

Finding resources for CR practice can often be difficult. In this case, it is not always the best choice to shop in occult stores for your CR information. If you are a student at a post-secondary school, take advantage of your library privileges. Read academic journals and scholarly studies about the Celts and their practices. More often than not, it's also best to go straight to the source and read primary Celtic texts such as the *Tain Bo Cualinge*, *The Mabinogion*, *Cath Maige Tuired*, and the *Lebor Gabala Erenn*. Unfortunately, sometimes primary sources are hard to find, but luckily there are quite a few reputable internet websites with excellent translations for public consumption.

Suggested Reading List

Celtic Reconstructionist Paganism

The "CR Essay", a collaborative work

http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=uswa&c=trads&id=6645

The Celtic Reconstructionist FAQ

(another collaborative work)

<http://www.paganachd.com/faq/>

CELT – The online resource for Irish history, literature, and politics

<http://www.ucc.ie/celt/>

Internet Sacred Text Archive – Celtic

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/index.htm>

Celtic Literature Collective

<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/celtic/texts/>

Clannada na Gadelica – Gaelic Culture

<http://www.clannada.org/>

Celtic Corner – Hallstatt/La Tène

<http://www.celticcorner.com/index.html>

Imbas – Senistrogna

<http://www.imbas.org/>

Celtic Reconstructionist Paganism

<http://www.ecauldron.com/reconcelt.php>

Celtic Reconstructionism: A Description and Critique

<http://www.pfpc.ca/en/paganism/reconstruction/index.html#celtic>

The Apple Branch, by Alexei Kondratiev.

[ISBN 0-8065-2502-9]

The Apple Branch Discussion Group

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The_Apple_Branch/

Questions or comments?

Join your local mailing list at

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DurhamPagans>

or visit the website at

<http://www.durhampagans.ca/>

This brochure created for

Durham Pagan Pride Day 2005-2006

by Lisa Wasilkowsky.

lisa.wasilkowsky@utoronto.ca

Celtic Reconstructionism



Celtic Reconstructionism (CR) aims to reconstruct to the best of our ability the rituals and practices of the ancient Celts. CR strives to create a modern tradition while respecting ancient practices, and while removing those concepts no longer relevant to modern life.

Celtic Reconstructionism uses the concept of An Thríbis Mhòr, or the great triple spiral, to explain their cosmology. This term was created by Sean Ó Tuathail and his works are influential to the development of CR. CR cosmology does not use a four element system, but rather the concept of Three Realms – Land, Sea, and Sky. Some CRs arrange these within a triskele, with each spiral representing a realm, and in the centre, the *imbas* or *awen* - divine inspiration - usually represented by fire in water.



Also, or in addition to the *awen* in the centre can be the World Tree, the centre post of the cosmos that grows through the worlds, extending from its roots in the Underworld to its branches in the heavens.

Elements are used in CR, but not in the way that most of neopaganism is familiar with. Elements are physical things, like

stones, soil, plants, the sea, the moon, wind, the sun, clouds, heaven. These are often associated with parts of the body as per creation myth, or with virtues or other philosophical concepts. These associations come from stories and writings in primary sources. Despite these associations, fluidity is important in CR practice as the universe itself is fluid.

Concept of deity in CR can be considered polytheistic and animistic. There is no overarching deity in the Celtic “pantheon”, and each deity is respected as their own person. Deities have personalities and traits much like humans do, so the saying “all gods are one god” does not apply in CR. Because of this, interactions of the gods from the lore are important and it is necessary to take into account the relationship between any gods being called into a ritual at the same time. Spirits of nature and of holy places also play a part in CR. Trees, animals, holy wells, and other natural places and phenomena can all possess spirits. Some spirits and deities are looked upon as regional or specific to a realm of activities, which can change CR worship from place to place.

Reconstructionism involves much academia and scholarly work as often the process for gathering information is tedious. However, not everyone involved with a reconstructionist group is expected to be a scholar and ritualist;

reconstructionism recognises different functions in society and that some people prefer to, or are better suited to fill other roles other than that of a priest or liturgist. Georges Dumézil, an Indo-European scholar proposed a theory of tripartite functions within Indo-European society, and most reconstructionist groups recognise these as all being important. Priests, warriors and agriculturalists are all necessary for a society to run, and therefore all of these roles and their counterparts, along with the mysterious fourth function of visionaries and seers are welcomed into the CR community. At the same time, the CR community does not advocate racism, sexism, homophobia, or any types of discrimination; regardless of the cultural focus of the deities we worship, anybody wishing to worship the Celtic gods in a CR style is welcomed into CR, regardless of their race, heritage, sexual preference, gender, etc.

The four main holidays celebrated in CR are already well known to the neopagan world as they were incorporated into the “Wheel of the Year” calendar now in widespread use: Samhain, Oímealg, Bealtaine, and Lughnasadh. However, these festivals are not always set to a specific date because of local changes in the land of the practitioner true to the festival’s original purpose.