

Chapter 1 : Cosmogony of the Ancient Celts

Languages change over time, and people move, and how much modern-day Celtic peoples, language and cultures are related to the ancient Celts is an open question.

The Celts in Ancient History Earliest References IN the chronicles of the classical nations for about five hundred years previous to the Christian era there are frequent references to a people associated with these nations, sometimes in peace, sometimes in war, and evidently occupying a position of great strength and influence in the Terra Incognita of Mid-Europe. This people is called by the Greeks the Hyperboreans or Celts, the latter term being first found in the geographer Hecataeus, about B. Herodotus, about half a century later, speaks of the Celts as dwelling "beyond the pillars of Hercules " - i. Aristotle knew that they dwelt "beyond Spain," that they had captured Rome, and that they set great store by warlike power. References other than geographical are occasionally met with even in early writers. Hellanicus of Lesbos, an historian of the fifth century B. Ephorus, about B. Plato, however, in the "Laws," classes the Celts among the races who are drunken and combative, and much barbarity is attributed to them on the occasion of their irruption into Greece and the [17] sacking of Delphi in the year B. Their attack on Rome and the sacking of that city by them about a century earlier is one of the landmarks of ancient history. The history of this people during the time when they were the dominant power in Mid-Europe has to be divined or reconstructed from scattered references, and from accounts of episodes in their dealings with Greece and Rome, very much as the figure of a primeval monster is reconstructed by the zoologist from a few fossilised bones. Yet from these, and from the accounts of classical writers, much can be deduced with certainty, and much more can be conjectured with a very fair measure of probability. The great Celtic scholar whose loss we have recently had to deplore, M. Ii] and it is this outline of which the main features are reproduced here. The True Celtic Race To begin with, we must dismiss the idea that Celtica was ever inhabited by a single pure and homogeneous race. The true Celts, if we accept on this point the carefully studied and elaborately argued conclusion of [18] Dr. They describe the Celts in almost exactly the same terms as those which they apply to the Germanic races. Rice Holmes is of opinion that the real difference, physically, lay in the fact that the fairness of the Germans was blond, and that of the Celts red. In an interesting passage of the work already quoted p. Put a Perthshire Highlander side by side with a Sussex farmer. Both will be fair ; but the red hair and heard of the Scot will be in marked contrast with the fair hair of the Englishman, and their features will differ still more markedly. I remember seeing two gamekeepers in a railway carriage running from Inverness to Lairey. They were tall, athletic, fair men, evidently belonging to the Scandinavian type, which, as Dr. Beddoc says, is so common in the extreme north of Scotland but both in colouring and in general aspect they were utterly different from the tall, fair Highlanders whom I had Seen in Perth-shire. There was not a trace of red in their hair, their long beards being absolutely yellow. The prevalence of red among the Celtic. They did not exterminate the original prehistoric inhabitants of these regions - Palaeolithic and Neolithic races, dolmen-builders and workers in bronze - but they imposed on them their language, their arts, and their traditions, taking, no doubt, a good deal from them in return, especially, as we shall see, in the important matter of religion. Among these races the true Celts formed an aristocratic and ruling caste. In that capacity they stood, alike in Gaul, in Spain, in Britain, and in Ireland, in the forefront of armed opposition to foreign invasion. They bore the worst brunt of war, of confiscations, and of banishment They never lacked valour, but they were not strong enough or united enough to prevail, and they perished in far greater proportion than the earlier populations whom they had themselves subjugated. But they disappeared also by mingling their blood with these inhabitants, whom they impregnated with many of their own noble and virile qualities. Hence it comes that the characteristics of the peoples called Celtic in the present day, and who carry on the Celtic tradition and language, are in some respects so different from those of the Celts of classical history and the Celts who produced the literature and art of ancient Ireland, and in others so strikingly similar. They are not very dark, but they are darker than the rest of the kingdom. In France, however, the Bretons are not a dark race relatively to the reit of the population. They are composed partly of the ancient Gallic peoples and partly of settlers from Wales who were driven out by the Saxon

invasion] But the [20] true Celts were certainly fair. Even the Irish Celts of the twelfth century are described by Giraldus Cambrensis as a fair race. Golden Age of the Celts But we are anticipating, and must return to the period of the origins of Celtic history. As astronomers have discerned the existence of an unknown planet by the perturbations which it has caused in the courses of those already under direct observation, so we can discern in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ the presence of a great power and of mighty movements going on behind a veil which will never be lifted now. During this period the Celts waged three great and successful wars, which had no little influence on the course of South European history. A century later we find them engaged in the conquest of Northern Italy from the Etruscans. They left a greater memorial in the chief of Latin poets, whose name, Vergil, appears to bear evidence of his Celtic ancestry. The name of the village where Vergil was born, Andes now Pietola, is Celtic. His love of nature, his mysticism, and his strong feeling for a certain decorative quality in language and rhythm are markedly Celtic qualities. Alliances with the Greeks All these wars were undertaken in alliance with the Greeks, with whom the Celts were at this period on the friendliest terms. By the war with the Carthaginians the monopoly held by that people of the trade in tin with Britain and in silver with the miners of Spain was broken down, and the overland route across France to Britain, for the sake of which the Phoenicians had in B. Greeks and Celts were at this period allied against Phoenicians and Persians. The Carthaginian army in that expedition was made up of mercenaries from half a dozen different nations, but not a Celt is found in the Carthaginian ranks, and Celtic hostility must have counted for much in preventing the Carthaginians from lending help to the Persians for the overthrow of their common enemy. These facts show that Celtica played no small part in preserving the Greek type of civilisation from being overwhelmed by the despotisms of the East, and thus in keeping alive in Europe the priceless seed of freedom and humane culture. Alexander the Great When the counter-movement of Hellas against the East began under Alexander the Great we find the Celts again appearing as a factor of importance. His son Perdiccas II. When Philip, a younger brother of Perdiccas, came to the obscure and tottering throne which he and his successors were to make the seat of a great empire he was powerfully aided in making head against the Illyrians by the conquests of the Celts in the valleys of the Danube and the Po. The alliance was continued, and rendered, perhaps, more formal in the days of Alexander. When about to undertake his conquest of Asia B. Alexander first made a compact with the Celts "who dwelt by the Ionian Gulf" in order to secure his Greek dominions from attack during his absence. The episode is related by Ptolemy Soter in his history of the wars of Alexander. His work has not survived, but is quoted by Arrian and other historians. As the Celtic envoys, who are described as men of haughty bearing and great stature, their mission concluded were drinking with the king, he asked them, it is said, what was the thing they, the Celts, most feared. The reference to the falling of the sky seems to give a glimpse of some primitive belief or myth of which it is no longer possible to discover the meaning. If we observe not this engagement," they said, "may the sky fall on us and crush us, may the earth gape and swallow us up, may the sea burst out and overwhelm us. See de Jubainville, " Premiers Habitants," ii. Unless the sky shall fall with its showers of stars on the ground where we are camped, or unless the earth shall be rent by an earthquake or unless the waves of the blue sea come over the forests of the living world, we shall not give ground. Douglas Hyde in his "Literary History of Ireland " p. About the year B. Under a king named by Livy Ambicatus, who was probably the head of a dominant tribe in a military confederacy, like the German Emperor in the present day, the Celts seem to have been welded into a considerable degree of political unity, and to have followed a consistent policy. Attracted by the rich land of Northern Italy, they poured down through the passes of the Alps, and after hard fighting with the Etruscan inhabitants they maintained their ground there. At this time the Romans were pressing on the Etruscans from below, and Roman and Celt were acting in definite concert and alliance. But the Romans, despising perhaps the Northern barbarian warriors, had the rashness to play them false at the siege of Clusium, B. The Celts recognised Romans who had come to them in the sacred character of ambassadors fighting in the ranks of the enemy. The events which followed are, as they have come down to us, much mingled with legend, but there are certain touches of dramatic vividness in which the true character of the Celts appears distinctly recognisable. They applied, we are told, to Rome for satisfaction for the treachery of the envoys, who were three sons of Fabius Ambustus, the chief pontiff. The Romans refused to listen to the claim, and elected the

Fabii military tribunes for the [25] ensuing year. Then the Celts abandoned the siege of Clusium and marched straight on Rome. The army showed perfect discipline. There was no indiscriminate plundering and devastation, no city or fortress was assailed. At last they reached the river Allia, a few miles from Rome, where the whole available force of the city was ranged to meet them. The battle took place on July 18, , that ill-omened dies Alliensis which long perpetuated in the Roman calendar the memory of the deepest shame the republic had ever known. The Celts turned the flank of the Roman army, and annihilated it in one tremendous charge. Three days later they were in Rome, and for nearly a year they remained masters of the city, or of its ruins, till a great fine had been exacted and full vengeance taken for the perfidy at Clusium. For nearly a century after the treaty thus concluded there was peace between the Celts and the Romans, and the breaking of that peace when certain Celtic tribes allied themselves with their old enemy, the Etruscans, in the third Samnite war was coincident with the breaking up of the Celtic Empire. See "Premiers Habitant;" ii. First of all, what are the evidences for the wide-spread diffusion of Celtic power in Mid-Europe during this period? Secondly, where were the Germanic peoples, and what was their position in regard to the Celts? The study of European place-names forms the basis of the argument. Take the Celtic name Noviomagus, composed of two Celtic words, the adjective meaning new, and magos Irish magh a field or plain. It occurred very frequently in France - e. It is also found in Switzerland - e. In Great Britain the Celtic term was often changed by simple translation into castra; thus Camulo-dunum became Colchester, Bran-dunum Brancaster. In Spain and Portugal eight names terminating in dunum are mentioned by classical writers. Segodunum, now Rodez, in France, turns up also in Bavaria Wurzburg , and in England Sege-dunum, now Wallsend, in Northumberland , and the first term, sego, is traceable in Segorbe Segobriga , in Spain. Brigia is a Celtic word, the origin of the German burg, and equivalent in meaning to dunum. The examples given are by no means exhaustive, but they serve to indicate the wide diffusion of the Celts in Europe and their identity of language over their vast territory. In the year a great pre-Roman necropolis was discovered at Hallstatt, near Salzburg, in Austria. It contains relics believed by Dr. Arthur Evans to date from about to B. These relics betoken in some cases a high standard of civilisation and considerable commerce. Amber from the Baltic is there, Phoenician glass, and gold-leaf of Oriental workmanship. Iron swords are found whose hilts and sheaths are richly decorated with gold, ivory, and amber. These antiquities represent, according to Dr. Evans, the culminating period of Gaulish civilisation, and date from round about the third century B. The type of art here found must be judged in the light of an observation recently made by Mr.

Chapter 2 : Danu - Top 10 Earth Goddesses - TIME

Celtic mythology does not propose a single version or description of the creation as a whole, as other religions and mythologies do, but a few Celtic myths mention that heaven and earth was created by giants, considered by this peoples group to be the ancient original gods.

No-one called the people living in Britain during the Iron Age, Celts until the eighteenth century. To the Celts symbols played a vital role and incredible, meaningful power in their lives. Symbols reflected Celtic beliefs and traditions. Stories behind their symbols have been carried on from generation to generation with the help of bards and storytellers, allowing Celtic heritage to live on. Signs of are often part of Celtic jewelry and these symbols and they always reflect the nature of important subjects like love, wisdom, war, loyalty, energy and much more. Many of the everyday things we often take for granted can hold hidden secrets, and by having the key to this knowledge we gain an insight into the minds and concerns of our ancestors who constructed these symbols. She was born in Dundalk in A. D and is accredited with first creating the unique cross that bears her name, which is normally made from rushes but occasionally from straw. According to ancient Irish traditions, the spiral of the Brigid cross invokes the North Star and the pattern that the Big Dipper makes in the sky over the course off a year. As the night sky turns around the North Star, the Big Dipper turns through the seasonal year like the hand of a clock. According to the legend, a young man, named Richard was fishing at sea with other men from his family when they were captured by pirates and brought to Africa as slaves. Years passed, many of the Irish fishermen died and Richard was miserable because all he wanted was to get back to his beloved who was on Ireland. To keep his spirits up and to keep hope in his heart, each day Richard stole a tiny speck of gold from his slave masters in the goldsmith shop where he tended the fires. Years passed and, with his tiny pieces of gold, he was finally able to fashion a ring. It was his hope that, despite what seemed nearly impossible, he would return to his village and present the ring to his true love. It remains unknown how Richard escaped or earned his release from slavery, but one day he was able to get back to Ireland. Richard was overcome with joy when he learned that his beloved had remained true to him in his long absence, waiting faithfully for him to return. It was on that day that Richard gave his beloved the ring he created that is now known worldwide as the Claddagh Ring. The Claddagh design appears not only in rings, but in other types of jewelry as well. The heart in the cladadgh symbolizes the love Richard longed to share with his true love. The crown symbolizes his undying loyalty and the hands symbolize friendship, which is, after all, the very foundation of love, with loyalty holding the two hands together. Patrick, the Patron Saint of Ireland made the shamrock famous and today you can find the symbol on t-shirts, postcards, stamps and many other different things. It is a national flower of Ireland that has had significance in the country since the days of the Druids. Legend tells that St. The Celts believed that everything important in the world came in threes; the three dominions of earth, sky and sea, the three ages of man, and phases of the moon. A plant with three leaves would have been held in high regard. Symbol Of Immortality Of The Soul The harp was a very popular musical instrument in ancient Ireland and is still greatly appreciate in the country. It is believed the harp was introduced to pre-Christian Europe by the Phoenicians who brought it over from Egypt as one of their international trading goods. The oldest surviving Celtic harps date back to the 15th century but the music of the harp has been an important emblem to Ireland since the 10th century. It was played by the musicians of ancient chieftains in Ireland. In the 16th century the music of the harp was seen as such a threat that The British Crown attempted to crush the Irish Spirit by ordering all harps to be burnt and all harpists executed. It was almost years before the music of the harp was freely enjoyed in Ireland once again. The harp is said to reflect the immortality of the soul. The harp symbol can be found everywhere in Ireland, from coins, uniforms and the state seal to the Guinness pint glass. The Celts believed that trees were the ancestors of man and had a connection to the other world. The most sacred of trees was the oak. Crann Bethadh, the Celtic Tree of Life often depicted showing the branches reaching skyward and the roots spreading out into the earth below symbolizing the Druid belief in the link between heaven and earth. The Green Man is a symbol of rebirth. In the case of Celts, this is the physical, mental and spiritual. It also symbolizes the eternal life, the flow of

nature, and spiritual growth. The Celts believed that everything happen in threes. The symbol can be found kerbstones of Newgrange which date back to Neolithic times around BC. They also appear on coins and pottery from Ancient Greece. The triskele is the symbol of Sicily, which in ancient times, used to be a Greek colony.

Chapter 3 : Celtic Myths on creation | Ancient Origins

The ancient Celts were various population groups living in several parts of Europe north of the Mediterranean region from the Late Bronze Age onwards. Given the name Celt by ancient writers, these tribes often migrated and so eventually occupied territories from Portugal to Turkey.

What do you know about Halloween? Do you celebrate it in your country? Here is a little history about it. Vocabulary to evolve v - to change little by little spirit n - ghost, some people believe the spirit and body separate when a person dies holy adj - sacred, very good, related to religion. Hallow comes from the word holy. They believed that the night before the New Year October 31 was a time when the living and the dead came together. This was a special holy day to honor the saints and other people who died for their religion. The night before All Hallows was called Hallows Eve. Later the name was changed to Halloween. Like the Celts, the Europeans of that time also believed that the spirits of the dead would visit the earth on Halloween. They worried that evil spirits would cause problems or hurt them. So on that night people wore costumes that looked like ghosts or other evil creatures. They thought if they dressed like that, the spirits would think they were also dead and not harm them. The tradition of Halloween was carried to America by the immigrating Europeans. Some of the traditions changed a little, though. For example, on Halloween in Europe some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common. So people began putting candles inside them and using them as lanterns. These days Halloween is not usually considered a religious holiday. It is primarily a fun day for children. Children dress up in costumes like people did a thousand years ago. But instead of worrying about evil spirits, they go from house to house. They knock on doors and say "trick or treat. Check Your Understanding True or False. Check your answers below. The Celts thought the spirits of dead people returned to the earth on October 31st. The Celts created All Hallows. All Hallows is on October 31st. The word Halloween comes from the word Hallows eve. A thousand years ago Europeans wore costumes to get candy. Americans still carve turnips to use as lanterns. Today Halloween is especially for children. Children get candy by saying "trick or treat.

Chapter 4 : Celts in Ireland

The Celts had settled in large part of the ancient world that it could be considered to be a Celtic Empire. It was an empire in a sense that that they shared a similar languages and cultures, including arts and crafts.

See Article History Celtic religion, religious beliefs and practices of the ancient Celts. The Celts, an ancient Indo-European people, reached the apogee of their influence and territorial expansion during the 4th century bc, extending across the length of Europe from Britain to Asia Minor. In Britain and Ireland this decline moved more slowly, but traditional culture was gradually eroded through the pressures of political subjugation; today the Celtic languages are spoken only on the western periphery of Europe, in restricted areas of Ireland, Scotland, Wales , and Brittany in this last instance largely as a result of immigration from Britain from the 4th to the 7th century ad. It is not surprising, therefore, that the unsettled and uneven history of the Celts has affected the documentation of their culture and religion. Sources Two main types of sources provide information on Celtic religion: Both pose problems of interpretation. Most of the monuments, and their accompanying inscriptions, belong to the Roman period and reflect a considerable degree of syncretism between Celtic and Roman gods; even where figures and motifs appear to derive from pre-Roman tradition, they are difficult to interpret in the absence of a preserved literature on mythology. Only after the lapse of many centuriesâ€”beginning in the 7th century in Ireland, even later in Walesâ€”was the mythological tradition consigned to writing, but by then Ireland and Wales had been Christianized and the scribes and redactors were monastic scholars. Given these circumstances it is remarkable that there are so many points of agreement between the insular literatures and the continental evidence. This is particularly notable in the case of the Classical commentators from Poseidonius c. Mercury was the most honoured of all the gods and many images of him were to be found. Mercury was regarded as the inventor of all the arts, the patron of travelers and of merchants, and the most powerful god in matters of commerce and gain. Of these gods they held almost the same opinions as other peoples did: Apollo drives away diseases, Minerva promotes handicrafts, Jupiter rules the heavens, and Mars controls wars. In characteristic Roman fashion, however, Caesar does not refer to these figures by their native names but by the names of the Roman gods with which he equated them, a procedure that greatly complicates the task of identifying his Gaulish deities with their counterparts in the insular literatures. He also presents a neat schematic equation of god and function that is quite foreign to the vernacular literary testimony. Yet, given its limitations, his brief catalog is a valuable and essentially accurate witness. In comparing his account with the vernacular literatures, or even with the continental iconography, it is well to recall their disparate contexts and motivations. On the other hand, the lack of structure is sometimes more apparent than real. It has, for instance, been noted that of the several hundred names containing a Celtic element attested in Gaul the majority occur only once, which has led some scholars to conclude that the Celtic gods and their cults were local and tribal rather than national. The seeming multiplicity of deity names may, however, be explained otherwiseâ€”for example, many are simply epithets applied to major deities by widely extended cults. The notion of the Celtic pantheon as merely a proliferation of local gods is contradicted by the several well-attested deities whose cults were observed virtually throughout the areas of Celtic settlement. The Irish and Welsh cognates of Lugus are Lugh and Lleu, respectively, and the traditions concerning these figures mesh neatly with those of the Gaulish god. An episode in the Middle Welsh collection of tales called the Mabinogion , or Mabinogi , seems to echo the connection with shoemaking, for it represents Lleu as working briefly as a skilled exponent of the craft. The probable explanation of this apparent confusion, which is paralleled elsewhere, is that the Celtic gods are not rigidly compartmentalized in terms of function. The solar connotations of Belenus from Celtic: His name survives in Arthurian romance under the forms Mabon, Mabuz, and Mabonagrain. He was the son of Dagda or Daghdha , chief god of the Irish, and of Boann , the personified sacred river of Irish tradition. In the literature the Divine Son tends to figure in the role of trickster and lover. At Bath she was identified with the goddess Sulis, whose cult there centred on the thermal springs. Through the plural form Suleviae, found at Bath and elsewhere, she is also related to the numerous and important mother goddessesâ€”who often occur in duplicate or, more commonly, triadic form. Her nearest

equivalent in insular tradition is the Irish goddess Brighid, daughter of the chief god, Dagda. Like Minerva she was concerned with healing and craftsmanship, but she was also the patron of poetry and traditional learning. The insular literatures show that certain deities were associated with particular crafts. Caesar makes no mention of a Gaulish Vulcan, though insular sources reveal that there was one and that he enjoyed high status. The weapons that Goibhniu forged with his fellow craft gods, the wright Luchta and the metalworker Creidhne, were unerringly accurate and lethal. Medieval Welsh also mentions Amaethon, evidently a god of agriculture, of whom little is known. Essentially these reflect the coupling of the protecting god of tribe or nation with the mother-goddess who ensured the fertility of the land. It is in fact impossible to distinguish clearly between the individual goddesses and these mother-goddesses, *matres* or *matronae*, who figure so frequently in Celtic iconography, often, as in Irish tradition, in triadic form. Both types of goddesses are concerned with fertility and with the seasonal cycle of nature, and, on the evidence of insular tradition, both drew much of their power from the old concept of a great goddess who, like the Indian Aditi, was mother of all the gods. Welsh and Irish tradition also bring out the multifaceted character of the goddess, who in her various epiphanies or avatars assumes quite different and sometimes wholly contrasting forms and personalities. She may be the embodiment of sovereignty, youthful and beautiful in union with her rightful king, or aged and hideously ugly when lacking a fitting mate. Welsh and Irish tradition preserve many variations on a basic triadic relationship of divine mother, father, and son. Zoomorphic deities The rich abundance of animal imagery in Celto-Roman iconography, representing the deities in combinations of animal and human forms, finds frequent echoes in the insular literary tradition. Other animals that figure particularly prominently in association with the pantheon in Celto-Roman art as well as in insular literature are boars, dogs, bears, and horses. The horse, an instrument of Indo-European expansion, has always had a special place in the affections of the Celtic peoples. Gundestrup Caldron, a Celtic ritual vessel, 1st century bc. Inside on the left is Cernunnos, lord of the animals. They believed in a life after death, for they buried food, weapons, and ornaments with the dead. The druids, the early Celtic priesthood, taught the doctrine of transmigration of souls and discussed the nature and power of the gods. The Irish believed in an otherworld, imagined sometimes as underground and sometimes as islands in the sea. It was similar to the Elysium of the Greeks and may have belonged to ancient Indo-European tradition. In Celtic eschatology, as noted in Irish vision or voyage tales, a beautiful girl approaches the hero and sings to him of this happy land. He follows her, and they sail away in a boat of glass and are seen no more; or else he returns after a short time to find that all his companions are dead, for he has really been away for hundreds of years. Sometimes the hero sets out on a quest, and a magic mist descends upon him. He finds himself before a palace and enters to find a warrior and a beautiful girl who make him welcome. These Irish tales, some of which date from the 8th century, are infused with the magic quality that is found years later in the Arthurian romances. Donn, god of the dead and ancestor of all the Irish, reigned over Tech Duinn, which was imagined as on or under Bull Island off the Beare Peninsula, and to him all men returned except the happy few. This threefold hierarchy had its reflex among the two main branches of Celts in Ireland and Wales but is best represented in early Irish tradition with its druids, *filidh* singular *fili*, and bards; the *filidh* evidently correspond to the Gaulish *vates*. Caesar stated that the druids avoided manual labour and paid no taxes, so that many were attracted by these privileges to join the order. They learned great numbers of verses by heart, and some studied for as long as 20 years; they thought it wrong to commit their learning to writing but used the Greek alphabet for other purposes. As far as is known, the Celts had no temples before the Gallo-Roman period; their ceremonies took place in forest sanctuaries. In the Gallo-Roman period temples were erected, and many of them have been discovered by archaeologists in Britain as well as in Gaul. Human sacrifice was practiced in Gaul: It was forbidden under Tiberius and Claudius. There is some evidence that human sacrifice was known in Ireland and was forbidden by St. Festivals Insular sources provide important information about Celtic religious festivals. In Ireland the year was divided into two periods of six months by the feasts of Beltine May 1 and Samhain Samain; November 1, and each of these periods was equally divided by the feasts of Imbolc February 1, and Lughnasadh August 1. Imbolc has been compared by the French scholar Joseph Vendryes to the Roman lustrations and apparently was a feast of purification for the farmers. Lughnasadh was the feast of the god Lugh. The impact of Christianity The conversion to Christianity

had inevitably a profound effect on this socio-religious system from the 5th century onward, though its character can only be extrapolated from documents of considerably later date. By the early 7th century the church had succeeded in relegating the druids to ignominious irrelevancy, while the filidh , masters of traditional learning, operated in easy harmony with their clerical counterparts, contriving at the same time to retain a considerable part of their pre-Christian tradition, social status , and privilege. But virtually all the vast corpus of early vernacular literature that has survived was written down in monastic scriptoria, and it is part of the task of modern scholarship to identify the relative roles of traditional continuity and ecclesiastical innovation as reflected in the written texts. Patrick banished those mantic rites of the filidh that involved offerings to demons, and it seems probable that the church took particular pains to stamp out animal sacrifice and other rituals grossly repugnant to Christian teaching. What survived of ancient ritual practice tended to be related to filidhecht, the traditional repertoire of the filidh, or to the central institution of sacral kingship. A good example is the pervasive and persistent concept of the hierogamy sacred marriage of the king with the goddess of sovereignty:

Chapter 5 : Samhain - Wikipedia

The subject of Celts in continental Europe is near and dear to my heart, and Graham Robb is a compelling writer. I found I could not get as engaged as the NY Times Book Review critic and others, however, because of the mixed type of story Robb sets out to tell.

Read preview A triskell motif on the end of a torque worn round neck. The triskell, found in the Isle of Mann coat of arms, is a sunwheel, suggesting ever-turning renewal. Pentre Ifan cromlech, West Wales. If archaeologists are correct, such sites were built not by the predecessors of the people we know as the Celts, but by their ancestors. The 13th month, Mid Samonios, was duplicated. Since months began with a full moon, no consistent dates can be given. Her reply suggests the magical importance of the Celtic festivals: No man may travel there who has not gone without sleep from Samhain to the lambing time at Imbolc, from Imbolc to the fires of Beltain, and from Beltain to the harvest time of Lughnasadh, and from then to Samhain. This cycle is perhaps the most exciting aspect of the Celtic approach to time, and certainly the one that we can most easily follow nowadays. In our time, most of us are out of touch with the seasons, and the one big Western festival has become more of a time for ringing tills than ringing the changes. We can bring a sense of rhythm and continuity to our lives by observing the Celtic festivals. Samhain The Celtic year began with Samhain. Celebrated around 31 October, it was a time of deliberate misrule and contrariness, rather like the Roman Saturnalia. It was also a time when the veil between this world and the Otherworld was thought to be so thin that the dead could return to warm themselves at the hearths of the living, and some of the living - especially poets - were able to enter the Otherworld through the doorways of the sidhe, such as that at the Hill of Tara in Ireland. It was a sacred time, whose peace was normally broken only by the ritualized battle of board games such as fidchell. Even the modern English celebration of Guy Fawkes Day has echoes of the ancient fire festival. Imbolc Coming at lambing time, around 31 January, Imbolc or Oimeic celebrated the beginning of the end of winter. New lambs were born, and a dish made from their docked tails was eaten. Women met to celebrate the return of the maiden aspect of the Goddess. This survived into Christian times as the Feast of Brigid: Beltain Beltain, celebrated around 1 May, was another fire festival; but whereas Samhain was associated with going to ground, and withdrawing, Beltain burst forth with an abundant fertility. Cattle were let out of winter quarters and driven between two fires in a ritual cleansing ceremony that may have had practical purposes too. It was a time for feasts and fairs, for the mating of animals, and for divorces - possible arising from trial marriages entered into at Lughnasadh. Like Samhain, it was a time for boardgames - as well as for travel between the worlds: De Jubainville, in his Irish Mythological Cycle, writes: It was on a Thursday, the first of May, and the 17th day of the moon, that the [invading] sons of Miled arrived in Ireland. Partholan [chief of the next race of invaders] also landed in Ireland on the first of May The first of May was sacred to Beltene, one of the names of the god of Death, the god who gives life to men and takes it away from them again. Thus it was on the feast day of this god that the sons of Miled began their conquest of Ireland. Lughnasadh Lughnasadh was a summer festival lasting for as long as two weeks either side of the day itself, which fell around 31 July. It was said to have been introduced to Ireland by the god Lugh, and so was sacred to this god. The Romans identified Lugh with Mercury. At any rate, both are gods associated with skills, and this festival was celebrated with competitions of skill, including horse-racing. In Ireland the festival was associated with Emain Macha, in Ulster, but was held in various locations, including the royal fort of Tara. Solar festivals We know less about Celtic celebrations of solar festivals. However, the solstices were probably celebrated. It is also significant that sun disks, solar chariot wheels and swastikas whose arms are intended to portray a blazing, spinning sun are important motifs in Celtic art. A view of Newgrange burial mound Meath, Ireland, where the winter solstice was celebrated. Point to see the entrance. Celtic astrology and tree calendars Astrology is an art, or science, that focuses on the passage of time, and which emphasizes the unique nature of a moment in time. Classical writers - including Strabo, Caesar, Diodorus Siculus, Cicero and Pliny - comment on Druidic knowledge of astronomy and astrology. There is also evidence that the Druids understood the tides and that they cut mistletoe and other plants at particular phases of the moon. Peter Berresford Ellis puts

forward a tentative case for a Celtic astrology, mentioning among other things the survival of astronomical terms such as dubaraith, meaning eclipse, into modern Irish. However, in the end there is no absolute proof, probably because of the Druidic aversion to keeping written records. Similarly, there is no proof that the Ogham-based Celtic tree calendar popularized by Robert Graves actually existed, whatever poetic truth it contains.

Attuning to time cycles There are several ways to apply the Celtic sense of time. First, we can attempt to become more aware of the truth of constant change. We should not cling to good times or despair during bad times. One way to develop an awareness of this is to keep a diary of our moods and experiences. Reading it back later will develop a sense of perspective. Keeping a diary can usefully be tied in with observing the phases of the moon - preferably in the night sky. This can enable you to plan accordingly, as well as developing your sense of natural rhythm. On the larger scale, we can observe the festivals and attune our lives to seasonal changes. We may find that Samhain is a good time to become more introspective and plant the seeds of new projects, allowing them to germinate over the winter months. On a more sombre note, this is a good time to remember the dead. Beltain, on the other hand, is a time to embark on projects requiring courage and energy. Beltain - a time for feasts and fairs, for the mating of animals, and for divorces A burial mound, or sidhe, at Knowth, Co. Such gateways to the Otherworld or Underworld were thought to be wide open at Samhain. Meditative figure on a Celtic bucket handle. The four swastika-like motifs suggest the four elements, seasons and directions, as well as turning sunwheels.

Danu is said to have literally suckled the gods. In Irish mythology, she is mother of the earth, the gods, fertility, wisdom, wind and of all the Celtic people.

A Brief History of Druidry The lineage of the Druid spiritual tradition can be traced across many thousands of years of time. We see the first evidence of spiritual practice in Europe 25,000 years ago - when candidates for initiation would crawl into caves, such as the Pinhole caves in Derbyshire - or the Chauvet or Lascaux caves in France, or Altamira in Spain, which are dramatically painted with figures of wild animals. After being initiated in the belly of Mother Earth, they were reborn into the light of day. Twenty thousand years later, in around BCE, we can see the same practice of seeking rebirth within the Earth: The best example of this is found at New Grange in Ireland, where a shaft is oriented to the Winter Solstice sunrise, so that the dawn rays can bathe the initiate in sunlight after his or her vigil through the night. Four and a half thousand years later, in the sixteenth century, the key text of Druid spirituality, transcribed from the oral tradition by Christian clerics, talks of the spiritual and magical training of a Druid, in which he is eaten by a Goddess, enters her belly, and is reborn as the greatest poet in the land. So from over twenty thousand years ago to the sixteenth century, we see a common theme - which we find again in the training of Druids and poets in Scotland up until the seventeenth century. There, to awaken their creative genius, they were told to lie in darkness for days, and after this period of sensory deprivation, they were released into the brightness of the world. This theme of seeking spiritual rebirth and creative expression through undergoing a simulated death-rebirth experience, runs like a golden thread of spiritual practice through the four major periods of history that relate to Celtic and Druid spirituality: The first is the prehistoric period: A megalith building culture develops, which raises great mounds like New Grange, and great circles of stone, like Stonehenge. This culture possesses considerable knowledge of astronomy, has engineering skills that we find hard to understand even today, and seems to use Pythagorean mathematics to build their monuments, two thousand years before Pythagoras is born. This period of pre- and then early Celticism gives way to the period of documented history, in which we can read about the Celts and Druids from the works of classical writers, such as Julius Caesar. We discover that the Celts had developed a highly sophisticated religious system, with three types of Druids: During this time there was much cross-fertilisation between Celtic culture and that of Greece and Rome. With the coming of Christianity, we enter the third period: This period lasted for a thousand years: During this millennium, Celtic and Druid spirituality was preserved by the Christian clerics who performed the valuable service of recording many of the stories and myths by which the oral teachings of the Druids were conveyed. People who think that Druidry was destroyed with the coming of Christianity fail to understand the resilience of spiritual teachings when they are encoded in myths and stories: St Patrick also recorded all of the old Druid laws in Ireland - providing us with invaluable information on the ethics and social structure of pre-Christian Celtic culture. The Church had taught that we were savages until the arrival of Christianity. But with the translation and printing of the classical texts on the Druids, Europeans discovered that their ancestors were far from being savages. At the same time, reports were coming back from America of Native American people who, like their ancestors, had been untouched by Christianity, and yet were worthy of admiration. This provoked a period known as the Druid Revival in which groups and societies were formed to study Druidry and Celticism. The founding father of the science of archaeology, William Stukeley, formed a Druid society in London and referred to the Princess of Wales as its Patroness. Cultural festivals, incorporating Druid ceremonies, and celebrating Celtic languages, grew up in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany. And this period of Revival has never finished. Instead, it has developed into a Renaissance, as more and more people find within Druidry a living spirituality that holds all of Nature sacred, and that offers a path of creativity and freedom, rooted deep in ancient tradition.

Chapter 7 : History of Halloween

The Celts believed that everything important in the world came in threes; the three dominions of earth, sky and sea, the three ages of man, and phases of the moon. A plant with three leaves would have been held in high regard.

The Gaulish calendar seems to have split the year into two-halves: Samonios may represent the beginning of the summer season and Giamonios the seventh month the beginning of the winter season. The lunations marking the middle of each half-year may also have been marked by festivals. It is attested in some of the earliest Old Irish literature, from the 10th century onward. It was one of four Gaelic seasonal festivals: Samhain and Bealtaine, at the witherward side of the year from each other, are thought to have been the most important. A Study in Magic and Religion that 1 May and 1 November are of little importance to European crop-growers, but of great importance to herdsman. It is at the beginning of summer that cattle are driven to the upland summer pastures and the beginning of winter that they are led back. Thus, Frazer suggests that halving the year at 1 May and 1 November dates from a time when the Celts were mainly a pastoral people, dependent on their herds. These gatherings are a popular setting for early Irish tales. Nevertheless, these tales may shed some light on what Samhain meant and how it was marked in ancient Ireland. Each year the fire-breather Aillen emerges from the Otherworld and burns down the palace of Tara after lulling everyone to sleep with his music. One Samhain, the young Fionn mac Cumhaill is able to stay awake and slays Aillen with a magical spear, for which he is made leader of the fianna. As his thumb had been inside the Otherworld, Fionn is bestowed with great wisdom. This may refer to gaining knowledge from the ancestors. The Fomorians seem to represent the harmful or destructive powers of nature; personifications of chaos, darkness, death, blight and drought. They say that King Tigernmas, and three-fourths of his people, died while worshipping Crom Cruach there one Samhain. He is warned of his impending doom by three undead horsemen who are messengers of Donn, god of the dead. It says that each year someone would be killed "to mark the occasion", by persons unknown. However, Nera succeeds, and the dead man then asks for a drink. Nera carries him on his back and they stop at three houses. They enter the third, where the dead man drinks and spits it on the householders, killing them. He follows the host through a portal into the Otherworld. Nera learns that what he saw was only a vision of what will happen the next Samhain unless something is done. He is able to return to the hall and warns the king. Mongfind offers Crimthann a poisoned drink at a feast, but he asks her to drink from it first. Having no other choice but to drink the poison, she dies on Samhain eve. As cattle-raiding typically was a summer activity, the invasion during this off-season surprised the Ulstermen. Several sites in Ireland are especially linked to Samhain. Each Samhain a host of otherworldly beings was said to emerge from Oweynagat "cave of the cats", at Rathcroghan in County Roscommon. In The Stations of the Sun: The only historic reference to pagan religious rites is in the work of Geoffrey Keating died, but his source is unknown. Hutton says it may be that no religious rites are mentioned because, centuries after Christianization, the writers had no record of them. He says that the gatherings of royalty and warriors on Samhain may simply have been an ideal setting for such tales, in the same way that many Arthurian tales are set at courtly gatherings at Christmas or Pentecost. Samhain itself, and the three days before and after. It involved great gatherings at which they held meetings, feasted, drank alcohol, and held contests. He claims that the feis of Tara was held for a week every third Samhain, when the nobles and ollams of Ireland met to lay down and renew the laws, and to feast. He adds that all other fires were doused and then re-lit from this bonfire. Cattle were brought down to the winter pastures after six months in the higher summer pastures. This custom is still observed by many who farm and raise livestock [1] [44] because it is when meat will keep since the freeze has come and also since summer grass is gone and free foraging is no longer possible. It is thought that some of the rituals associated with the slaughter have been transferred to other winter holidays. It was offered to Saint Martin, who may have taken the place of a god or gods, [45] and it was then eaten as part of a feast. This custom was common in parts of Ireland until the 19th century, [46] and was found in some other parts of Europe. At New Year in the Hebrides, a man dressed in a cowhide would circle the township sunwise. A bit of the hide would be burnt and everyone would breathe in the smoke. Marian McNeill says that a force-fire or need-fire was the

traditional way of lighting them, but notes that this method gradually died out. When the fire was lit, "one after another of the youths laid himself down on the ground as near to the fire as possible so as not to be burned, and in such a position as to let the smoke roll over him. The others ran through the smoke and jumped over him". When the bonfire burnt down, they scattered the ashes, vying with each other who should scatter them most. The bones of slaughtered cattle were said to have been cast upon bonfires. In the pre-Christian Gaelic world, cattle were the main form of wealth and were the center of agricultural and pastoral life. People also took flames from the bonfire back to their homes. In parts of Scotland, torches of burning fir or turf were carried sunwise around homes and fields to protect them. Each family then solemnly re-lit its hearth from the communal bonfire, thus bonding the community together. In 18th century Ochtertyre, a ring of stones "one for each person" was laid round the fire, perhaps on a layer of ashes. Everyone then ran round it with a torch, "exulting". In the morning, the stones were examined and if any was mislaid it was said that the person it represented would not live out the year. A similar custom was observed in north Wales [50] and in Brittany. In Celtic mythology, apples were strongly associated with the Otherworld and immortality, while hazelnuts were associated with divine wisdom. Another involved hanging a small wooden rod from the ceiling at head height, with a lit candle on one end and an apple hanging from the other. The rod was spun round and everyone took turns to try to catch the apple with their teeth. If the nuts jumped away from the heat, it was a bad sign, but if the nuts roasted quietly it foretold a good match. This was said to result in a dream in which their future spouse offers them a drink to quench their thirst. Children would also chase crows and divine some of these things from the number of birds or the direction they flew. On 31 October, the locals would go down to the shore. They stayed near to home or, if forced to walk in the darkness, turned their clothing inside-out or carried iron or salt to keep them at bay. Places were set at the dinner table and by the fire to welcome them. Peddle suggests the guisers "personify the old spirits of the winter, who demanded reward in exchange for good fortune". At each they recited verses, some of which "savoured strongly of paganism", and the farmer was expected to donate food. In Wales the white horse is often seen as an omen of death. However, in the Celtic-speaking regions they were "particularly appropriate to a night upon which supernatural beings were said to be abroad and could be imitated or warded off by human wanderers". Playing pranks at Samhain is recorded in the Scottish Highlands as far back as and was also common in Ireland, which led to Samhain being nicknamed "Mischief Night" in some parts. The "traditional illumination for guisers or pranksters abroad on the night in some places was provided by turnips or mangel wurzels, hollowed out to act as lanterns and often carved with grotesque faces". By those who made them, the lanterns were variously said to represent the spirits or supernatural beings, [82] or were used to ward off evil spirits. The Tochmarc Emire, written in the Middle Ages, reckoned the year around the four festivals at the beginning of the seasons, and put Samhain at the beginning of those. Frazer also put forth that Samhain had been the pagan Celtic festival of the dead and that it had been Christianized as All Saints and All Souls. The calendar of the Celtic League, for example, begins and ends at Samhain. Traditionally, children carve turnips rather than pumpkins and carry them around the neighborhood singing traditional songs relating to hop-tu-naa. James Frazer suggests that 1 November was chosen because it was the date of the Celtic festival of the dead Samhain "the Celts had influenced their English neighbours, and English missionaries had influenced the Germans. He suggests that the 1 November date was a Germanic rather than a Celtic idea. This created the three-day observance known as Allhallowtide: Wheel of the Year Samhain and Samhain-based festivals are held by some Neopagans. As there are many kinds of Neopaganism, their Samhain celebrations can be very different despite the shared name. Some try to emulate the historic festival as much as possible. Other Neopagans base their celebrations on sundry unrelated sources, Gaelic culture being only one of the sources. Neopagans usually celebrate Samhain on 31 October " 1 November in the Northern Hemisphere and 30 April " 1 May in the Southern Hemisphere, beginning and ending at sundown. In the Northern Hemisphere, this midpoint is when the ecliptic longitude of the Sun reaches degrees. They base their celebrations and rituals on traditional lore as well as research into the beliefs of the polytheistic Celts. Though CRs make offerings at all times of the year, Samhain is a time when more elaborate offerings are made to specific ancestors. Often there will be a meal, where a place for the dead is set at the table and they are invited to join. Traditional tales may be told and traditional songs, poems and dances

performed. A western-facing door or window may be opened and a candle left burning on the windowsill to guide the dead home. Divination for the coming year is often done, whether in all solemnity or as games for the children. The more mystically inclined may also see this as a time for deeply communing with their deities, especially those seen as being particularly linked with this festival. It is deemed by most Wiccans to be the most important of the four "greater Sabbats". Samhain is seen by some Wiccans as a time to celebrate the lives of those who have died, and it often involves paying respect to ancestors, family members, elders of the faith, friends, pets and other loved ones who have died. In some rituals the spirits of the dead are invited to attend the festivities. It is seen as a festival of darkness, which is balanced at the opposite point of the wheel by the spring festival of Beltane , which Wiccans celebrate as a festival of light and fertility.

Chapter 8 : Celtic Mythology and Celtic Religion

The Celts - Origin and Background The object of these notes, as the title implies, is to express the writer's ideas and opinions. One culture which unwittingly has caused much confusion in people's minds is that of the Celts.

In recent centuries the problem seems to have begun with the antiquarian William Stukeley - who associated such ancient monuments as Stonehenge and Avebury with the Celtic Druids, unaware of course that such monuments predated the Celtic Druids by a couple of millennia. Thus began the association of the Celts with the structures of the remote past. The fact that the Celts as such were a relatively recent civilization, contemporaneous with the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan cultures did not gain wide acceptance until the 20th century - and even today many may find it hard to accept the flowering of Celtic culture as post BC. Much Greek and Roman literature has survived and it ought to be easy to pinpoint the Celts on their home ground. Herodotus, a Greek historian of the 5th century BC, refers to the Danube "which has its source among the Celts near Pyrene - the Celts live beyond the Pillars of Hercules Gibraltar next to the Cynesians who are the most Westerly people of Europe". What is happening here is confusion between the Celtic homeland on the Upper Danube and the limit of their influence - Iberia. Another Greek geographer Pausanias 2nd century AD tells us that the Gauls "originally called Celts live in the remotest region of Europe on the coast of an enormous tidal sea. Okeanos the River of Ocean which surrounds the world is the most distant part of the sea - the people who live beside it are Iberians and Celts - it contains the island of Britain. The remotest Celts are called Kabares who live on the edges of the ice desert - a very tall race of people. Julius Caesar 1st century BC in his account of his campaigns in Gaul gives us a very clear picture of Celtic culture in one region in which it was dominant Gaul. He also makes a statement which perhaps deserves more attention than it has generally received - "The Druidic doctrine is believed to have been found existing in Britain and thence imported into Gaul: Caesar goes on to refer to the areas of Gaul under greatest Celtic influence but does not include the territory of the Belgae in the North. It is the Belgae who migrated in large numbers to the South and East of Britain. So Caesar associates a large area of Gaul with Celtic influence but again makes no reference to a Celtic homeland. A possible reason for the lack of information on this topic is that by the time of the authors quoted the Celts may have been losing ground in their homeland and were best known in the territories in which they had acquired influence. It is significant that it is the earliest account Herodotus circa BC which gives us a clue to an Upper Danube location. The earliest manifestation which can be specifically associated with the Celts is the Bronze Age Hallstatt culture, from post BC to around BC. This culture was a wealthy one being centred on a salt-mining region, therefore trading widely with European areas generally and even further a field. The use of iron was highly developed in this area by the end of the Hallstatt period. It would appear that this development was largely an internal cultural one - not necessarily fostered by newcomers. The use of iron ploughs made possible a greater volume of agricultural production. Skills in textile making were highly developed. The use of iron weaponry also gave military superiority. From an early period the influence of the Celtic culture was through the process of migration and commerce spreading Westwards across Europe, notably into Spain, France, North Italy. This influence would appear at this stage to be mainly due to peaceful penetration. Population growth in the Celtic area led to the need for more land for settlement. Spain in particular was a mineral rich country much in demand by Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, and later by Romans. The main players were the Carthaginians, Greeks, and Etruscans. Both Carthaginians and Greeks had established a chain of settlements and coastal trading stations along the shores of the Mediterranean and outside the Pillars of Hercules. The Celts were in a position to make full use of such river systems as the Danube, Rhine, and Rhone to access markets and sources of supply. Recent discoveries in Asia along the Silk Road have indicated that along this route were bases occupied by people akin to the Celts from at least BC. The Tokharian language as spoken in the Turkestan area has links with Celtic. So early Celtic influence based on settlement and commerce extended from the Atlantic to Asia.

Chapter 9 : The Discovery of Middle Earth: Mapping the Lost World of the Celts by Graham Robb

I have been searching for a good book about the Celts for years, but until Graham Robb's book, "The Discovery of Middle Earth" all I found was the romantic clap-trap that pacifies the folks who believe the Celts originated in Ireland.

Visit Website In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction during the long, dark winter. To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. When the celebration was over, they re-lit their hearth fires, which they had extinguished earlier that evening, from the sacred bonfire to help protect them during the coming winter. One quarter of all the candy sold annually in the U. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain. The first was Feralia, a day in late October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. Pope Gregory III later expanded the festival to include all saints as well as all martyrs, and moved the observance from May 13 to November 1. By the 9th century the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands, where it gradually blended with and supplanted the older Celtic rites. All Souls Day was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels and devils. Halloween Comes to America Celebration of Halloween was extremely limited in colonial New England because of the rigid Protestant belief systems there. Halloween was much more common in Maryland and the southern colonies. As the beliefs and customs of different European ethnic groups as well as the American Indians meshed, a distinctly American version of Halloween began to emerge. Colonial Halloween festivities also featured the telling of ghost stories and mischief-making of all kinds. By the middle of the nineteenth century, annual autumn festivities were common, but Halloween was not yet celebrated everywhere in the country. In the second half of the nineteenth century, America was flooded with new immigrants. These new immigrants, especially the millions of Irish fleeing the Irish Potato Famine , helped to popularize the celebration of Halloween nationally. Young women believed that on Halloween they could divine the name or appearance of their future husband by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings or mirrors. In the late s, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers than about ghosts, pranks and witchcraft. At the turn of the century, Halloween parties for both children and adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. Parties focused on games, foods of the season and festive costumes. Because of these efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones by the beginning of the twentieth century. Pumpkin Spice Has Been a Thing for 3, Years Halloween Parties By the s and s, Halloween had become a secular, but community-centered holiday, with parades and town-wide Halloween parties as the featured entertainment. Despite the best efforts of many schools and communities, vandalism began to plague some celebrations in many communities during this time. By the s, town leaders had successfully limited vandalism and Halloween had evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young. Due to the high numbers of young children during the fifties baby boom, parties moved from town civic centers into the classroom or home, where they could be more easily accommodated. Between and , the centuries-old practice of trick-or-treating was also revived. Trick-or-treating was a relatively inexpensive way for an entire community to share the Halloween celebration. In theory, families could also prevent tricks being played on them by providing the neighborhood children with small treats. Thus, a new American tradition was born, and it has continued to grow. Who Invented Candy Corn? The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits. The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both European and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly

world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.