

## Preface to 2021 Edition

It is now nearly nine years since original publication of the 'Triskele' edition of the Book of Bealtaine, and it seems that some additional clarification may be helpful.

Our group 'Gaia' was founded in Brisbane in 2005, originally meeting monthly at a café in West End. At the outset we were simply friends at a 'meet-up' based on our common imaginative interest in both Wicca and the Occult, whilst reflecting our commitment to orthodox human values. We wanted to enlist in two activities, namely occult psycho-drama as cathartic theatre, and secondly in experiments in the technology of idealism this suggested, writing up satisfying rituals based on western occult traditions. A group manifesto in the form of a 'Covenant' soon followed.

So much for mutual interests, activities and values; we also shared motives. Although from strongly Christian backgrounds, all of us were by imaginative inclination decidedly Neo-Pagan and Green, so by way of compromise we attuned our group to raising consciousness toward the Divine and engaging in occult theatre in those imaginative terms. Feeling suffocated by the strictures of conventional ritual, we instead emphasised the feminine aspect of Divinity, the 'Divine Anima', to be accessed by meditative path-working techniques of Qabalah [the Tradition], towards the Land of Sarras, also known as the 'Supernal Triangle' of the Tree of Life. In this regard we wanted to satisfy our shared taste for ritual drama and revival of the Eleusinian Greek mysteries. We wanted to show that pagan witchcraft could not only be compatible with common human values, but might also fulfil them.

In due course, we aimed to conduct rituals in Circle, using a technology of idealism built on both high and low occult traditions. We adopted transcendental techniques to access the consciousness of Divinity [Gaia] for both personal development and ecological purposes. And at the same time we designed theatrical rituals in Circle for Esbats of the Moon and seasonal Sabbats to give expression to our collective pagan interest. We affirmed support for natural, political and social ecology, a green planet, and a practicum to advance these ends through our Circle.

The external structure took form in the 'Covenant of Gaia', reproduced in the Memorandum of this Manual. Our internal structures were based on our 'Articles of Covenant', which we distilled from various sources involved in Craft Wicca and Rosicrucian Qabalah. Increasingly, we borrowed from Alexandrian Wicca and the Grail tradition of the Golden Dawn. We adopted a Celtic calendar of solar and lunar feasts, and celebrated the Nine Important Days.

As convenor of the Group, I early on chose to incorporate god-forms in a pantheon ready provided through the imaginative works of J.R.R. Tolkien. As these were conceived as angelic beings and devas, there could be no conflict with any holding the strictest monotheistic views. For catholic Trinitarians, we also incorporated a 'Goddess theology' in which the 'Divine Anima' was spelt out as the 'Immanent Spirit of Divinity', the 'Queen of Heaven' [and of Nature].

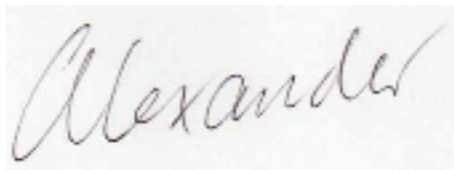
Although it was not a pre-requisite to hold any religious views, and we actively welcomed sceptics, the elders of our [neo-] Pagan group also happened to accept their own remarkably Judaeo-Christian backgrounds. We also respected and sought to incorporate other deeply held religious convictions, including from Vedic, Buddhist, Islamic, Shamanic and Animist perspectives. A defensive understanding of the hostile and surreal perspective of Goetia was also necessary, although we ruled out any primarily goetic practices, except in very rare specified circumstances.

When this Manual was first conceived, it encountered a difficult stand-off between the three imaginative systems of Hermeticism, Craft Wicca and orthodox Catholic Christian beliefs. Gradually I came to realise that the three systems could not only align but also crystallise and confirm each other in idealist terms through the Grail tradition. Regrettably our Covenant fell apart before this was readily apparent. In its defence, not only are there 'many mansions' in the House of the Divine, but also in strong mystical traditions green shoots especially appear where all seems most barren and unlikely. This makes them all the more hardy and powerful.

The Gaian Covenant is a restatement in ecological and feminist terms of the Mystery tradition that venerates the Holy Anima that is the font of Life and Being. I commend this Manual, its ritual theatre and psycho-drama, to this end; and along the way, the role of Magick and Trees in the salvation of our beautiful Earth.

I trust that the reader may equally find it amusing, intellectually engaging, of more than passing interest for the literary and historical sources, and that it may also stand alone as an artistic artefact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alexander". The ink is dark and the background is a light, slightly textured grey.

Alexander Campbell-Webb  
22nd July 2021