them in order to build our language of the gods. In this, we shall explore some of the potential meanings, allegories, and inferences, whilst introducing the names and symbols, or sigils, appropriate to each of the winds. These can be used as described, and we shall look in greater detail as to how this can be achieved.

## *Astoreth*

*Colour: Lapis lazuli, violet*

*Vowel sound: A, alpha*

*Sigil: An eight-legged star, or else a pentagram within a circle*

*Symbols: The pentagram, the star Venus, Bull of Heaven, fertility symbols*

*Time: Candlemas*

*Wind: Northeast*

Astoreth bestows good gifts in her positive aspect. As Queen of Heaven, she can bring good fortune and promise of growth for anything planted at this time. As Queen of Earth, she represents fertility and the promise of a bountiful harvest to come. Seasonally, this is a time of early growth—the first showing of spring and emerging of the year. New starts, fresh growth under the auspices of Astoreth in this aspect.

In contrast, her warlike face reflects her role as queen of the underworld. The ire of Astoreth is remorseless, so care is essential, and this aspect is usually avoided.

In this particular direction, summoning the cold northeasterly wind that strips the leaves, flaying the flesh, comes with extreme caution. The northeastern wind is marked by an ice-cold hill and is necessary for clearing away the debris of the old year, revealing the shoots of the new. However, when deliberately invoked, this can have unexpected and unwelcome consequences, as there is no discrimination; all will be taken back to bare earth.

The Greek letter alpha, deriving from Phoenician aleph and a pictographic representation of an ox head, recalls the ancient myths associated with creation and the cosmic bull. This is, perhaps, reflected in the proto-myth of the primeval cow which frequently accompanies the Cosmic Twins in the cosmologies of ancient Indo-European mythologies. The Bull of Heaven survives in Sumerian myths of Inanna, indicative of the constellation Taurus.

Another name for this wind is Core. This corruption of the Greek Kore, “the maiden,” is an epithet of Persephone, a chthonic goddess, queen of the underworld, and the spirit of nature as spring. After the wanting period of winter, where nothing seems to grow, Persephone returns to the world of the living and new life springs forth.

The most frequent cognate of Astoreth is the Phoenician Astarte, a form of the Mesopotamian Ishtar, Sumerian Inanna. Jake Stratton-Kent expounds upon the identification of Astaroth with this ancient goddess of Greek and Levantine origin, pointing to various underworld queens in the corpus of source works.<sup>94</sup> Within the grimoires, Astaroth usually appears as one of a triplicity of infernal emperors together with Lucifer and Belzebuth.

Deities that may be related to certain aspects might include Astarte, Ishtar, Inanna, Persephone, Praxidice (avenging justice), Bride (Irish), Ffraid (Welsh), Brigantia (British).

## ***Uziel***

*Colour: Red*

*Vowel sound: E, epsilon*

*Sigil: A sun rising on the horizon line*

*Symbols: (Cosmic) egg, white or yellow flowers, bull horns, light, fallen angel, Lucifer, cross of resurrection*

*Time: Lady Day*

*Wind: Easterly*

Also sometimes known by the names Ouza, Azza, and Samyaza, Uziel is often regarded as the leader, or highest, of the fallen angels, or Watchers. In

this capacity, Uziel can be identified with the Morning Star and the bringer of knowledge to mankind. The most common associations with this wind are knowledge and instruction, illumination, intellectual pursuits, new ideas, and youthful play.

Applying a speculative etymology from the Proto-Indo-European root \*h<sub>2</sub>ews-, meaning “dawn” and “east,” Uziel may share an etymology with other words signifying the place of the sun’s rising, through \*h<sub>2</sub>éwsōs, the PIE goddess of the dawn—examples include Eos in the Iliad, Ushas in Vedic Hinduism, Ēostre in West Germanic history, even in non-PIE language groups such as Uzume, the dawn goddess in Japan.<sup>95</sup> Other associated words derived from the same root are Easter and the Neopagan festival Ostara. The demon king of the east, Oriens (“east,” as in Orient) is the active participle of orior, which means “rising,” suggestive of the energy of this airt.<sup>96</sup>

The vowel associated with the wind of the east is epsilon in the ancient Greek alphabet. Nigel Pennick indicates that this sound resonates with the alchemic quintessence, the spirit as breath of life, the “subtle energy of life.”<sup>97</sup> This might refer to the quickening life energy in the season, the bursting forth of life, the rush of green, and the first sign of flowering in the Northern Hemisphere—the birth of spring proper.

The ancient Sumerian myth of Dumuzi and Inanna marks the marriage and consummation, the hieros gamos, at the traditional new year around the vernal equinox. This marks the point of equal night and day but, in contrast to the autumn equinox, with an emphasis upon the coming of new growth, the earth bursting to life, and the daylight lengthening. In a more cosmological sense, it is the meeting of the heavens and earth, night and day, darkness and light in harmony as equal partners. This marriage of heaven and earth is epitomised in the sacred marriage, whereby the priest/king is wed to the Queen of Heaven and Earth as he marks an important rite of passage.

The airt of Uziel, then, expresses the moment of rising sap, the thrill of discovering a seemingly brand-new world, and the exhilaration of first love. Indeed, this current underwrites the entire energy and force of the season, a

fresh youthfulness bursting with the kindling of desire and the thriving urge to explode into the world as the sun in its glorious rising. The vigorous, fresh-faced urges of youth initiate us into the mystery of lust, desire, wantonness, discovering emotions and feelings for the first time—coupling the raging hormones that flit from anger to love in a blink. These are the energies present at the east and which may be harnessed, observed, enjoyed, or avoided as you will.

Associated spirits include Lucifer, Apollo, Hermes, Uriens, Prometheus, and the goddesses Ushas, Aurora, Thesan, and Eos.

## ***Tubiel***

*Colour: Gold, green*

*Vowel sound: H, eta*

*Sigil: An upright arrow on a horizontal line*

*Symbols: Hammer and tongues, blacksmith's anvil, lameness, a cock, maypole, lovemaking, May Queen*

*Time: May Eve*

*Wind: Southeast*

Tubiel, “god’s goodness,” is acknowledged as a titular deity of Traditional Witchcraft. As patron of blacksmiths, he is cognate with Vulcan and Hephaestus. Tubal, Tubelo, or Tubiel taught crafts to mankind, passing on the ability to fashion the sword and the ploughshare. Transformation is the chief art and power of Tubiel, the alchemical master of magic that transmutes the base into the magical, the cruel into the fruitful.

Closely connected to Hephaestus is the Roman equivalent, Vulcan. As a fire and smith god, Vulcan might relate to the Minoan vegetation god Volchanos. Robert Graves translates the name Velchanus as the “king who drags his foot” and relates him as the Cretan Hephaestus and had the cock as his emblem.<sup>98</sup> Later, Graves also names Tubal-Cain, the biblical son of Lamech, the seventh generation of Cain, as a “Kenite Goat-god,” associating the smith with the male sorcerer of the witch cult, as well as the English folk ballad *The Coal Black Smith*.<sup>99</sup> Referencing the folk song recorded as Roud 1350, Child 44, the now-popular ballad tells of a blacksmith who threatens to take a maiden’s virginity before a “transformation chase” ensues, reminiscent of the shapeshifting prose of the seventeenth century confessions of the witch Isobel Gowdie, as well as the medieval “Tale of Taliesin,” which tells of the transformation of Gwion Bach into the great poet after a similar progression of transformations.

Associations with the ancient Greek vowel eta include Helios—the sun—the ultimate furnace of the blacksmith’s forge firing transformation. The letter itself means a fence or enclosure. In its Kabbalistic corollary, Cheth, Lon Milo DuQuette hints at the meaning of temenos that is particularly significant to us when he reckons the enclosure as being “set apart, defined, and then plowed by the ox.”<sup>100</sup> In this useful definition, we learn that the fence encloses the sacred life-force, shielding it and nurturing the light within. This is the foundry of the spirit, the testing ground, the furrowed field which brings forth the corn for harvesting. Tubiel, like his forefather Cain, has separated his plot, ploughed, and sown the acre and is caretaker of the transformation that this wind bestows.

This airt, then, is the place for transformational magics, the transmuting of one substance into another, higher reality. It is a place of shapeshifting, of metamorphoses and alchemical processes, and the magics of skill and all Craft arts—the intentional act of taking materials to create something new from them. This is most assuredly an airt of life and the energy of life—of the celebration of life and its transformative power, the ability to become who we need to be, our best selves, and letting go of the dross that holds us back in the reshaping.

Related spirits and gods include Hephaestus, Vulcan, Volchanos, Tubal-Cain, Helios, Belenus, Sethlans, Ptah.

## ***Hébol***

*Colour: White, yellow*

*Vowel sound: I, iota*

*Sigil: Five-legged star circled and crowned with a cross*

*Symbols: Lion, oak, apple, shepherd's crook, sun, twin, (oracular) head*

*Time: Midsummer*

*Wind: South*

Hébol stands astride twin sides of the coin of fruitfulness; he is the bittersweet fulness of the year and the promise of death in life. While this wind is dominated by the joyous carousing sun at its height, it is marked by the shadow that is the departure from the light half of the year and the lengthening of night. Hébol presides over the transition, the dramatic shift from life to death and the waxing year to the waning year. This is a potent force to include in magics that call for this essential and dramatic change. For magics that include sacrifice, severance, commuting form from the land of the living to the realm of the dead, cessation of active agency to passive, this is the wind that facilitates the best results.

The name of Hébol is apple, and he is the “twin,” also called Yēmōl, the sacred king whose life is given in order that the tribe may prosper and survive. From his death, his body will be rent and the world ordered and fashioned anew. He is a giant, accompanied by the Bull of Heaven, and he is the first to die. From his death, he becomes the bridge between the world

of the living and the dead, assuming the function of rulership of the underworld.

The apple tree has connotations in the myth of Inanna and Dumuzi. Here, the apple tree is emblematic of Inanna and symbolises fertility, love, sexual appetite, desire, union, and hieros gamos.<sup>101</sup>

The journey of Dumuzi, as a vegetation god, a dying and resurrecting god, as well as the solar champion of the sacred king mysteries, is well-represented throughout the Witch Compass mythos. The allegorical myth, during which time Dumuzi is ritually “slain” and returned to the land of the dead and shades of the living, marks a turning point in the year around the summer solstice. Indeed, Wolkstein and Kramer suggest the connection between Dumuzi specifically with grain, particularly barley and the production of beer, linking him with the British folklore of John Barleycorn.<sup>102</sup>

The sigil is a five-pointed star within a circle, crowned with a cruciform. The symbols are the lion rampant, the oak and the apple, the shepherd’s crook, and the sun. The colour is white and the sacred vowel sound is I, iota in the Greek. The Greek letter iota shares a root with the Hebrew Yod in the Phoenician alphabet. It is believed to originate in a pictogram which symbolises a hand, or perhaps a fist, raised in the air. Inferred meanings might include the labour produced by the hand or else the violence of the fist, indicative of the twin modes of production and war. In this way, the hand is dual-natured, being possessed of the ability to create and destroy.

Cognate spirits include Dumuzi, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysus, Orpheus, Ymir, Brân the Blessed, John the Baptist, and Abel.

## ***Azrael***

*Colour: Cream, ivory, bone*

*Vowel sound: O, omicron*

*Sigil: A curved horizontal line with twin extended “scythe” heads*

*Symbols: Crossroads, scythe or sickle, wryneck, torches, keys, Anubis*

*Time: Lammass*

*Wind: Southwest*

Azrael typically represents a benevolent psychopomp who helps the recently deceased acclimatise with their new perspective. This airt is informed by the recurring myth of Inanna and Dumuzi, and it is here that we find the period whereby the dying and resurrecting god commences the actual journey to the underworld after passing the gateway at Midsummer. If Astoreth marks the wind that is the new beginning in the waxing year, Azrael commences the reflex in the waning half of the year.

The Greek and Romans syncretised the spirit of this quarter with their own, producing Hecate Ereschigal, combining the capacity of ruler of the underworld with the psychopompic function of Hecate.<sup>103</sup> The feast of Hecate in her storm aspect was held in ancient Greece around early August. Suitable offerings include cakes of honey left at crossroads, thought to be meant to propitiate the goddess in order to protect crops from the seasonal storms.<sup>104</sup>

Hecate maintains a liminal quality, being often associated with the crossroads and the means of transmission between boundaries. Indeed, it is this latter characteristic that imbues this ancient deity with the ability to move between worlds and act as a psychopomp, perhaps equating her in the minds of late classical theurgists and writers with Ereshkigal. Sarah Iles Johnston in her groundbreaking academic study, *Hekate Soteira*, explains how Hecate represents, for the mystical and philosophical writers of the classical period, and epitomises in the late Neoplatonic Chaldean Oracles of the third through sixth centuries, the cosmic power that is “creator and retainer of limits.”<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, the function of Hecate as ruler of liminality and boundaries is summarised in late mystical and philosophical literature as being “concerned with bridging of boundaries on a cosmic scale.”<sup>106</sup> In this capacity, we have a clear idea of the energies inherent within this airt and the potential that may be worked here. The roles expressed are thoroughly complementary and convey the sense of the underlying theme being that of crossing the boundary between the “Sensible World” and the “Noetic”—conveying of souls from the land of the living to the realm of shades, the transition across liminal boundaries that separate and otherwise divide the worlds. These, then, are the magics and functions of this direction.

Azrael is, then, the guide to the dead, the ferryman of the compass who presides over the transition from life to death, steering the solar barge as it begins the great descent. He sometimes assumes the form of a crow, owl, vulture, or dog. It must be understood that Azrael is not death itself but the guide who meets those who cross the river to begin the journey through the underworld.

Corollaries include Hecate, Ereshkigal, Anubis, Charon, Urshanabi, Thanatos, the Valkyries, Sancus, Culsu, Leinth, Leta, and the Manes.

## **Mēniel**

*Colour: Green, grey*

*Vowel sound: Y, epsilon*

*Sigil: A cradle or lunar horns nestling a short horizontal line*

*Symbols: The moon, water, lunar crown, scales, Phrygian cap, mirrors, tripod*

*Time: Autumn equinox*

*Wind: West*

Mēniel is the king of the western horizon, the sunset, where the sky and sea meet. As twin of the vernal equinox, this is a time of balance, harmony, judgment, and justice. However, the time moves toward a period when darkness rules and night is longer than day. This is the reaping and weighing of the harvest, measuring what has been gathered from the year's spoils and separating the wheat from the chaff.

Mēniel is sometimes seen as male, sometimes as female, and represents that androgynous effect of the lunar deities and the moon itself as a force for change. For this reason, the airt is often associated with magic itself.

Due to the nature of the waters, the amniotic fluid of life, and the womb, this kingdom is home also to the Etruscan mother goddess, Cel. As the mother of the earth, she is present for its harvest in her month, Celi, corresponding to September, whilst also ruling over omens and divination. Mēniel's kingdom is also the place where memories reside and is strongly emotive, the wind that most speaks to emotions. As a lord of wisdom, Mēniel appears as an older man or woman, representing the later years of life and the wisdom that is bestowed by experience.

When he was sent away after slaying his brother, Abel, Cain was cast out to the east of Eden, exiled to a land called Nod. This name is still colloquially used in modern times to indicate the realm of sleep, "the land of Nod." Curiously, the word Nod originates in Hebrew, which is the root for the meaning "to wander." Whilst this has led many to assume that it is suggestive of Cain's nature to wander in exile, a peregrination, it is worth noting that moon deities such as Arma, a Hittite lunar god with associates amongst many of the Semitic peoples, may have its origin in the Proto-Anatolian \*ormo-, meaning "wanderer."<sup>107</sup> The Kingdom of Mēniel is the land of Nod, of Morpheus, under the light of the moon as it wanders upon its pilgrimage.

Obvious syncretistic associations are with the Celtic deity of water, healing, hunting, and dogs (all underworld symbols associated with the likes of Hecate), Nodens. This important god of the Celtic peoples is cognate with the Irish Nuada, the first king of the Tuatha Dé Danann, and the Welsh

Nudd, father of the psychopomp and underworld king Gwyn ap Nydd. The Norse Njord, a god of the wind, sea, sailing, and fishing is also related.

## ***Samael***

*Colour: Indigo*

*Vowel sound: , omega*

*Sigil: Reversed omega, like a horseshoe or a cauldron*

*Symbols: Serpents, death, skull, cauldron, moon, chariot, Mari Lwyd, mound, cave mouth, dolmen arch*

*Time: All Hallows'*

*Wind: Northwest*

Samael, the “blind god,” is the Jewish Angel of Death as well as the chief adversary, Ha-Satan. In many apocrypha and associated literature, Samael’s name is frequently evoked to allude to death. Not simply the crude death of the body but the transmuting of the flesh into pure spirit.

Sometimes identified as the destroyer, Samael presides over the shadow aspect of the year, the time when the darkness is in its ascendancy and the maw of winter gapes before us as a cavernous mound. Here, he is seen frequently as a warrior, sometimes Roman in a red tunic with a breastplate and gladius sword. He may be envisioned riding a chariot that harnesses twin horses.

The Etruscan Satres, sometimes seen in the Roman Saturn, presides as ruler of the realm of the dead. In this respect, the spirit of Samael incorporates the mantle of Hades, meaning “unseen one,” alluding to the blindness or darkness of the underworld to waking, physical eyes. The vision of the

underworld frequently evades normal sight and, therefore, presents itself in the mind's eye through imagery, symbols and allegory, and dream and imagination.

Similarly, the mythological Alberich, whose name is anglicised as Oberon (the Shakespearean king of the fairies) and means "elf king," is overcome by the hero Siegfried through a "cloak of invisibility" (perhaps alluding to the lack of mundane sight again) in the Song of the Nibelungs, a medieval German epic poem. In another German epic of the period, Ortnit, Alberich is only visible to the one who possesses a magic ring.

As the region of the Grand Sabbath, this airt has particular provenance in terms of Samael's function as lord over the shades of the dead, the ancestors, elves, and fair folk of the netherworld. In this capacity, he presides over the veil which separates the land of the quick and the dead and, as the mouth of the mound is at hand, the inevitable movement into the dark hill at Midwinter. As the cave entrance is open, the free movement of spirits within proximity of the living is achieved and arts necromantic are most efficacious. This is the liminal point which is closest to the fairy hill, the ancestors, and the ghosts of the ancestors. Whilst Azrael is an assistant in the transition from life to death, Samael is the embodiment of the grim reaper, the keeper of the bones, and the guardian of the bridge that spans the river that divides the two realms.

Samael's cognates in mythologies include Pluto, Hades, Oberon, Alberich, Arawn, Orcus, Erlking, Brân, Erlik, Volos/Veles.

## ***Arddu/Arawn***

*Colour: Black*

*Vowel sound: Silence*

*Sigil: Saltire*

*Symbols: Ursa Major, the plough, Corona Borealis, Caer Arianrhod, Spiral Castle, jawbone, spear, mound, "Bone Mother," "Pale-Faced Goddess," boar, goat, crow or raven, skull*

*Time: Midwinter*

*Wind: North*

Known through Romano-Celtic inscriptions that refer to an arable god Arubianus, most likely denoting a speculative etymology of ploughman or "god of the turned field," through the Latin arare, Welsh arddu, meaning "to plough" this spirit is also recognised through the Welsh underworld deity/ruler Arawn, all sharing the Proto-Celtic root aryeti from the PIE \*h<sub>2</sub>erh<sub>3</sub>-, "to plough."<sup>108</sup> Arddu shares a common root with these names in Proto-Indo-European and can be translated in modern Welsh to mean "plough."<sup>109</sup>

In Breton, Cornish, Welsh, and Norman folklore, Ankou is the spirit of death appearing as a black-robed skeleton, brandishing the distinctive scythe, epitomising the image of Death himself. This Celtic spirit is sometimes identified as the firstborn of Adam and Eve, yet another corollary with Cain, who haunts graveyards and gathers the dead as psychopomp and reflection of the Wild Hunt motif in traditional lore.<sup>110</sup> This clearly establishes the winter king Arddu as one with the spirit of Cain as founder of cities and horsemen, and the farmer who tills the soil, the first sorcerer of the Sabbatic Witchcraft current. With a cognate in Arkou, Ankou likely relates to Arddu, Arawn and Arubianus, all deriving from the same root words that signify "ploughing" and gives us the modern word arable (Latin arare, as in suitable for ploughing).

The spirit at this airt, known in my tradition as Kanu Kerbaru, is the essential nature of the shamanic and otherworld journey. This is the direction of the North Star, the axial pole which connects the celestial canopy above with the chthonic realm at our feet. As we see in Kenneth Johnson's North Star Road, this is the region that provides the "pivot of the four quarters," the "nail of the sky."<sup>111</sup> Kanu, as Arddu, appears as the Man

in Black of the Sabbat. Here is the realm of the Divil, asymmetry, inversion, and reversions—night can become day, and many years might pass in the blink of an eye. The Otherworld Lord can be envisaged in his persona as the winter king.

The ancestors saw the world through the tent, the humble yurt, or rudimentary house as a mirror of the ceiling above in the dark night sky, turning about its axial pillar, tree, or ladder. As the smoke from the central hearth fire weaves its way to the opening in the top, so the otherworld journeyers traverse the worlds by the axis mundi. As Kenneth Johnson beautifully explains, “spirit takes flight through the smoke hole, heading up the North Star Road to the centre of all things, the land of spirits and the gods.”<sup>112</sup> In many traditions of witchcraft, the north is a place which meets a twin, a second ring, a region which is utterly within the depth of the otherworld. This Spiral Castle, this mystical underworld land is available at this airt.

## **Exercise 11**

### ***Visions of the Winds***

In a time and place that is convenient and comfortable, where you will not be disturbed in any way, arrange your surroundings so that they are conducive to meditation. Make the atmosphere appropriate to the task of a visionary journey to the realms of the winds. Turn off the light, perhaps, and have an appropriately coloured candle blessed and dedicated to the powers of the wind you are working with.

It is recommended that you begin with the first wind as it has been given in this book, taking one at a time. Don't try to rush, but allow at least a day to pass between visualisations of the winds. You may want to work with an appropriate day that corresponds to the spirit of the wind you are working. The planets have not been provided that correlate with the winds, and you will observe that there are only seven days. However, you should find little

difficulty in locating the weekdays and planets within the structure of the compass. By now, this should be a task you can accomplish and will provide you with good skills.

When you are ready, have your journal to hand to record any details, visions, or intuited gnosis received during the meditation. This is best performed indoors in a safe space. Looking over the wind with which you intend to work, you are going to try to create the corresponding sigil in your imagination and meditate upon it.

*When you are prepared and have quieted the mind, allow your thoughts to drift to the symbol you have chosen to work with. Picture the sigil in your mind. Move your focus slowly from one part of the sigil to another until you have caressed its entirety with your awareness. Build the image until it is solid and as real as you can make it.*

*Once you have visualised the sigil, imagine touching it and the sensation you feel when you brush against it; is it hard, soft, cold, hot, metallic, wooden, natural, organic? Fully engage your senses to discern how the sigil appears to you.*

*When the symbol is vividly described in your awareness and you can hold it without falter, simply maintain it in the mind. With an awareness devoid of ought but the sigil, let the mind conjure through the sign and see what comes. Do not dwell on any images or thoughts that appear, just acknowledge and remember them before allowing them to pass.*

When you have satisfied yourself that the vision is over, return to the mundane world. Move your hands and feet, then arms and legs, gently to awaken your physical being. After you are present in your body, recall all

that you were given in your vision and note the experience in your journal. It is imperative to be a reliable scribe of your visionary experiences, recording those sights, thoughts, or ideas which flashed across the screen of the mind.

Exhausting your inventory of associations, note if there are any patterns or threads that weave and connect them. Alternately, are there any thoughts that are incongruous or out of place?

Continue this exercise, working on the sigils given for each of the eight directional winds.

## **Key Ideas**

Spirits, winds, and deities communicate through symbolism and allegory.

The Witch Compass is a mechanism for relating symbolism and allegory and using it for magical or mystical purposes.

Through the eight spokes of the wheel, we come to develop a dictionary of symbols, signs, and language that informs our compass.

Each of the winds is possessed of its own spirit, mythos, and realm or kingdom.

These kingdoms and inherent spirits interlock and reflect each other in a grand scheme of the Witch Compass.

The language, the symbolism, is the methodology of communion, through this we orient and traverse the mythic landscape of the compass.

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## *Chapter 7*



### *Ensorcelling the Witch Compass*

By far the most common question that arises in Traditional Witchcraft forums concerns what has come to be called “laying the compass.” Often, I have replied to such enquiries that the nature of the technology of the Witch Compass means that it is rather something within which all realities exist already, and therefore translating it as you would a Circle of Art is rather a separate matter. Whereas the circle is cast using certain words and methods prescribed by tradition and establishes a space set apart, the Witch Compass by its very nature encompasses all; it is a worldview, a way of seeing and being in the world and chasing reality, an ordering of chaos, and a catalogue of spirit relations.

One of the great assets of the Witch Compass, as with the spirit compass of the grimoire and Solomonic tradition, shared through the bridge of the

cunning folk, is that it is ever present and provides crucial information regarding any spirit. For example, if you are approached by a spirit in a dream, you can immediately recognise something of its nature and character by locating it within your compass.

Whenever somebody mentions a spirit to me, the first thing that I always ask is what colour was it and from which direction did it come. This gives immediate knowledge despite what the spirit might impart during the course of the conversation. Certain spirits are known to be misleading and deceitful, but, like an accent or traditional dress, you can tell where a spirit is from. Furthermore, because the spirit will be part of a kingdom, the chief or ruler of that direction can be requested to assist in the identifying and handling of the spirit. If a spirit is unruly or troublesome, the cardinal ruler, the king or emperor, can be petitioned to bring it to order and cease any difficulties arising from its presence. There is no other such direct and immediate technology for locating and interacting with spirits than that provided by a compass, which not only orients and locates, but identifies and provides a language and a map. For these same reasons, whenever somebody is working with a spirit compass to evoke a spirit, such as using a Solomonic grimoire system, it is always necessary to face the direction from which the spirit is being called, in the same way that you would present your face to a visitor in your home when addressing them.

## **A Magic-Filled World**

If you have been following the exercises thus far, you will already have an extensive map of the spirit world and a relationship with its inhabitants. Those of you who are thus equipped are in a far stronger position to work the Witch Compass than someone who is otherwise lost. While, strictly speaking, the Witch Compass is always present and you are at its centre, it is possible to acknowledge its presence about you and access its shifting currents and tides to work operative magics. Now, quite often this could appear to be a similar process to a circlecasting, and in some respects it is,

but the underlying philosophy and principle are quite different. In both, the acknowledging of the quarters is used, and a ring is utilised. However, the laying of the compass is not done in order to contain nor to protect. Furthermore, spirits are invited to attend should they so wish, and their presence will be made available through your experience.

The locating of the cardinal pillars—establishing the structure of the world and giving meaning to it—is a long-established practice in creating sacred space, temporary or permanent. The process is found in the first mythic city and temple builders, contained in the myth of twins Cain and Abel or Romulus and Remus, who first carved a ditch about a sacred hill and founded their city kingdom. In laying the compass, we emulate this first sorcerer, taking a bladed instrument to carve a piece of land that is set aside as a temenos, a sacred enclosure. In Traditional Witchcraft, this has been called “ploughing the (first) furrow,” establishing the “blood acre” or sacred plot, which is a part of the Compass set aside for a specific purpose, orienting us to shift out of our skin and between worlds.

Some traditions have certain phrases, chants, incantations, or other means to identify or solemnly mark the occasion of inscribing a ring, and these can be used as you feel appropriate. The important thing is that the instrument is bladed and there is a physical act of dividing that which is without from that which is within in an endless line. Many people place their stang or staff at the centre and attach a knife to a length of string to cut a perfect circle, and it is worth noting here that such an instrument for inscribing a circle round is called a compass.

Once the foundation is prepared with the ditch, a myriad of possibilities exist for hallowing the ground. A blood offering is traditional, emulating the sacrifice of Abel or Remus, Ymir or Brân, the temporal king who is made sacred in his transcending the flesh at the hands of the priest king, Cain, the progenitor of witches and first sorcerer.

Within the Devil’s Plot, Blood Acre, or Ring of Art, the four cardinal spirits, or wind gods, are called upon to structure the ring squaring the circle. The exercises so far have equipped you with a language and relational experience of these spirits, and you are equipped with the sign, word, and image to call upon these spirits and have them come when

required. When you intend to work with the four wind gods, the method is to approach the direction and summon the vision of the realm of that quarter as you have encountered it in previous exercises. When it comes time to perform this sacred act, as will be found in the following exercises, you should fill your mind with the colour and the sigil, sign, or word of the direction, and when you are overwhelmed with the sensation or mood of the spirit, the vowel of that quarter is intoned. Vowel chants are vibrated until your entire being resonates the spirit of the direction and it responds with the unassailable knowledge of its presence. Often, if you are outside, the wind might reply and will be obvious in its answer to your call, or some other visible and very real sign will indicate the presence of the spirit. There is no mistaking when the winds come to your call, and there is no amount of spells, chants, or rhymes that can match the thorough experiential calling to the spirit that you have been preparing. You know the spirit is present when you feel the unmistakable feeling that accompanies it. Up to this point, you have been developing your awareness of the spirits, becoming sensitised to their sensations, symbols, and feelings. These are the essential means of communicating presence, and you will know them when you see them.

In one sense, you lay a compass for your own benefit, attuning yourself to the spiritual and acclimatising to the necessary frequency or state necessary to work in the mythic, magical landscape which incorporates both the chthonic and realm of shades, ancestors, and sublunary spirits, as well as the celestial host of beings. The Witch Compass does not need casting or invoking as does the magic circle, as it is ever present behind the curtain of the mundane and everyday reality we operate in as part of our temporal and prosaic lives. When we shift to the language of poetic inference, the world in which we operate is seen with the magician and poet's eyes, being a potential-filled, spirit-filled world that is always available. In this sense, the Witch Compass, then, is not magicked in the outer world as a circlecasting so much as it is reaffirmed upon the inner, or other, world, representing a shift from mundane thinking to the mythic, magical worldview that underwrites our witchery. Science has demystified the world we share and in which we function as part of our daily lives of work, eat, and sleep. As John Williamson writes in *The Oak King, the Holly King, and the Unicorn*, referencing a Fontenelle quote that appears in historian and mythographer

Jean Seznec's (1905–1983) book, the relevance and importance of myth is best exemplified in the times of human history when mankind believed himself to be living in a divine world, a spirit-haunted world of manifest deity.<sup>113</sup>

However, the magical world exists still, and the spirits are present in all. What has changed is that the new priests of the religion of science have removed some of our acuity of magical perception of the world. The fairies, imps, elves, pixies, brownies, and fair folk of yesteryear are not gone away, nor are they hiding. Only our capacity for being open to the other, our belief and expectancy of the wonder that is reality, has been robbed of us by those agencies that seek to explain, categorise, and reduce the world to simple structures. The poet, mystic, and witch still occupy the spaces in reality which allow creative wonderment, expressions of a holistic awareness, and a full and flavoursome experience of truth.

## **Ensorcelling the Compass**

The magic circle has truly ancient precedent and appears in the rituals of exorcism of Sumerian sorcerers. As the zisurrû, the magic circle was drawn with white flours of various cereals and was always a prophylactic and defensive measure, underscoring the protective nature of the earliest Ring of Art.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, its prime use was always when interacting with the spirits. Whether to protect a figurine, person, or persons, or as a sigil upon doorways and portals, the fundamental nature of the zisurrû is to protect. Curiously, the word “sorcery” derives, through Latin sors (Fate) from a similar PIE root, \*ser-, which means “to guard,” “bind together,” and “line up.”<sup>115</sup> In this respect, the root word indicates and evokes words that relate to protection, as in Proto-Italic \*serwos, meaning guardian or watcher, and which becomes modern English “server,” as one who attends (to a person or thing). Of course, this shows clear association between the magic circle and the Witch Compass. However, whereas the magic circle is in the context of protection, the compass more relates to the sense of the Watcher as

attendant spirit, shepherd, guardian (of the sacred enclosure). Magic circles, too, can allow for this meaning in greater depth of philosophy, but in the ceremonial sense of the late medieval to early modern period, inherited into the twentieth century, this was not always necessarily the case.

The PIE \*ser-, as has been indicated, also means to “bind” or “line up” and is the original of later words in English such as “sort,” via Latin sors, which is the basis of the word “sorcery,” as in one who sorts lots, that is, tells fortune (a sortiarius). This is indicative of an individual engaged in the workings of Fate with understanding of, or else influence over, the allotting of each person’s portion. Once again, we can see the fundamental work of the sorcerer in working magics that manipulate and influence the threads of Fate, whether sorting the lots to divine fortune or else binding the warp and weft of the tapestry of the wyrd. There is a common ancestry, then, in the Sumerian word for a ring of white flours, zisurrû, and the late medieval, early modern word ensorcell, meaning to bewitch, enchant, or fascinate.

What can we take from this linguistic mapping? Well, the use and function of the magic circle, the ensorcelled compass, and the zisurrû is to fascinate—that is, to enchant and entrance. It is important in the understanding of the Witch Compass to here understand that the object of that fascination is not the sorcerer themselves. Rather, the target of the fascination of the ensorcelled ring is the spirits themselves. In this way, the ring of the sorcerer is intended to attract and entrance the spirit or spirits who are the target, luring and catching them within the bounds of the unending ring. In this sense, the magic circle used as a protective device is a spirit trap which is designed to capture the malevolent spirit, ensnaring it in the grip of the zisurrû, from which it cannot escape.

Within the context of the Witch Compass, however, the intention is to entice, court, and attract the spirits of the compass to attend and uphold the construct of the cosmological and mythical landscapes the sorcerer is accessing through the ensorcelled ring. It is to be understood, then, that the ensorcelled Witch Compass is constructed with several purposes in mind. In the first instance, we draw in the spirits of the airts, calling them to the fascination of the ring, where their attendance enforces the four and eight regions of the horizon and holds the heavens and the earthly realms

between them. Alternatively, the spirits of the particular airt that we intend working with can be ensorcelled into the ring to imbue the enclosure with the quintessence of that mythic landscape, transporting us to a specific land in order to have access to the magics available there.

When we access the Witch Compass through ensorcelling the ring, we can evoke the most profound operation through the use of the crossroads. Therefore, the Witch Compass that is laid with a ring of flour, ash, or salt, with a crossroads marking its interior, allows the pathways for the spirits of the cardinal airts to locate themselves in their kingdoms.

It is long-held magical knowledge that spirits are drawn to following patterns, and for this reason, spirit traps work off the basis of this principle. This practice is present in ancient times when incantation bowls, for example, were used, which functioned as Antique Near Eastern apotropaic magic. In this instance, a ceramic bowl is inscribed with a line of incantation spiralling toward the centre. The bowl is then buried or placed upside down at a threshold, such as doorways, as well as cemeteries where the restless dead might be caused to wander and interfere with the living. This is one example of a spirit trap that functions on the principle of the spirit becoming entangled, as they are drawn to follow the lines of the charm in an endless knot. Indeed, this might be the purpose and function of the pentagram, known in medieval Europe as the “endless knot.” In this case, the elemental pentagrams of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn are fundamentally spirit traps designed to draw the elemental spirits through enchantment.

Because spirits follow patterns, this helps explain one reason why rhyming charms are regarded as particularly effective methods of witchery, again reflecting the spirits’ attraction to designs. Furthermore, this attraction to patterns, and the drawing of spirits into the ensorcelled compass through the principle of the lure, means that the Witch Compass, when laid in a working, is simply dismissed by drawing a line through the circle of flours or ash, which breaks the circle and releases the spirits. In Traditional Witchcraft, there is no need to dismiss or expel the spirits; they require no exorcism or license to depart. However, they should be released and

enabled to depart of their volition. Within modern Wicca, this could be why the breaking of a cast circle is avoided so studiously.

Another method which works upon this same proposition of spirit behaviour is the spiral or maze found throughout the West Country of Britain, especially in Cornwall. This archaic device is a clear spirit trap, whether apotropaic or for another purpose is unclear, but it is a technology that can be utilised in our witchery. In working the maze pattern in the compass, the spirits are enticed to emulate our motion and become enchanted by the pattern.

Methods of ensorcelling the Witch Compass, or, to use common parlance, “laying the compass,” involve the hoary tradition of acknowledging the four pillars upon which the heavens are supported. These are the domains of the wind gods and the Royal Stars, the Kerubim of revelation and the mystical chariot. Whilst these may resemble the magic circle in the “calling of the quarters,” we should surely know by now that a magic circle may be cast within the Witch Compass, but the reverse is never true. That is to say, the Witch Compass may not be contained or sustained within the magic circle. This is because, as I have been at pains to exhaustively express and impart, the Witch Compass is a complete cosmology and cosmogony, a complete system of the worlds, of sorcerous art. It is a complex and ancient technology for apprehending the worlds and approaching their inherent spirits, whilst also being a subtle tool of folk witchery. To the outsider, one working a Witch Compass may appear to be using simple ritual—crude even—whereas the worldview available through the understanding afforded by experiencing the Witch Compass is profound and powerful.

This ritual that I have called “laying the compass” for convenience’s sake is a method for orienting yourself within your magical worldview, locating yourself in the mythic landscape of the Witch Compass and navigating it. Furthermore, it utilises the principles of spirit behaviour to enchant the desired entities to attend—an essential aspect of all Traditional Witchcraft. Once the spirits are present within the ensorcelled ring, the landscapes are available and the means of accessing revealed.

It goes without saying that the compass accompanies you in your daily life, which we seek to make more magical through regular engagement of the

compass. For this reason, the “laying of the compass” can be used regularly to establish the mythic landscape around you as an experiential tool for the use of greater ritual. These differences to the magic circle cannot be overstated. As we develop our practice, we will find that there are methods, signs and sigils, and words of power that are given to us that allow us to call upon spirits of the airts depending upon our need and without laying a compass. For example, one might be called to use the spiral associated with telluric magics and the southern wind, first drawing it out and tracing it with your finger repeatedly while speaking a simple rhyme until the spirit makes itself known and is prepared to undertake the request you make. This is a very simple witchery that can be applied through regular use and understanding of the Witch Compass, following techniques and philosophies that have been available through ages and are found in folk custom and practice of the cunning folk and wise people of old.

Whilst we have discussed the importance and relation of the inner and outer, it is important to understand that the spirits of witchery have a very real existence and presence and will make themselves known to you through various means and experiences. Often, these are difficult for the human mind to process at first in the early stages of the relationship, as the locus of conscious awareness utilises the vibrations of information that barrage our perception. The result can oftentimes feel confusing, disorienting, and even frightening, but these are sure signs that there is something within our field of awareness present and communicating with us. Your senses may indicate an unusual or unexpected presence, smell, taste, sensation, or change of temperature, which are all cues that the spirit is manifesting in your perception.

In order to take ourselves out of our comfort zone, experience some visceral and real magic, and encounter witchcraft in its native territory, you will find that this works best when undertaken outdoors, often at unsociable hours. This means planning and preparation, but the difference between a ritual in the dead of night in the woods, on a hill, or in a cemetery, and that in a bedroom, living room, or even a prepared dedicated temple, is profound. The experience, and engaging directly in Traditional Witchcraft, demands we be amongst the spirits in the wild. The panic that accompanies such an endeavour is the goat-foot god’s inspiring awe as Pan watches over the rite.

The sheer presence of the winds makes for a far deeper experience in calling them forth and having them come! Therefore, you are encouraged to find a location where you can remain undisturbed and uninterrupted, where you are not going to incur the ire of a landowner or suspicions of neighbours or law enforcement.

## **Tools**

Over time, you will develop a host of items, banners, and objects which are representative in some way of the directions of the compass and aid you in accessing the realms of those inherent spirits. But, in establishing your Witch Compass around you, there is no cheating the essential means of calling the spirits in from those directions using the sound made by vibrating the breath and visualising the colour or image inspired by the wind. In the following exercises are provided the bones of a ritual for ensorcelling, or laying, a Witch Compass, which can be used or adapted as you will. It is not set in stone, being fluid with the flux and reflux of the winds and airts, but it does offer an indication of how we might approach and establish the ground for working.

This is not to say that we need to do such work each and every time we use magics and access the realms of the Witch Compass because, as previously discussed, Traditional Witchcraft often operates without the later medieval and early modern requirement of protective boundary or containment of power when working with spirits. Indeed, the Witch Compass is portable and available, as it is part of the very cosmology of a magical paradigm, being the perspective which informs as well as the architecture of which it is constructed. For this reason, the compass is wherever you are whenever you envision it, and you are ever at its centre when you locate yourself there, moving from that place to the realms of the spirits as, and when, required to do so.

With practice and training—honing your skills and imaginal ability to shift awareness, accessing the mystical and magical worldview at will—the Witch Compass can be attained successfully on the individual level with little or no prompts, props, or *materia magica*. Whilst these supports are effective means of sustaining the magical worldview, providing scaffolding which allows you to build your compass, the essence and keys to the operation of the compass do not require such tools all the time. As ever, context informs the needs of the Witch Compass and its construction, use, and function.

In addition, as a collective group expands beyond one or two people, and as different levels of philosophical attainment may be represented, a more sophisticated outward expression of the mythos might be required. Through an assortment of symbolism, allegory, artefacts, sacred objects, ritual, and ceremonial tools, the group psyche can be elevated to the height of the Witch Compass and more easily locate everyone within the mindset required for works of magic and mysticism on a coven scale. Of course, it is convenient to possess the skills required to work the Witch Compass with little or no implements necessary, but these can offer the opportunity to reinforce and reaffirm the architecture of the compass around you. Ceremonial items can serve particular functions and symbolically retain the spirit of certain aspects inherent within the compass. They are useful up to a point within the understanding of the operant but are not always required for accessing the Witch Compass.

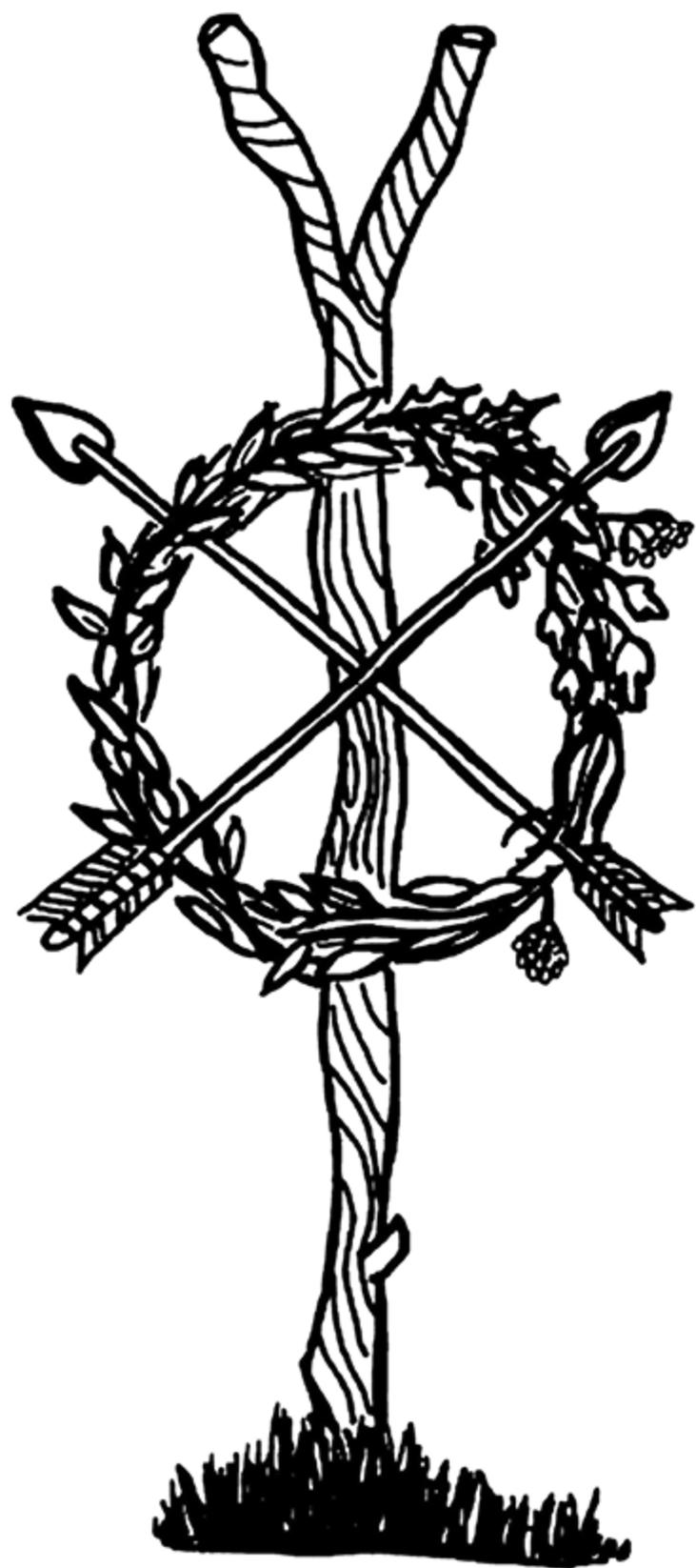
## *The Witches' Stang*

The witches' stang (figure 10), for example, is one such tool that is much favoured these days since its introduction by Robert Cochrane and expansion through Evan John Jones and Shani Oates. For this reason, the properly dressed stang, for example, with crossed arrows and wreath decorated for the season, becomes the compass itself—the entire witch cosmology hanging as upon the world tree or cosmic axis, with the directions of the winds of the telluric sphere evident (figure 11). As a meditative device, a dressed stang is a superb implement that is rich in

philosophy and profusely loaded with meaning and function. It has been expounded in great detail by Cochrane, Jones, and Oates throughout the years.



## **The Witch Compass (figure 10)**



## **Dressed and garlanded stang (figure 11)**

### ***Nine Witch Knots***

Another important tool that similarly reflects the Witch Compass in its composition, formula, and usage is the cord of the Nine Witch Knots, as previously discussed in Chapter 4 (see figure 9). The witches' cord consists of eight knots and a noose tied at one end. The knots are equally spaced and formed by tying while speaking the spell into the knot, only pulling it tight after your breath has blown the spirit of the spell through the gap, which is closed around it. The Nine Witch Knots bind the winds of the compass and the Wheel of the Year and can be used as a meditative device when treading the mill. To do this, move the cord in your left hand through your thumb and middle finger, counting each knot as you pass that direction of the compass. Similarly, as a rosary, the cord can be used in this manner when working a full compass is not possible. For example, you could be seated safely at home, in a meditative condition, using the cord as your compass and working the knots as you metaphorically tread the mill.

### ***Robe***

The robe is a traditional tool but is not absolutely necessary. The hooded robe provides the darkness to sight and sound that is essentially an hermit's cave, limiting the senses as you work your compass. Clothed in the black of night, the colour of the void, one becomes as an empty vessel.

### ***Blade***

For inscribing the ring, the use of a blade is customary. There is a tradition of avoiding iron in working with fairy spirits, and this may hold true for

your proclivity or tradition. However, the blade of the knife and ploughshare are the traditional tools fashioned by the first smith and sorcerer, and therefore are suitable for marking the ditch that separates the quick and the dead about the ring of your compass.

## *The Cauldron*

The cauldron is an object with a long and well-founded association with witchcraft. Once again, we could suggest that the cauldron is another representation of the philosophy and function of the compass, being an analogue of the cosmos and worldview of the witch. It is, in Celtic lore, decorated with nine pearls about its rim, correlating to the knots upon the cord, and its fluctuating contents contain the creative essence for transformation and renewal.

## *Holy Water*

Within the ritual outline in this chapter for laying the compass, one important aspect is the use of holy water. In the tradition of Gerald Gardner and Traditional Witchery, the method used for preparing holy water from The Key of Solomon the King is most efficacious. Holy water can also be obtained from a Catholic church, which keeps a font available near the entrance.

To consecrate your own holy water—ready for use in ritual, house blessing, exorcising unwanted spirits, and general psychic hygiene—take a vessel of spring water and a small amount of kosher salt containing no additives, such as iodine. Bless the salt as follows:

*Tzabaoth, Messiach, Emanuel, Elohim Gibor, Yod He Vau He; O God, Who art the Truth and the Life, deign to bless + and sanctify + this Creature of*

*Salt, to serve unto us for help, protection and assistance in this Art, experiment and operation, and may it be succour unto us.<sup>116</sup>*

Cast the salt into the water in a cross pattern and recite Psalm 54:

*Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.*

*Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*

*For strangers are risen up against me and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.*

*Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.*

*He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.*

*I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord; for it is good.*

*For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.<sup>117</sup>*

## **Exercise 12**

### ***Laying the Witch Compass***

After securing for yourself a working area outside, where you can be certain you will not be disturbed, gather about you the implements of the ritual. You will need a white powder, flour or ash, your stang or staff, a ritual knife or tool for inscribing the ring, holy water (see instructions for creating holy water), your witch's cord of Nine Witch Knots (or a length of rope or string), and a bull-roarer (not essential).

Approach the working area and ensure it is cleared and free of debris. You should be able to form a ring around you without break, being able to walk fully around.

Locate the direction of north, either using a magnetic compass or the stars or sun. It is common to place the stang, or witches' staff, in the north if you are inclined to use such a tool. In this place, it stands between the world centre and the celestial axis of the North Star, being the world tree, or bridge, between the heavenly abode of the Fates and stars and the terrestrial and chthonic world of men and spirits. Therefore, the stang may be placed outside of the limits of your ring as you are establishing the circle of the worlds about you. Otherwise, the staff or stang may be placed in the centre of your ring, again being axial but directly allowing for spirit flight, or else it may be placed in the direction of the season. In the latter case, the stang should be dressed according to the season, meaning that it should be adorned with the flowers, trees, or boughs that are "in season" at which time it, as representing the Witch God, assumes the mask of the tides.

From the north, fix a staff, stick, or marker at what will be the centre of your Ring of Art. To this marker, attach your cord (otherwise a string or rope) that extends to the circumference of the ring. Tied to the other end of the string, you should have your blade—a steel or iron instrument that is used to cut the earth. This is the tool of the smith, the artificer of metals, demonstrating mastery over the sorcerous arts of transmuting earth, and it is the weapon of the first sorcerer. With the compass so arranged, inscribe the ring about you with the blade, ploughing the first furrow, ditch, or moat. You might physically use the blade to cut the earth, or you may prefer to symbolically inscribe the ring without penetrating the land—the choice is yours. When this is done, recover the tools used.

Consecrate the ring with holy water, moving sunwise while repeating the following three times:

*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me,  
and I shall be whiter than snow.<sup>118</sup>*

The ring should now be marked as the boundary of the sacred enclosure (temenos) using a white powder (zisurrû). Traditionally, this would be flour or ash from a sacred fire—such as you might have at the centre of your ring—a Beltaine or Midsummer fire, or else a bonfire from the All Hallows’. Salt may also be used, but the author would be disinclined to employ this mineral, as it requires enough that a continuous ring of white is visible, and salt in quantity can induce conditions that aren’t favourable to plant growth, causing dehydration and disrupting water balance in soils.

When the ring has been ensorcelled with flour or ash, using the same material, divide the ring into four quarters by drawing a line directly from north to south and from west to east. In effect, you now have the crossroads that provides a fascination for the Watchers, drawing the spirits into the compass: .

A simple rhyme can be spoken while you are ensorcelling the ring. One such rhyme that is favoured in some circles of Traditional Witchcraft is derived from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, spoken by Hecate and describing the four cardinal winds. This is now thought to have been introduced into the text of *Macbeth* by Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) at some point prior to 1623, and taken from his original play, *The Witch*, which draws from Scot’s *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584):

*Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey,*

*Mingle, mingle, mingle you that mingle may.*

*Titty, Tiffin, keep it stiff in.*

*Firedrake, Puckey, make it lucky.*

*Liard, Robin, you must bob in.*

*Round, around, around, about, about,*

*All ill come running in, all good keep out.<sup>119</sup>*

When the ring is marked and consecrated, move to the middle of the ring and recite the Black Paternoster whilst turning to each direction and making the sign of the cross:

*Four nooks in this house for holy angels,*

*A post in the midst, that's Christ Jesus*

*Lucas, Marcus, Matthew, Johannes*

*God be in this house, and all that belongs us.<sup>120</sup>*

It is customary to approach the Ring of Art from the direction of the northeast, being the region of beginnings and openings in the compass. From the outside of the moat, freshly turned, and approaching from the northeast, make an offering of blood to the moat, committing a drop to the furrow. Some solemn words might be pertinent or a moment's pause in offering and making sacred this act.

Enter the ring from the northeast and move to the east. With your palms together at your chest in the sign of prayer, visualise the colour and spirit of

the east, calling from your experiential perspective the essence of the direction, including any symbols and signs that are resonant. Really allow the spirit of the wind to use your sensory and perceptual experience, drawing from your imaginal world to establish the pillar of the east. When you feel the time is right, intone the vowel of the east. With your heart, utter the following charm to the east:

*Watcher of the eastern wind,*

*Red dawn of morning star,*

*Awaken ye, and heed the call,*

*Uziel, O Helel ben Shahar.*

Move to the south, and with outstretched arms embracing the horizon, fill your being with the experience of the realm of the southern wind, using all of your senses to visualise the spirits of the south. When you feel overwhelmed by the sense of the southern wind, intone the vowel of the south:

*Watcher of the southern wind,*

*White Scorcher effulgent Resh,*

*Awake ye, and heed the call,*

*Hébol, O thou shining Shemesh.*

Moving to the west, reach out with your hands to the horizon and allow your imagination to reach out to the winds of the west. Visualise all the

symbols, colour, signs, and sigils you have established that associate with the spirit of the western wind, invoking the nature of the spirit. Really fill yourself with the essential identity of the direction until inspiration so enflames you that you can do nothing else but intone the vowel of the west:

*Watcher of the western wind,*

*Pale hue of evening gloam,*

*Awake ye, and heed the call,*

*Mēniel, O Helel ben Shalim.*

Finally, take yourself to the north, and arms held across your chest, bring your awareness to the quietude of the northern portal. Bring forth all of the imagery of this castle, the potentiality, the stillness, the place of magic, and the gateway to all. When you feel yourself overcome with the sense of the spirit of the north, and this will likely take longer than the rest, open your mouth and allow your breath to issue forth silently in the direction:

*Watcher of the northern wind,*

*Dark baldachin of heaven's skull*

*Awake ye, and heed the call,*

*Arddu, O Ba'al Zəbūl*

The final act is whistling the winds, whereby you move to each of the quarters in turn and whistle softly until the wind replies in kind, signalling the ancient call and response. Traditionally, a bull-roarer would be used to

summon the quarters, and practice may be required in this instance. If you have a bull-roarer or wind instrument, this would be appropriate, especially if you can't whistle.

Finding yourself in the centre of your ring, feel the four winds, or airts, around you and be consciously aware of the spirits that accompany them. Close your eyes and reach out with your mind to each in turn, then return to the heart of the castle where the four doors open to the kingdoms of the witch gods. You are now able to continue with any work planned in this space, which is effectively a temenos, a sacred enclosure fashioned in the world, locating and orienting you in the mythical landscape through the magical perspective of the Witch Compass.

When you are ready to break the sorcery and release the attendant spirits of the Watchers, take your knife blade, and anywhere upon the ring, cut across the line of white powder and break the circle. Always make sure this is done when the ritual or enchantment is finished. It doesn't matter how many times you do this, so long as you do it once.

This is a simple method for ensorcelling the Witch Compass, which can be used for myriad uses such as celebrating the festivals of the seasons or working magics. However, if you wanted to access a particular spirit or airt, one would design the compass laying to reflect that mythic landscape. For example, if we wanted to journey to the king of the east, we would not use the crossroads pattern but would utilise the symbols of the eastern ruler in our compass. In this instance, the sigil would be a horizontal line with a semi-circle, symbolising the sun cresting the horizon. Marking this from the compass edge from west to east, we align the ring with the spirits of the east and the juxtaposed western ruler, while engaging the signs appropriate and fascinating to the desired king. We might burn incense of springtime herbs and resins, sweet-smelling odours, while working with light green colours, the red of dawn, the bough of the mayflower, or daffodils. These are considerations for laying a more specific compass when working with the lands which compose the worlds.

## Exercise 13

### *Ensorcelling with the Daily Adorations*

If you have been performing daily adorations of the sun, as discussed in Chapter 5, you have been accumulating experience and familiarity with the compass on a regular basis. One of the benefits of this practice is that it accrues a bond in memory and mythos with the compass through the solar energies. If you are performing a work with the compass and wish to access these potencies, you can ensorcel your ring with the same ritual. Obviously, instead of reciting the verse at the appropriate times of the day, the work is condensed into a single ceremonial act, addressing the location of the compass where the sun would be at that time of day.

This type of ritual laying of the compass is beneficial for healing and solar work and is best done as a quick and readily available ensorcelling and requires no tools.

Begin by facing the east and place your palms together at your chest in a gesture of prayer:

*Hail, to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of morning,*

*Upon the wind of Uziel.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft,*

*Thou risest up on the peaceful wave-crest*

*Like a queenly maiden in bloom*

Moving to the south, open your arms as if embracing the sun, expanding into the horizon:

*Hail, to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of Day,*

*Upon the wind of Hébol.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft;*

*Pouring upon us gently and generously,*

*Glory to thee thou glorious sun.*

Progress to the easterly direction and draw your outstretched arms together so the palms are facing a short distance from each other:

*Hail, to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of Evening,*

*Upon the wind of Mēniel.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft;*

*Thou liest down in the destructive ocean*

*Without impairment, without fear.*

Finally, move to the north and wrap your arms around your torso in an embrace:

*Hail, to thee, sun of the seasons,*

*From the realm of Hweyu,*

*Upon the wind of Arddu.*

*As thou travellest the skies aloft;*

*Thy steps are strong on the wing of the heavens,*

*Thou art the glorious mother of the stars.*

Having acknowledged the four stations of the solar energy, you have aligned a simple compass about you. This is a simple compass that honours the four winds that stand at the corners of the world, the mythos of the solar birth, growth, death, and rebirth through space and time. These factors coalesce to create a sacred enclosure about you for the purpose of magic.

## **Key Ideas**

The tradition of laying the compass has developed over recent years.

The compass, being a cosmological paradigm and worldview, does not always require “laying.”

The compass does not protect or contain but is a mythic landscape within which we move.

The kingdom to which we move is its own compass and, possessed of its signs, sigils, and symbols, has an inherent mythology. Compasses within compasses.

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## *Chapter 8*



### *Magic at the Edge*

#### *Enchantment with the Witch Compass*

Now that we have gained an insight into the architecture and landscapes of the Witch Compass—the language with which the conscious experience is apprehended—we can begin to approach each airt in terms of practical sorcery. The mythic narrative which informs the compass allows us to comprehend something of the spirits with which we cooperate and work. For example, if we are working with a particular dream technique and a spirit regularly invades our dreamscape, we can quickly discern some information. In this respect, the Witch Compass works as analogous to a

sort of spiritual Rolodex, providing a useful indexing system by which we can quickly identify and contact a spirit and its rulers. In the case of the dream visitor, we can tell by the colour and direction from which they approach what mythic realm they are coming from and what type of spirit they are. Furthermore, if they are troublesome and persistent, ignoring your requests to leave you alone, the rulers of that realm can be called on to bring them in line—the equivalent of calling a cosmic line manager.

Conversely, this has the benefit of permitting us to understand how we load the coordinates of the mythic landscape we intend to approach in order to work magic, divination, healing, and prosperity. These four types of magical operation can be readily placed upon the Witch Compass, finding their homes available in the four cardinal directions:

North—Magic and sorcery

East—Prosperity and growth

South—Healing

West—Divination

These are not fixed influences or powers, as the whole is more of a spectrum, fluidity meaning that the strengths of each airt bleeds into the next with greater or lesser degrees. These are only a shorthand for the character and flavour of the realms of these four, and only by direct experience can we gain a more comprehensive and richer relationship. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to explore the realms of the compass independently and, using the exercise examples in this book and others, develop your language and map of the worlds.

Fundamentally, it has been remarked by Robert Cochrane that the main difference between the witch and the Pagan is that the witch crosses the river that separates the quick and the dead. In other words, crossing the

hedge and shifting from mundane consciousness to an otherworld experience is fundamentally a part of modern Traditional Witchcraft. In terms of the compass work here expounded, this would involve moving from the position of the Witch Compass that is the whole to the location of the compass of the kingdom, castle, or direction of the wind with which you are working.

With this firmly in mind, and with great encouragement, the following are example rituals that can be used to access these magical realms for the purposes best suited. Of course, the airts used are at their greatest potency during the season that is characterised by the spirit which presides. For example, divinations are most effective during the period around the autumn equinox or All Hallows', while works of healing that use the fullness of the solar energy might be successfully achieved at Midsummer. However, we are again reminded of the dynamic nature of the compass and the availability of the airts throughout.

One way of conceptualising the interconnected relationship of the Witch Compass is the Vedic and Buddhist metaphor of Indra's Net. In this extended metaphor, Indra's Net spans the world from the axis mundi, in this instance the Hindu and Buddhist Mount Meru. The net is composed of many threads, which have diamonds at each point of intersection. Every one of these multifaceted diamonds reflects all of the other jewels. This means that the individualised junction contains within it a reflection of each other respective part of the whole. This metaphor works better than that of the Tree of Life in Kabbalistic and Hermetic systems, as the compass is not an emanatory or hierarchical model.

Similarly, and using another allegory, the Witch Compass is akin to a hologram on a cosmic scale. A hologram is composed of a field of light received from multiple directions as opposed to a single focussed point, like a photograph. This means that it can be viewed and contains information through the medium of light from different perspectives. Furthermore, if a hologram is divided into two or more pieces, each part retains the entirety of the information of the light field, meaning that the whole image can be visibly seen in each piece.

For these reasons, the conceptual compass is composed of a multitude of compasses. The most structurally important are the four kingdoms of the winds, which we examined earlier. These are then accompanied by the cross-quarter points, which give us the eight spokes of the Wheel of the Year, providing a compass composed of eight compasses. Each of these reflects the whole, containing within its makeup the same principles and truths, but with differing character, almost like a multiverse.

When working magic with these directions—accessing the power of the winds—it is sometimes necessary to arrange the compass of that spirit realm. When we move from the mundane, the location of the present, to another world outside of the circles of time and space, we may ritually ensorcel that compass as the locus of the kingdom. Therefore, when we work with the castle of the east, we lay the compass that belongs to that king of the winds.

In each of the proceeding spells, instructions are provided to work the associated magics as they are relevant to the particular direction or castle upon the compass. These harness the spirit of the airt to empower the magics retained therein. In order to access this and commence the work, we first lay the compass as previously explored. However, it is important to note that, here, the compass we are laying is that of the castle of the direction and is adorned appropriately. In this manner, aside from the usual tools for the compass ritual, one should make appropriate adjustment to incorporate the spirit of the wind.

For example, the stang should be located in the relevant quarter, such as east for workings of the east, and decorated in a way fitting for the castle approached. If, say, we were working with the east, we might place flowers, leaves, or branches of the season about the wreath, or else place a candle coloured for the airt at its foot or between the horns. It is up to you what items or decorations invoke the quarter to you, but it should be appropriate to the airt. Of course, appropriate seasonal boughs are more available if the time coincides with the operation of magic, and thus, the power is at its peak.

You are at liberty to dress your compass in any other way you deem fitting—be creative. Of course, the essential rule to observe is that it must be in

keeping with the spirit of the wind direction.

## **Castle of the East–Prosperity and Growth**

The castle of the east is the home to knowledge and learning, illumination and fresh ideas, intellect and inspired thinking. Therefore, it is apropos that the magic accessed here draws from these characteristics and imparts some of its energy in teaching us how to be more fruitful and prosperous.

The following ritual uses a “blown” egg that should be acquired beforehand. First, get yourself a fresh egg and “blow” it. To do this, it is often easiest with a piece of tape affixed to the top and bottom before a pin is carefully inserted at either end, making a small hole at each. Then, an extended paperclip or other such item can be used to insert and break up the yolk, making it easier to remove. Then, after thoroughly cleaning, place your mouth over the top hole and gently blow, pushing the contents of the egg into a bowl. You can flush the inside of the shell with clean, cool water to remove any organic material. Gently remove a small piece of the eggshell top, enough that you can fill the cavity with soil or compost, and having done so, place it to one side for use in ritual.

Having prepared the egg, you should spend some time thinking about the subject you wish to gain insight into or new area of the Craft you hope to obtain knowledge of. Compose a short and concise phrase that encapsulates the intent. This should be clear, unambiguous, and in a positive tone. Try to phrase your intent in such a way as to assume it is a certainty, and be direct. Something like: “My knowledge of witchcraft grows every day.”

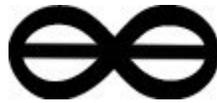
Then, taking your phrase, remove every vowel and repeating letters from the sentence, like this:

My knowledge of witchcraft grows daily

This should leave you with a handful of letters only.

MKNHS

Take these letters and, combining them as your whim dictates, produce a sigil that is the essence of your intention. Something like this:



Place a copy of the sigil under your pillow when you sleep for three nights before painting or drawing it upon the blown eggshell preceding the performance of the ritual.

Now, with this preparation done, you should have an egg that is decorated with your sigil and intent and is filled with soil. Gather your tools for ensorcelling the compass and, at the appointed time and place, retire to perform the rite. In addition to your ritual implements of art and the sigil-decorated egg filled with soil, have with you a couple of sunflower seeds for sowing.

Finally, lay your compass as before at a time relevant to the quarter, such as dawn or before noon, perhaps during the season of spring or around the vernal equinox. You should take the time to embellish the surroundings of the compass in the raiments of the castle of the east: signs of growth, light, intelligence, illumination, fire, joy.

When you have attuned yourself to the eastern wind, take up the egg. Moisten the soil and take a sunflower seed and prepare to sow it in the egg. Before planting the seed, repeat the following:

*Rising sap in Mother Earth's womb,*

*Seed of the sun deliver this boon,*

*As the vine reaches toward lofty bower,*

*So may my learning begin to flower.*

Meditate upon your sigil and the intention to develop and learn, the process of acquiring new wisdom and teachings, and growing toward prosperity.

Afterward, there is no need to “banish” the compass, but there is necessity to tidy the area and remove all rubbish with you. You should care for the seedling as you would tend to your betterment as it begins to grow. With as much dedication as you provide this new life, so must you tend to your own growth and development.

When the plant has grown large enough, having outgrown the eggshell, take it to a dedicated place where it will get plenty of sunlight and, gently cracking the shell so it doesn't confine the roots, plant it out and continue to take care of it until its wonderful face glows with the sun.

Harvest any seeds that are produced for repeat performances and future use.

## **Castle of the South—Healing**

The warm, life-giving rays of the sun have long been thought to heal in moderation. Of course, like the flame or water, there is a balance to be had, and the fierce sun can be extremely dangerous, scorching, and harming. The dual nature of the sun's powers demonstrates the great effect it has upon life, being both the giver of life and the potential destroyer. Here, we will focus upon the vivifying energy of the solar power.

The following incantation is adapted from the Gaelic-speaking world of the Orkney Isles, the far reaches of northern Britain, and was recorded by the folklorist and collector of charms William MacKenzie in 1895.

This charm for "Forespoken Water" involves the making of blessed water, and the saining, or blessing, is carried out with an incantation to imbue the water with revivifying powers that can relieve even the evil eye.

Take a bowl of water and leave it to absorb the midday sun at Midsummer. Meanwhile, obtain for this operation, preferably from the seashore, three pebbles or stones of different colours: black, white, and red. This rite partakes of what has been identified as "dual faith"—that is, the beliefs of charmers, sorcerers, and cunning folk who are comfortable treading the line between Pagan and Christian magics.

The three stones are dropped in the water followed by the single utterance of the word "sain" and the sign of the cross. Then the following charm is said over the water:

*In the name of Him that can cure or kill,*

*This water shall cure all earthly ill,*

*Shall cure the blood and flesh and bone,*

*For ilka ane there is a stone;*

*May she fleg all trouble, sickness, pain,*

*Cure without and cure within,*

*Cure the heart, and horn, and skin.<sup>121</sup>*

Whoever the Forespoken Water has been prepared for should now take a drink from the bowl, while the remainder is sprinkled about the area of the body to be cured. Otherwise, it may be used to asperge an area to bless. In any case, use with the following:

*Father, Son, Holy Ghost,*

*Bitten sall they be*

*Wha have bitten thee!*

*Care to their near vein,*

*Until thou get'st thy health again,*

*Mend thou in God's name!<sup>122</sup>*

The Forespoken Water charm is traditional to Orkney, reflecting the Christian tone of the magic and witchery of the past. It should be remembered that many Traditional Witchcraft adherents follow a “dual faith” approach to sorcery and are perfectly comfortable with both Christian and Pagan influences in their work. There is great majesty in the Christian rituals that are found buried in folk magic around the globe, some more obviously than others, such as Hoodoo and Conjure.

As discussed in earlier chapters, we must bear in mind that the habitus, the perceptual worldview of our forebears that coloured every facet of their

lives, was firmly grounded within a model underwritten by the architecture of Christianity. Therefore, the inclusion here of Christianised elements should not deter but encourage us in our witchcraft; after all, the witch makes use of all that is available rather than slavishly adhering to elaborate ceremonial requirements.

The castle of the south, then, can be used to great effect in acts of healing, fruition, and accessing the fulness of the seasonal tide. Furthermore, the spirits of this knot straddle the world of the waxing and waning tide and, therefore, have one foot in the living and one in the dying aspect of the god of the year. For magics that require his especial expertise, this quarter provides some considerable sorcery.

## **Castle of the West—Divination**

This ritual is best performed at the autumn equinox if you can, but can be worked at any other time that the moon is full.

Find a quiet space to light a candle and meditate, such as a bedroom or outside in a secluded garden or grove. Have with you a small bowl or vessel filled with water sufficient to be able to gaze upon the surface and a solitary candle of any colour. It is best if you can position the bowl to reflect the moon, however briefly, at some point prior to the ritual.

When darkness has cast its veil over the day and the spirit takes you, locate yourself in the chosen place where you may be undisturbed. Before you, place the bowl of moon water with the candle behind. Light the candle so that its flame is visibly reflected within the water. Calm and centre yourself and prepare for the journey with the following words:

*Within the sky, the golden shield grows pale and sinks within the mists as the silver shield, rising over the harvest field, is seen again. Thus does the Moon replace the Sun. The scales upturn, bright kindly day gives way to night, and fair Spring's youth, so far away, now changes into Autumn's eve.*

Gaze into the light reflected in the water; sink into the light trance of journey. Let the spirits of the water take you to the castle of wisdom and rest. Let it entrance you and take you away. Journey with your soul, let loose your emotions, and feel your way, mindful of illusion and delusion.

This quarter makes for powerful journey, vision, foresight, and memory. This is the influence of the moon and the water and reflects the Isle of Avalon, the Apple Isle (recall Hébol whose otherworldly aspect is as King of Annwn). This mystical island in the sea, where the sun descends in the western horizon, marks an otherworld position and an underworld descent. Therefore, the moon and its waters are the access points to the mysterious realms that may recall memories of the past or the future.

## **Castle of the North—Magic and Initiation**

The castle of the north is the place of all sorcery and witchcraft, being the direction most closely allied with the chthonic realm of the underworld and the astral axis above. Obtained through the North Star Road, the castle of the north is the bridging direction and place of power which is directly associated with the powers of sorcery. In addition, the Man in Black resides here, commonly held to be the place of the Devil himself. Therefore, it is where we must traditionally go to attain the favour of the Devil and initiate ourselves into the witchcraft.

The charm here is taken from MacKenzie, who directly refers to his colleague and friend Walter Traill Dennison, and is another formula found

in Orkney which recounts the method used by residents in that sacred isle. Indeed, so hoary is this formula that, we are told, when MacKenzie wrote of it in 1895, Dennison had written it down some fifty years prior.<sup>123</sup> The purpose of the rite is the ensorcelling of the compass for works of sorcery that culminate in initiatory congress with the Witch Father, the folkloric Devil of Traditional Witchcraft. In this respect, the Witch Father is the initiator of all sorcery, the Man in Black of the Grand Sabbath, presiding over the meetings of witchcraft. He is the initiator par excellence in Traditional Witchcraft, with many aspects shared in Chronos, Saturn, the Goat of Mendes, and the late medieval folkloric Devil or Divil.

The original outline of the charm given in MacKenzie directs those who would obtain the power of witchcraft to go to the seashore to perform the ritual at a place between the lines of low and high water.<sup>124</sup> From this, we can discern the requirements to locate yourself in the in-between, the liminal spaces. While there are substitutes that can be made, it is important to understand that they must pertain to the liminality necessitated in this rite. Therefore, suitable alternatives might be a graveyard, crossroads, boundary, bridge, or ford. Use your imagination or try to find the seashore location. It is imperative that the location meets these requirements, and it may be that the time is not right, but that the place and time will avail itself when you are ready.

When making the pilgrimage to the site you have dedicated yourself to locating, at the appointed hour of midnight, seven stones will make themselves known to you. Keep a weather eye as you make the journey and collect the necessary stones as you go. You will know them when you see them. When you arrive at your chosen location, spend some time familiarising yourself with the spirits of the land there and ensure that they respond favourably to your intent. The next step is to turn widdershins—that is, against the direction of the sun—three times, signalling the inversion of boundaries and approach to the realm of the Witch Father. In this act, you emulate the first sorcerer, Cain, who wrought the workings of his ensorcelled world according to his own cunning.

Then, as midnight approaches, in your sacred space, lie down facing north with your head in the south. In each hand, a stone is held, while two are

placed at the side of each foot and one at the head. A flat stone is placed upon the chest with the last at the heart. Obviously, it's easier to place the stones at the feet and chest before taking the remaining two in your outstretched hands.

Note that you have stones now at each of the four quarters, with your body splayed out in a cruciform upon the crossroads. Finally, close your eyes and repeat the incantation thus:<sup>125</sup>

*O, mester, king of all that's ill,*

*Come fill me wi'th warlock skill,*

*And I shall serve with all my will.*

*Trow take me gin I sinno!*

*Trow take me gin I winno!*

*Trow take me gin I cinno!*

*Come take me now, and take me all,*

*Take lights and liver, pluck and gall,*

*Take me, take me, now, I say,*

*From the top of the head to the tip of the toe;*

*Take all that's out and in of me,*

*Take hide and hair and all to thee,*

*Take heart and harns, flesh, blood, and büns,*

*Take all between the seven stones*

*In the name of the muckle black Wallawa!* <sup>126</sup>

After repeating the charm, which is best memorised so that you can speak it aloud while remaining in position with eyes closed, allow the stillness to overtake you. Open yourself to all that may come, having welcomed the Old One. If you feel the urge to do so, repeat the incantation until the Devil is come. Remain still no matter what occurs around you, resisting the urge to balk in fear. This initiatory process will not only be undone if you acquiesce to the dread that overwhelms you, but the Devil may ride you ever after. This is an important point that rarely gets attention in such initiatory rituals, but the person opens themselves to being ridden by the Devil if such an attempt is deemed a failure and given up before the process is complete. Make no mistake, the fear can be palpable, and the desire to desist and quit will grip you with an intensity that is difficult to endure. This is the testing ground, and it is a perilous path for those not of stout mind and mettle.

When you are satisfied that the rite has climaxed, the next stage is to open your eyes and turn to your left side before rising. Each stone is, in the original description, to be individually cast into the sea, but running water will serve equally well if you are inland (do not use still water). All that remains is to integrate the experience as it unfolds throughout the weeks, months, and years that follow.<sup>127</sup>

Initiations are often difficult and life-changing times. Many people enter into an initiation lightly, and this is a grave mistake if you truly intend for it to “take.” One knows when an initiation has worked and that the spirits or gods have accepted the candidate. This will manifest itself in your life through innumerable and personal signs and indications too varied and idiosyncratic to list. What is certain about any initiation is that, while the human agent introduces the aspirant to the tradition, lineage, egregore, or spirits and tutelary deities in attendance, it is those ethereal beings that actually enact the initiation. A human intermediary can only guide, signpost, and orchestrate the necessary circumstances and rituals, but the

initiation (meaning a beginning or commencement) is between the aspirant and the spirits.

Initiation signifies a beginning, a commencement, a start. Therefore, like any new endeavour, there is frequently a clearing away of that which impedes the path that is necessary. This can often be painful and confusing, and is always challenging. Not every initiation is this way, but the more aspects that are detrimental to the success of the initiation, the more work is required. For this reason, many people find their entire lives transformed in the process which occurs after an initiation has ignited its especial change. While this is a sure way to know that an initiation has taken effect, that the gods and spirits are responding to your ritual actions, it is a serious consideration. Therefore, any who would undertake this work must spend an adequate amount of time in reflection.

Prior to any initiation, the candidate should always reflect upon their life, what has brought them to this point, and what they hope to attain through this new beginning. Also, grave consideration should be made toward what could be lost along the way. Without exaggeration, these events can be utterly transforming, but something has to be sacrificed or relinquished in order that it may become renewed. The process, which is alchemical, can take as long as is necessary and will not end until the aspirant has achieved that transformation required of the egregore, tutelary deities, or spirits.

## **A Note on the Language of the Charm**

The language of the charm uses an early nineteenth-century Scots dialect, which is a combination of English, Scottish Gaelic, and Norn, an extinct north Germanic language of the remote isles of northern Britain.

First is the word mester, which is obviously a dialectal rendering of “master.” Here, the master referred to is the folkloric Devil, the Witch Father.

In the Scots dialect, warlock is a term used most commonly for a male witch. However, in this instance, we are told that the charm derives from the granddaughter of a witch and, perhaps, was used interchangeably for both male and female warlocks.<sup>128</sup>

A trow is a spright or fairy in Orkney folklore traditions, originating in the Scandinavian “troll.” Trolls are found throughout Scandinavian and Norse lore and tradition right up to the present day and are worked in magical traditions. In this line of the charm, “gin I sinno” means “where I shall not.” This is followed by similar lines that alternate the last word, giving meaning of “will not” and “cannot.” Therefore, “Troll take me where I shall not / will not / cannot.”<sup>129</sup>

The Witch Father is beckoned to take all of the enchanter, including internal organs, which are referenced. The pluck is the heart and lungs, often used as a principal ingredient in haggis.

*From the top of the head to the tip of the toe—it is customary in witchcraft, as recorded from the early modern period in folklore and tradition, to place one hand on the head and another beneath the feet and promise all in between to the Devil.<sup>130</sup> This was, for a while, a standard initiatory offering to the Devil, promising the entirety of the individual to this witchery.*

The poem continues to include more references to internal organs. Harns is “brains,” while büns is an Old Norse form of “bones.”

*Muckle is Scots dialect meaning significant or of great amount, or even large or magnificent. A rather interesting term, Wallawa, suggests Walliman, “a name for the devil” in Scots folklore, and may be more akin to the King of the Fairies.<sup>131</sup> In 1629, Janet Randall was tried for witchcraft in Orkney. During her trial, Janet describes a gentleman dressed all in white, with white head and grey beard, whose name was Walliman. Dictionaries of the Scots Language indicates that the adjective “wallie,” or “wally,” has several related meanings, including “fine, excellent, pleasant.”<sup>132</sup> Variants also give meanings that include wave-tossed, relating to the sea, and also “waly,” an exclamation of sorrow.<sup>133</sup> Some of these meanings, in combination or isolation, may or may not be suggested in the name Walliman. What is alluded to, however, through these descriptive terms is*

*that Walliman, or Wallawa, represents an important or kingly representative of the “good people” or “fair folk”: the fairies, elves, and trolls of Orkney. Therefore, we can conclude that Wallawa is a direct allusion to the folkloric Devil of witchcraft in this context—the Witch Father in fact.*

The rites laid out here are given as guidance, indicative of the types of magic that are to be found at the directions of the compass. These are examples of expressions of the four guardian quarters which uphold, or “square,” the compass of witchcraft. You may wish to employ these as they are, recording the results and findings in your journal. Otherwise, you may have an idea as to how to approach the powers of the airts in this manner and prepare a spell, working, journey, or initiation into each of the powers inherent within the directions.

Of course, the cross-quarter winds are deliberately not included here, being left for you to explore and bring to reification through experience. The four quarters are outlined in order to provide the fullest interpretation of the airts most commonly associated with witchcraft and how they may be engaged through the Witch Compass.

In addition to the outlines given above, consideration should be made with regard to the season and potency of the tide. Therefore, for example, if you wished to work healing magics, these, too, may be located in different directions. However, the flavour and purpose of the healing would vary accordingly. To illustrate this, you might work a Candlemas (Imbolc) ritual for healing that requires new growth of healthy tissue. Alternatively, you could use the power of the All Hallows’/Samhain airt to request the spirits of the underworld remove the cause of harm or illness to the land of the dead.

In truth, the witch compass is a lifetime’s work and entails a philosophy and technology of such completeness that it would take many books to even scratch the surface. These rituals, though, incorporating traditional, folkloric, and customary aspects of sorcery, will give a succinct exploration of the compass through the four principal directions.

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121. William MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations, Charms and Blessings of the Hebrides* (Inverness, Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, Limited, 1895), 35–36.

122. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 36.

123. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

124. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

125. I have taken the liberty to update some of the occasionally difficult quirks of archaic Orcadian language used in the formula.

126. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

127. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

128. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

129. MacKenzie, *Gaelic Incantations*, 4.

130. Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Eastbourne, Sussex Academic Press: 2010), 39.

131. “Wallie,” *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, accessed February 14, 2022, [https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/wallie\\_adj](https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/wallie_adj).

132. “Wallie,” *Dictionaries of the Scots Language*, accessed February 14, 2022, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/wallie>.

133. “Wawy,” Dictionaries of the Scots Language, accessed February 1, 2022, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/wawy>; “Waly,” Dictionaries of the Scots Language, accessed February 1, 2022, <https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/waly>.

## *Chapter 9*



### *Conclusion*

#### *Tying Off the Knot*

As an instrument tuned to the key of myth, the Witch Compass fixes spatial and spiritual location through the directions, winds, or airts aligned with the cosmic axis through the north. At its most elementary level, the compass first and foremost centres through the north, being the place of power and the ruler of the winds. As such, it is the channel, the direction through which we ascend and descend the tree, which is the witch's mount through the North Star Road. Moreover, the Witch Compass is the boundary where we choose to meet the world, extending out toward the hem of infinity's

cloak. This is where the inner world of focussed, individualised conscious experience encounters the outer reality of which it is part receiver and part contributor.

Ever since the compass was introduced to the wider community, principally through the limited writings of Robert Cochrane in the mid-twentieth century and expounded further since by Shani Oates, there has been a growing interest. The use of the terminology has permeated witchcraft circles, whilst the experiential and hard-won prize of understanding through use, personal gnosis, and extensive research has enflashed the bones.

In the current climate of witchcraft and the occult, the burgeoning zeitgeist of Traditional Witchcraft is maturing, being capable of maintaining a current of tradition within a context which is simultaneously open and progressive. This, one could argue, is its great strength, being grounded in a mythic, folkloric, and ultimately pragmatic foundation. And yet it is empowered to develop its corpus to allow for greater expression of experience. The truth of validity of any system, tradition, and practice rises and falls at the feet of the practitioner. It is only through vital experience that we may apprehend the truth, and that may not easily be expressed nor grasped by another, much less judged.

In the end, the greatest teacher of all, and one that eludes the stamp of authority or identity, is that of personal experience and gnosis. We are each and all the sum of our experiences and those factors which constitute them, but we are not owned or possessed by them. You are invited, then, to approach and continue this work under the sovereignty of personal experience, guided by gnosis and questioning everything. None of us are a complete work.

The Witch Compass has had a profound impact upon modern Traditional Witchcraft and its operations. The seven directions form the compass to navigate inner space, whilst projecting that internal world upon our external reality. As discussed at the outset, our entire experience of conscious reality outside of ourselves is, in actuality, occurring within our heads. Lon Milo DuQuette succinctly expressed this metaphysical truth, asserting that it's all in your head ... you just don't know how big your head is.<sup>134</sup> The Hermeticist and Trantrika, non-dualists both, would agree upon this point,

albeit expressed slightly differently: “as above, so below” and “as within, so without.”

The Witch Compass provides an effective, practical, and achievable results-based operative sorcery that enables you to approach and work powerful magical sorcery. Through the methods and techniques introduced here, you are equipped to develop a working relationship with the Witch Compass and Traditional Witchcraft from an informed position, bolstered by practical use. Furthermore, personal gnosis will enable the practitioner to propel themselves forward, with the compass as a launching point, to evolve their witchery and experience the worlds and spirits available to them. The pattern of the Witch Compass is about working with Fate and learning where and how change can be effected.

The model of the Witch Compass presented is a starting point, the beginning of a rich and fruitful journey culminating in an initiatory rite that is, in actuality, the start, not the end. Hopefully, this is one that will endow you with a system of sorcery that locates the winds within their cosmological territory, equipped with the map and language to operate successfully in a paradigm which encompasses a re-mystified world.

## **A Journey Through the Mythic Year**

There are as many ways to use the Witch Compass as there are varieties of modern witches, and not each resonate or have meaning to us. In its most common envisioning, we see the Wheel of the Year overlaid upon the spokes of the compass, providing a narrative which informs the journey through the year. Indeed, in the Welsh witch coterie Y Plant Brân, the sun and moon are sometimes seen to represent the luminaries as the god and goddess. Through these heavenly lamps, the solar journey about the year is reflected in the mythic life cycle of the male deity as he traverses the sky, from birth in winter, through the trials and tribulations of life identified through rites of passage. In this way, he works through the drama of the

mysteries, imparting their wisdom to all under the aegis of the House of Brân.

The youthful sun is the traveller and adventurer from Midwinter to the vernal equinox, bursting with the vigour of boyish vivacity. He arrives at the equinox with vitality where he meets and couples with his bride. At Beltane, the wedding is celebrated, the god taking on the responsibilities of husbandry and protector of all life before attaining his peak at Midsummer. By the time the god reaches Lammas, he has entered the later stages of his life and has grown aware of his pending demise as his decline heralds the onset of night. Following this, he enters his twilight years at the autumn equinox, measuring justice and wisdom through maturity. As the Hallows approach, the sun is in his final throes of ebbing life, more old than he is young. The moral tales which inform the festivals as stations of the sun upon the Wheel of the Year ensure that the lessons and values are imparted on a personal level.

Alongside the story of the sun is the lunar counterpoint, the goddess who achieves her highest point around the Midwinter season, whilst hanging lowest in the sky at Midsummer.

The year cycle can be adapted and incorporated, as it has been for the last many decades, to great effect. Indeed, the energies of the annual cycles and seasons can be utilised in our magics through the Witch Compass, building liturgy of rites which are, nevertheless, informed by the spirits of time and tide. The exploration of these is a lifetime's work.

The world is imagined and built around the architecture of our worldview, seen beautifully through the creative expression of the artist and poet. How we interpret and give meaning to the experience of reality, furthermore, affects that experience. Each of us as a consciously aware being resides within the skeletal cavern of our head, projecting the world outward from the phenomena of our senses, fashioning an estimation of reality about us. As a magician, sorcerer, and witch, we purposefully engage directly in this cosmic creation, dissolution, and re-creation, all available to us in the dialectic of being, becoming, and nonbeing. In approaching this through the model of the Witch Compass, we are intimately connected to the experience of reality forming. Unlike the magic circle, which takes place within a

model of reality, the Witch Compass, then, is the very fabric of that experience; it is the ordering, architecture, phenomenon, map, and conscious territory of our lived experience.

In its simplest form, the compass is the means of orienting, of finding yourself within the experience of reality and locating due north along the axis mundi. At its most complex and subtle level, it is the entire expanse of conscious awareness and its myriad forms of potentiality through structured and ordered chaos.

## **Where Do We Go from Here?**

As a vehicular technology, the Witch Compass can take you to the ends of the world and back again, through space and time, inner and outer, and all in between. The journey awaits the sorcerer who dares undertake the adventure of many lifetimes. Herein lie the bare essentials for experiencing the compass. Having found yourself within your reality, centred and oriented along the cosmic axis, you are empowered and equipped with all you need.

Echoing the visionary mystic of the Sabbatic current of sorcery, Andrew D. Chumbley, in his introduction to the Sethos edition of his seminal work *The Azoëtia*, this is intended as a foundational work.<sup>135</sup> In achieving the climactic rite of the book, the practitioner should have formed a firm understanding and elementary appreciation of the workings of the sorcerous compass. Through the approach we have taken, the Witch Compass may be apprehended as a technology accessed through mythic narrative, delving deep into the structure of the cosmological map of the witch. Furthermore, some concepts in approaching the dimensions of the compass have been expressed, representative of the manifold methods for utilising the compass in our magical endeavours. What remains is the unwritten, nonphysical work, underlies the formulary of witchcraft which informs the Witch Compass. The intention of this book to make manifest the eldritch map has

been reified through the signs, symbols, and narrative of expression. This book is a magical work in and of itself, possessed of its own spirit, partaking of the arcane and mystical fulness of witchcraft—a book of magic as well as a book about magic.

The bones of witchcraft have been laid bare, rendering unto the astute and cunning reader the skeleton of the Witch Compass, the corpus which waits to be en fleshed through the operative experience of the sorcerer. From the moment of opening the book and reading the words, undertaking this rune, the magical operation begins, catalysing the substrate of the Witch Compass through a process of becoming.

What remains is for the work to be made manifest through the Witch Compass, summoning the breath that lifts the sails and transmutes the vessel toward the empyrean realms behind the north wind.

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134. Lon Milo DuQuette, *Low Magick: It's All in Your Head ... You Just Have No Idea How Big Your Head Is* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2010), 185.

135. Chumbley, *The Azoëtia*, xiii.



## *Selected Recommended Reading*

Andrew D. Chumbley, *The Azoëtia* (Xoanon Publishing)

Robert Cochrane and Evan John Jones, *The Roebuck in the Thicket: An Anthology of the Robert Cochrane Witchcraft Tradition*, editor Michael Howard (Capall Bann)

Robert Cochrane, with Evan John Jones, *The Robert Cochrane Letters: An Insight into Modern Traditional Witchcraft*, editors E. J. Jones and Michael Howard (Capall Bann)

Gemma Gary, *The Black Toad: West Country Witchcraft and Magic* (Troy Books)

Gemma Gary, *The Devil's Dozen: Thirteen Craft Rites of the Old One* (Troy Books)

Gemma Gary, *Traditional Witchcraft: A Cornish Book of Ways* (Troy Books)

Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (Pantheon)

Robert Graves, *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* (Faber & Faber)

Marian Green, *A Witch Alone: Thirteen Moons to Master Natural Magic* (Thorsons)

Christina Hole, *A Dictionary of British Folk Customs* (Paladin)

Christina Hole, *Witchcraft in Britain* (Paladin)

Michael Howard, *The Sacred Ring: The Pagan Origins of British Folk Festivals & Customs* (Capall Bann)

Michael Howard and Nigel Jackson, *The Pillars of Tubal Cain* (Capall Bann)

Paul Huson, *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks, and Covens* (G. P. Putnam's & Sons)

Nigel Jackson, *Masks of Misrule: The Horned God & His Cult in Europe* (Capall Bann)

Kenneth Johnson, *North Star Road: Shamanism, Witchcraft & the Otherworld Journey* (Llewellyn Publications)

Evan John Jones, with Doreen Valiente, *Witchcraft: A Tradition Renewed* (Robert Hale)

A. D. Mercer, *The Wicked Shall Decay: Charms, Spells and Witchcraft of Old Britain* (Three Hands Press)

Shani Oates, *Tubelo's Green Fire: Mythos, Ethos, Female, Male & Priestly Mysteries of the Clan of Tubal Cain* (Mandrake of Oxford)

Nigel Pearson, *A Ring Around the Moon: Witch Rites Revisited* (Troy Books)

Nigel Pearson, *Treading the Mill: Workings in Traditional Witchcraft* (Troy Books)

Nigel Pennick, *Secrets of East Anglian Magic* (Capall Bann)

Daniel Schulke, *Veneficium: Magic, Witchcraft and the Poison Path* (Three Hands Press)

Daniel Schulke, *Via Tortuosa: An Exposition on Crooked Path Sorcery*  
(Xoanon Publishing)

Robert J. Stewart, *The Underworld Initiation: A Journey Towards Psychic Transformation* (Mercury)

Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* (RBJT6)

Doreen Valiente, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (RBJT6)

Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Sussex Academic Press)

Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Gowdie: Magic, Witchcraft and Dark Shamanism in Seventeenth-Century Scotland* (Sussex Academic Press)

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## *Glossary*

**Airt** – An old British term for a compass point, direction, or wind. Also, a quarter of the heavens.

**Cauldron** – The prime symbol of the witch stereotype. Used as a vessel for transmuting potions or poisons, as in venifica. Also a cosmological metaphor.

**Chthonic** – Beneath, under or within the earth, as underworld.

**Circle** – The preliminary rite of Wiccan and ceremonial arts, principally as a protective barrier and a vessel of containment.

**Compass** – The basic construct of the Traditional Witch cosmology, a map and language of the otherworld and the means of traversing the realms. Based upon directions, or airts.

**Dame Fate** – The principal force underlying reality in most witchcraft traditions. Usually underwriting the cosmological philosophy that is at the heart of witchery.

**Devil** – The folkloric representation of the Witch Father, the transgressive leader of witchery. Often referred to in historical record

**as the Man in Black. Also used to denote the magister or leader of a lineage of the witch cult.**

**Knot – A term derived originally from Cochrane-influenced witchcraft, indicating the node or sabbat upon the Wheel of Life/Year. See the Nine Witch Knots Charm.**

**Logos – Denoting logic and reasoning, the purely intellectual pursuits of the mind, including hard facts and figures. The -ologies.**

**Mythos – The mystery of unutterable truths, experienced and expressed through the experiential relationships between ritual, poetry, symbolism, and allegory.**

**Stang – A rod or staff identified with Traditional Witchcraft. Witches are often depicted riding a pole or “stang,” indicating the nature of the tool as analogous to the compass in vehicular aspect. An emblem of the compass as cosmological model. May also represent the Devil or Witch Father in certain traditions.**

**Telluric – Literally, of the earth. Relating to the power of the planet entire rather than chthonic, which is suggestive of the underworld specifically. Tellus was the original name of the earth goddess in the time of the Roman Republic, interchangeable with Terra. Coupled with Ceres, as mother of earthly fertility.**

**Watcher – From the Greek Grigori, one of the Persian Royal Stars, the fallen angels, guardians of the compass directions, winds, or airts.**

**Witch Father – An alternate name for the Devil in Traditional Witchcraft in his aspect as initiator and governor of sorcerous magics. Also used to denote the leader or magister of a tradition within the witch cult.**

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