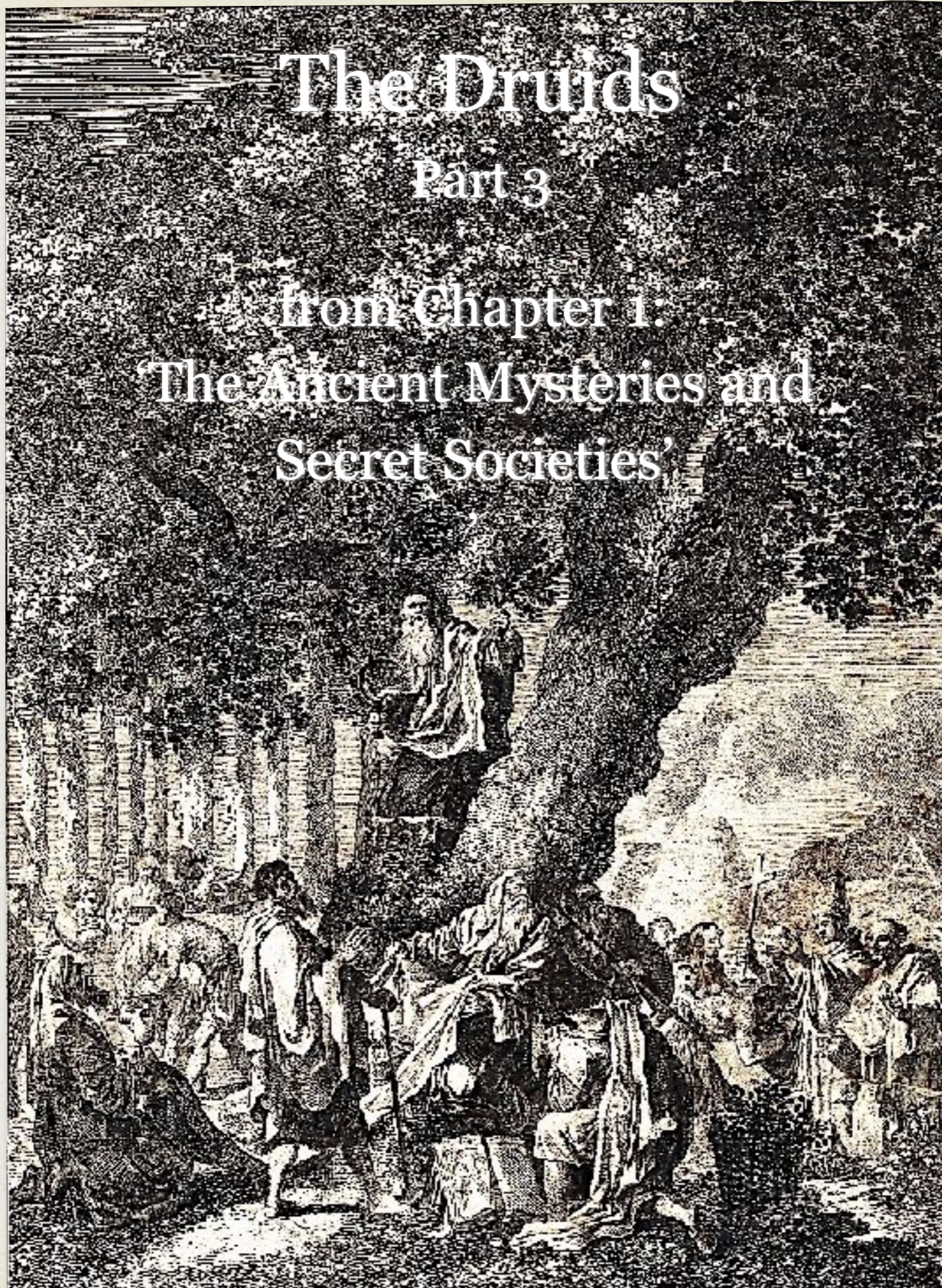


# The Druids

Part 3

from Chapter 1:  
'The Ancient Mysteries and  
Secret Societies'



# MAKARA – the blog

archive of ageless wisdom teachings & Trans-Himalayan commentary by Michael Robbins

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Belenus



Mercurius









Like nearly all schools of the Mysteries, the teachings of the Druids were divided into two distinct sections. The simpler, a moral code, was taught to all the people, while the deeper, esoteric doctrine was given only to initiated priests. To be admitted to the order, a candidate was required to be of good family and of high moral character. No important secrets were entrusted to him until he had been tempted in many ways and his strength of character severely tried. The Druids taught the people of Britain and Gaul concerning the immortality of the soul. They believed in transmigration and apparently in reincarnation. They borrowed in one life, promising to pay back in the next. They believed in a purgatorial type of hell where they would be purged of their sins, afterward passing on to the happiness of unity with the gods. The Druids taught that all men would be saved, but that some must return to earth many times to learn the lessons of human life and to overcome the inherent evil of their own natures.

Before a candidate was entrusted with the secret doctrines of the Druids, he was bound with a vow of secrecy. These doctrines were imparted only in the depths of forests and in the darkness of caves. In these places, far from the haunts of men, the neophyte was instructed concerning the creation of the universe, the personalities of the gods, the laws of Nature, the secrets of occult medicine, the mysteries of the celestial bodies, and the rudiments of magic and sorcery. The Druids had a great number of feast days. The new and full moon and the sixth day of the moon were sacred periods. It is believed that initiations took place only at the two solstices and the two equinoxes. At dawn of the 25th day of December, the birth of the Sun God was celebrated.

The secret teachings of the Druids are said by some to be tinged with Pythagorean philosophy. The Druids had a Madonna, or Virgin Mother, with a Child in her arms, who was sacred to their Mysteries; and their Sun God was resurrected at the time of the year corresponding to that at which modern Christians celebrate Easter.

Both the cross and the serpent were sacred to the Druids, who made the former by cutting off all the branches of an oak tree and fastening one of them to the main trunk in the form of the letter T. This oaken cross became symbolic of their superior Deity. They also worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. The moon received their special veneration. Caesar stated that Mercury was one of the chief deities of the Gauls. The Druids are believed to have worshiped Mercury under the similitude of a stone cube. They also had great veneration for the Nature spirits (fairies, gnomes, and undines), little creatures of the forests and rivers to whom many offerings were made. Describing the temples of the Druids, Charles Heckethorn, in *The Secret Societies of All Ages & Countries*, says:

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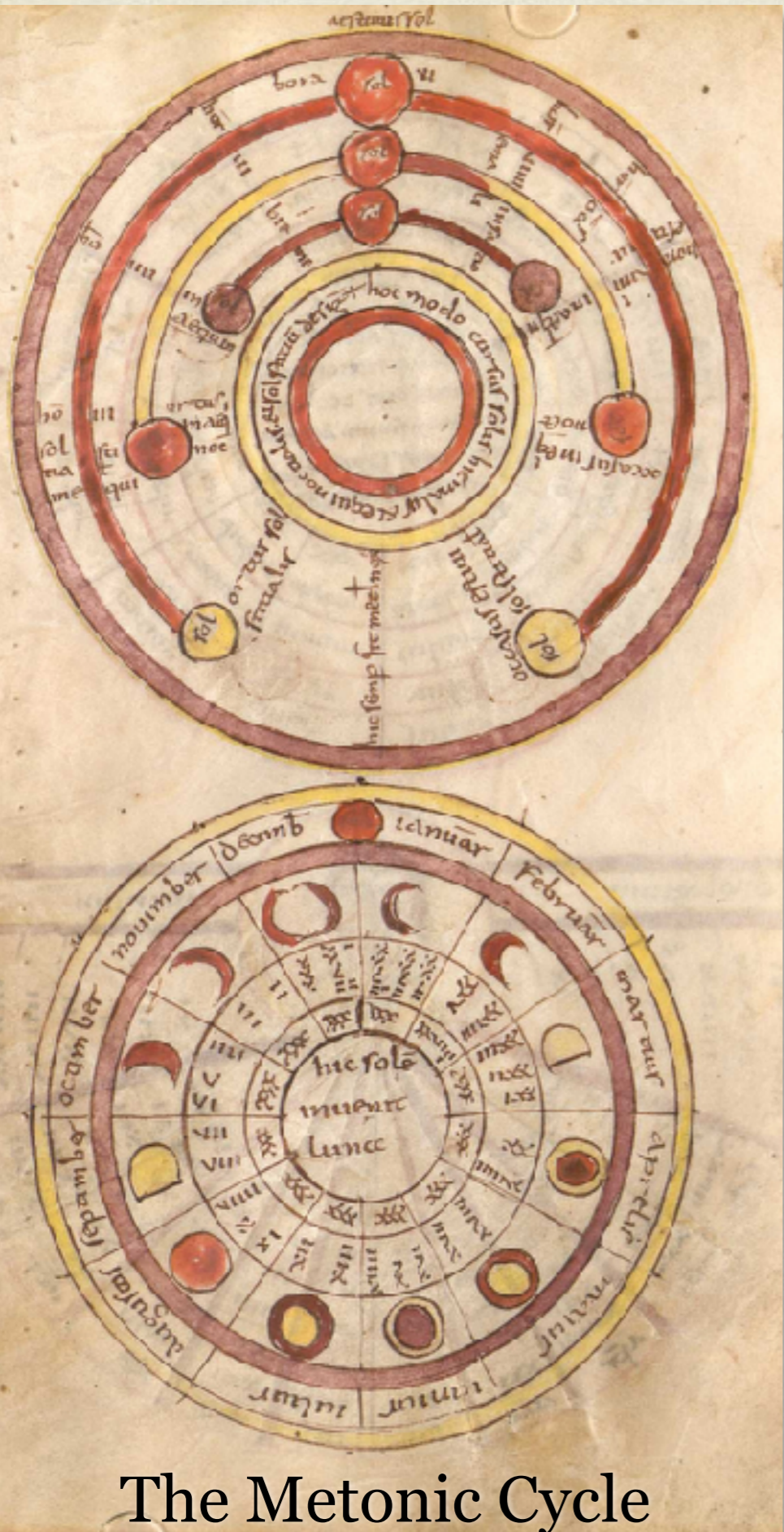
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The doctrine of the harmony of the spheres, as held by Pythagoras, was also held also by the Druids of Ireland. And it is remarkable that the word *Pythagoras* signifies literally in Welsh, ‘explication of the universe’, or cosmogony, from the verb *pythagori*, to explain the system of the universe. The following is the account given by the Rev. Dr. Collyer of the opinions of Pythagoras, whom he makes to say, “God is neither the object of sense, nor subject to passion; but invisible, only intelligible, and supremely intelligent. In his body, he is like the light, and in his soul he resembles truth. He is the universal spirit that pervades and diffuseth itself over all nature. All beings receive their life from him. There is but one God, who is not, as some are apt to imagine, seated above the world, beyond the orb of the universe; but being himself all in all, he sees all the beings that fill his immensity, the only principle, the light of Heaven, the Father of all. He produces every thing, he orders and disposes every thing; he is the reason, the life, and the motion of all beings.” –Celtic Druids:125-6



The Druids taught the doctrine of one supreme being, a future state of rewards and punishments, the immortality of the soul and a metempsychosis. It was a maxim with them that water was the first principle of all things, and existed before the creation in unsullied purity, which seems a contradiction to their other doctrine that day was the offspring of night, because night or chaos was in existence before day was created. They taught that time was only an intercepted fragment of eternity, and that there was an endless succession of worlds. In fact, their doctrines were chiefly those of Pythagoras. They had great veneration for the numbers three, seven, nineteen (the Metonic cycle), and one hundred and forty-seven, produced by multiplying the square of seven by three.

—The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries v.2:107-8

The Metonic Cycle

		<i>Chaldean.</i>	
A	Α.....	1	
B	Β.....	2	
R	Ϛ.....	200	
A	Α.....	1	
K (X)	ϙ.....	100	
A	Α.....	1	
S	Ϛ.....	60	
		<hr/>	
		365	

B	β.....	2	
H	η.....	8	
L	λ.....	30	
E	ε.....	5	
N	ν.....	50	
O	ο.....	70	
Σ	ϡ.....	200	
		<hr/>	
		365	

E	ε.....	5	
R	Ϛ.....	200	
E	ε.....	5	
C	ϙ.....	20	
O	ο.....	70	
E	ε.....	5	
L	λ.....	30	
L	λ.....	30	
		<hr/>	
		365	



Belenus

Certain it is, that the mystical names of the sun, Abraxas, Belenus, and Erecoell, the derivation of which have so puzzled etymologists, are no more than words formed of numerals, making up the number of days in a year, viz. 365. —The Celtic Druids:309-10

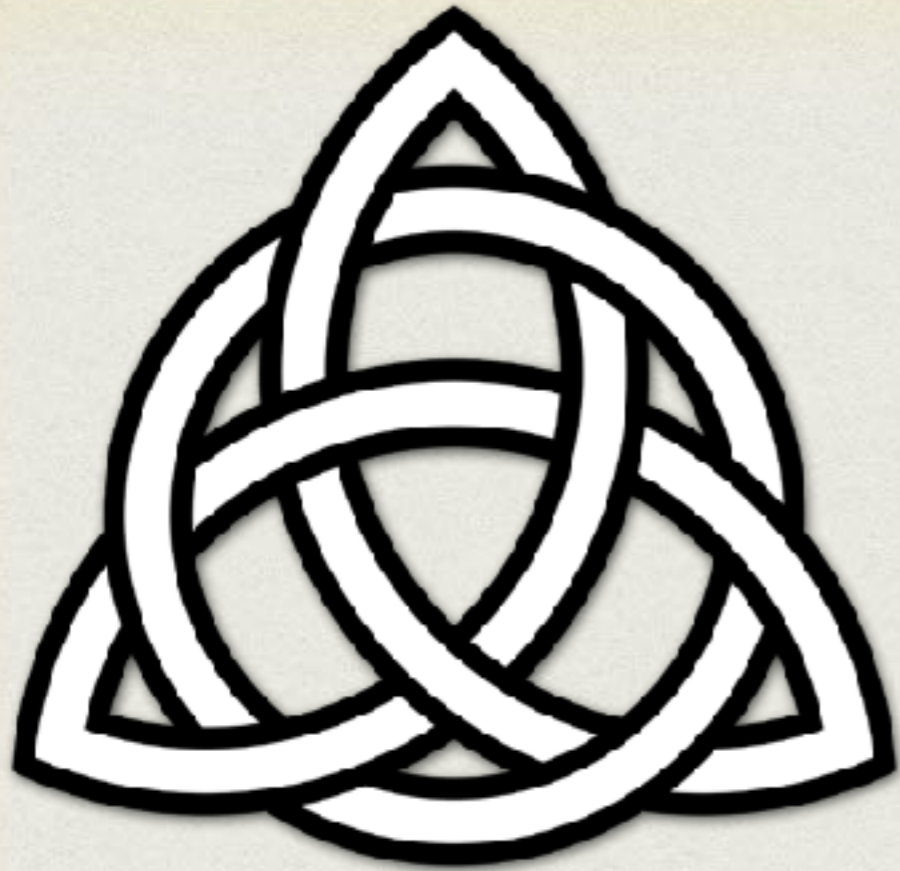
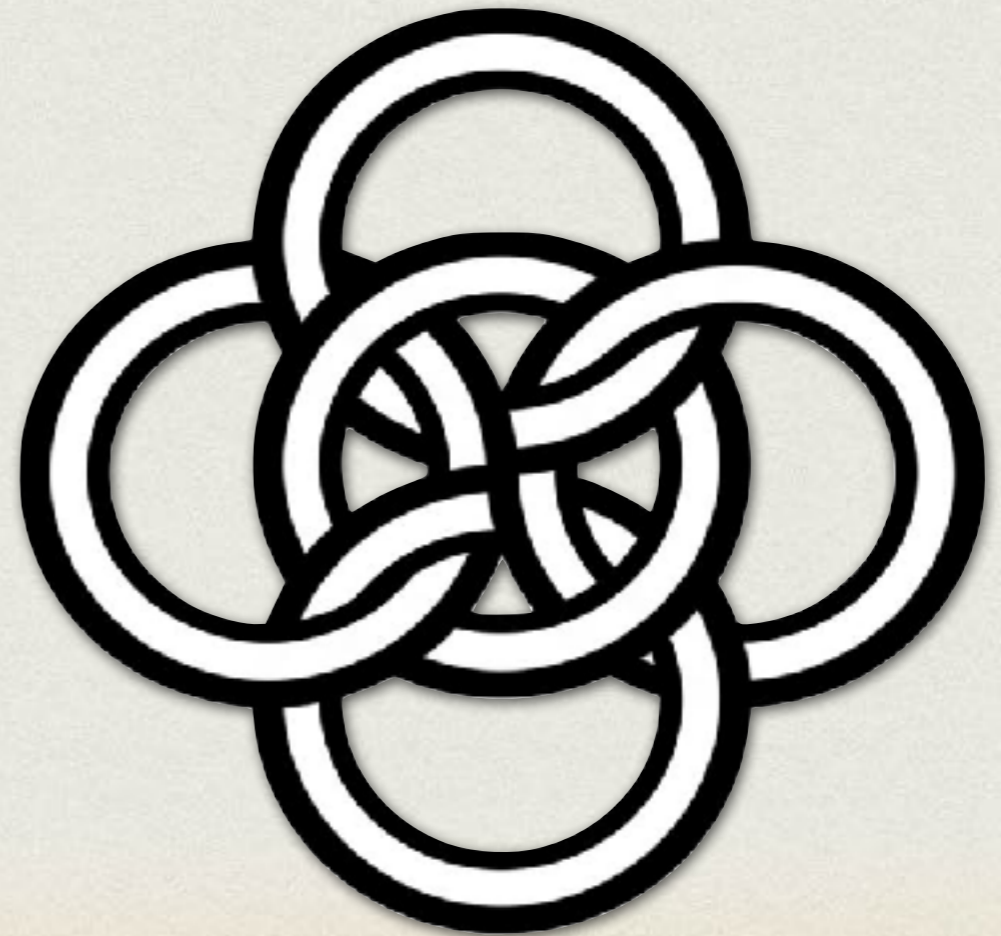
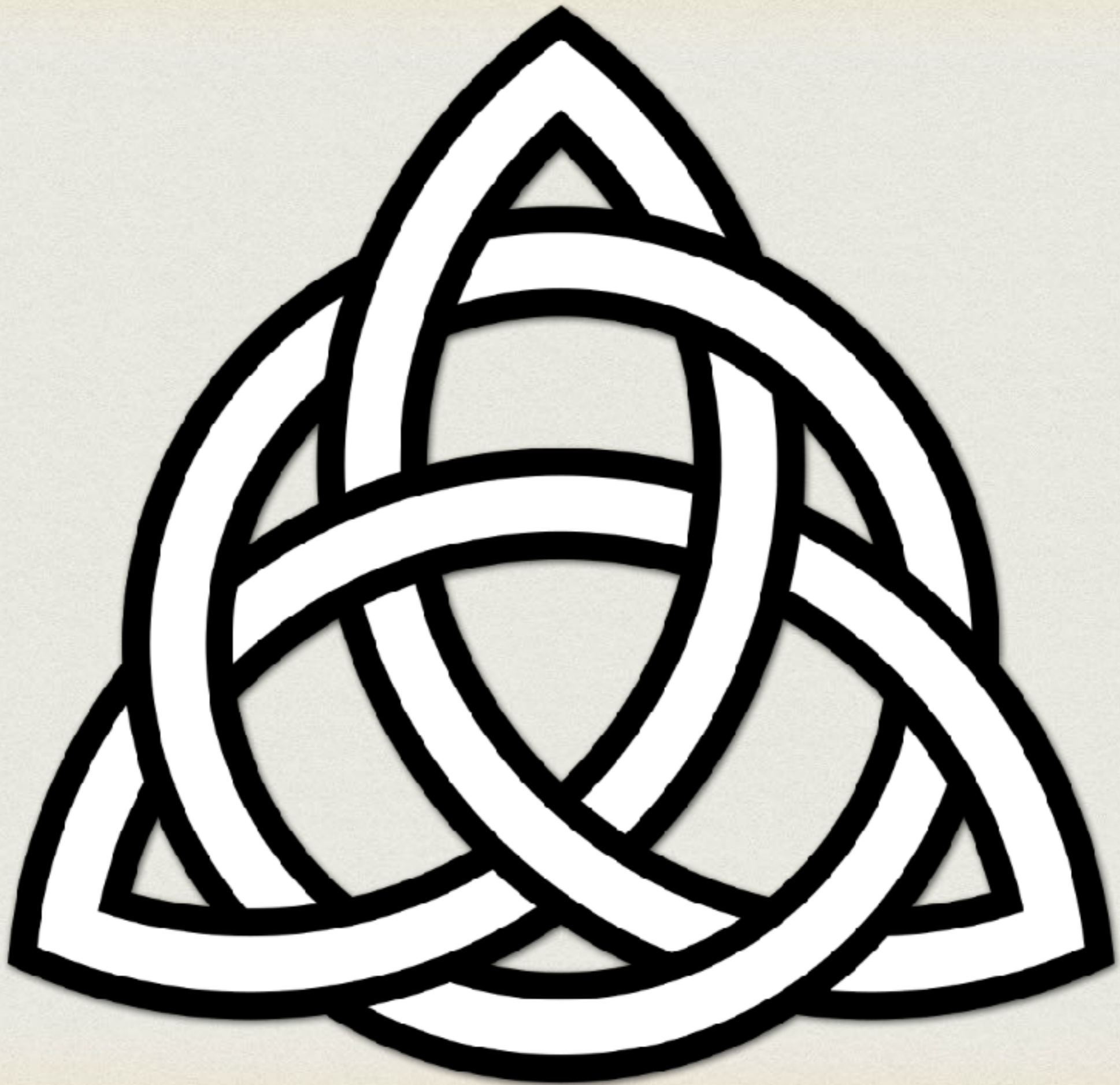
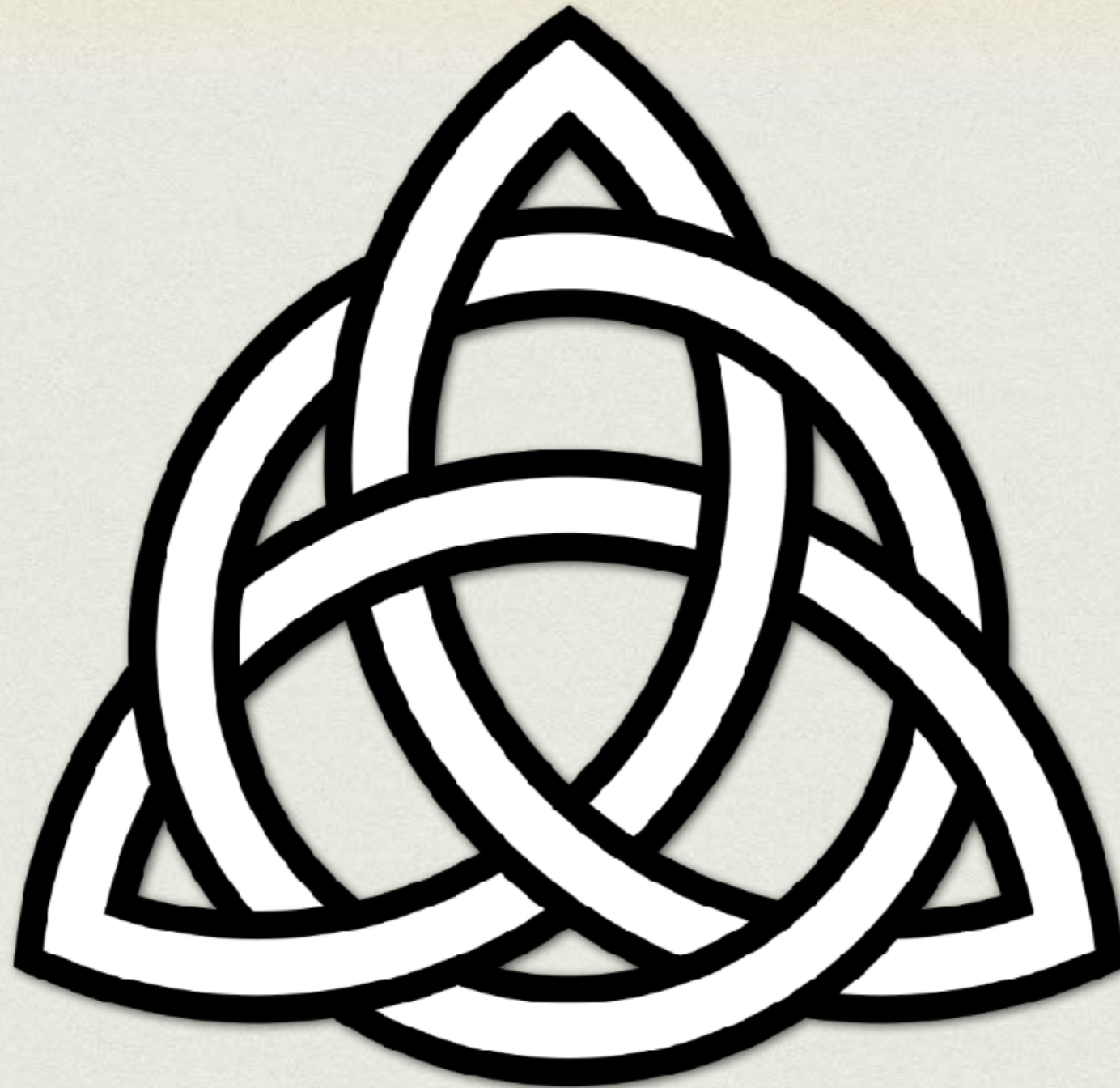


Figure carved in the Druidical  
subterranean grotto at New Grange in Ireland



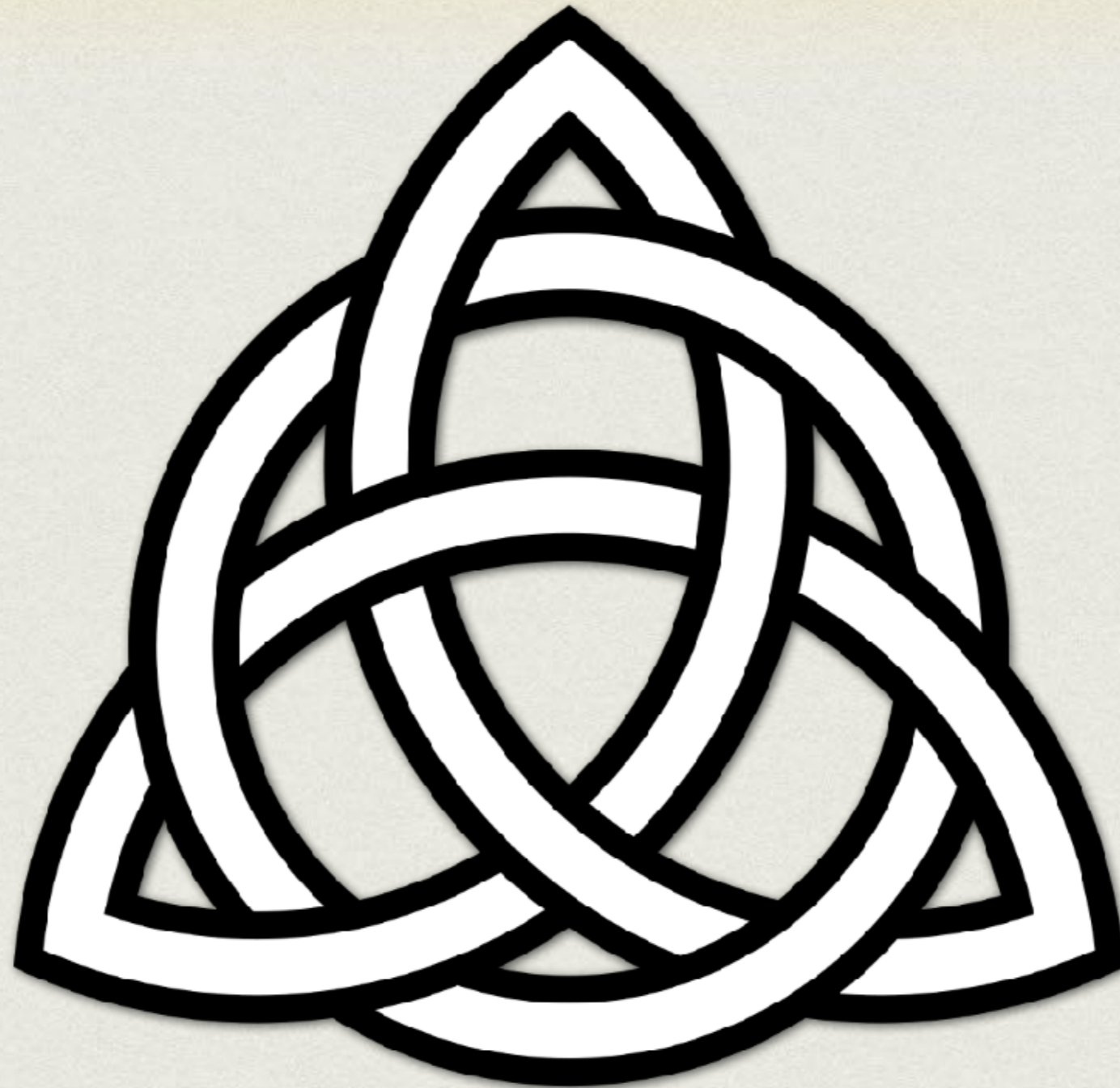




Stanz 5, verse 6

The Lipika circumscribe the triangle, the first one, the cube, the second one, and the pentacle within the egg.





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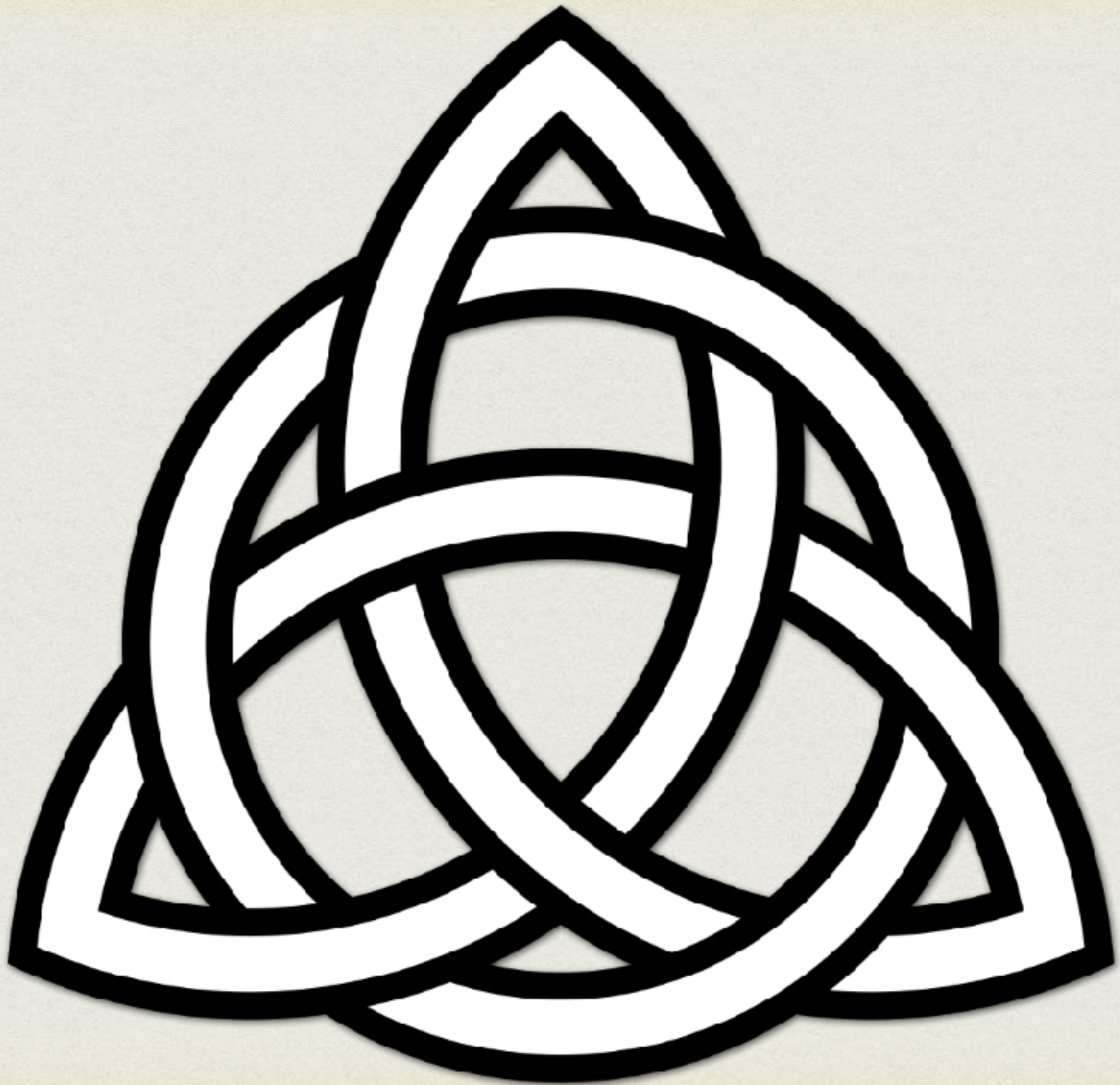
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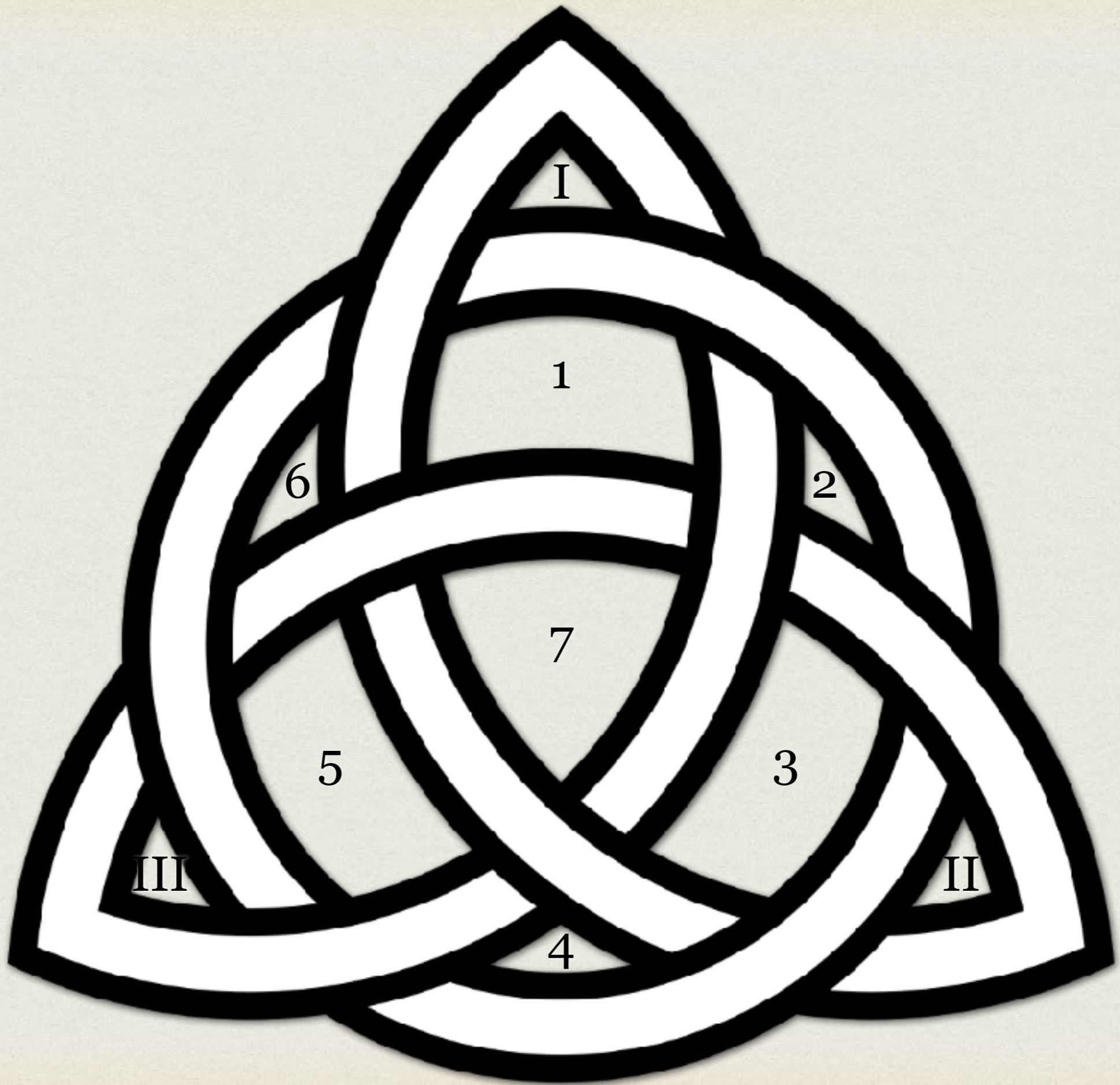
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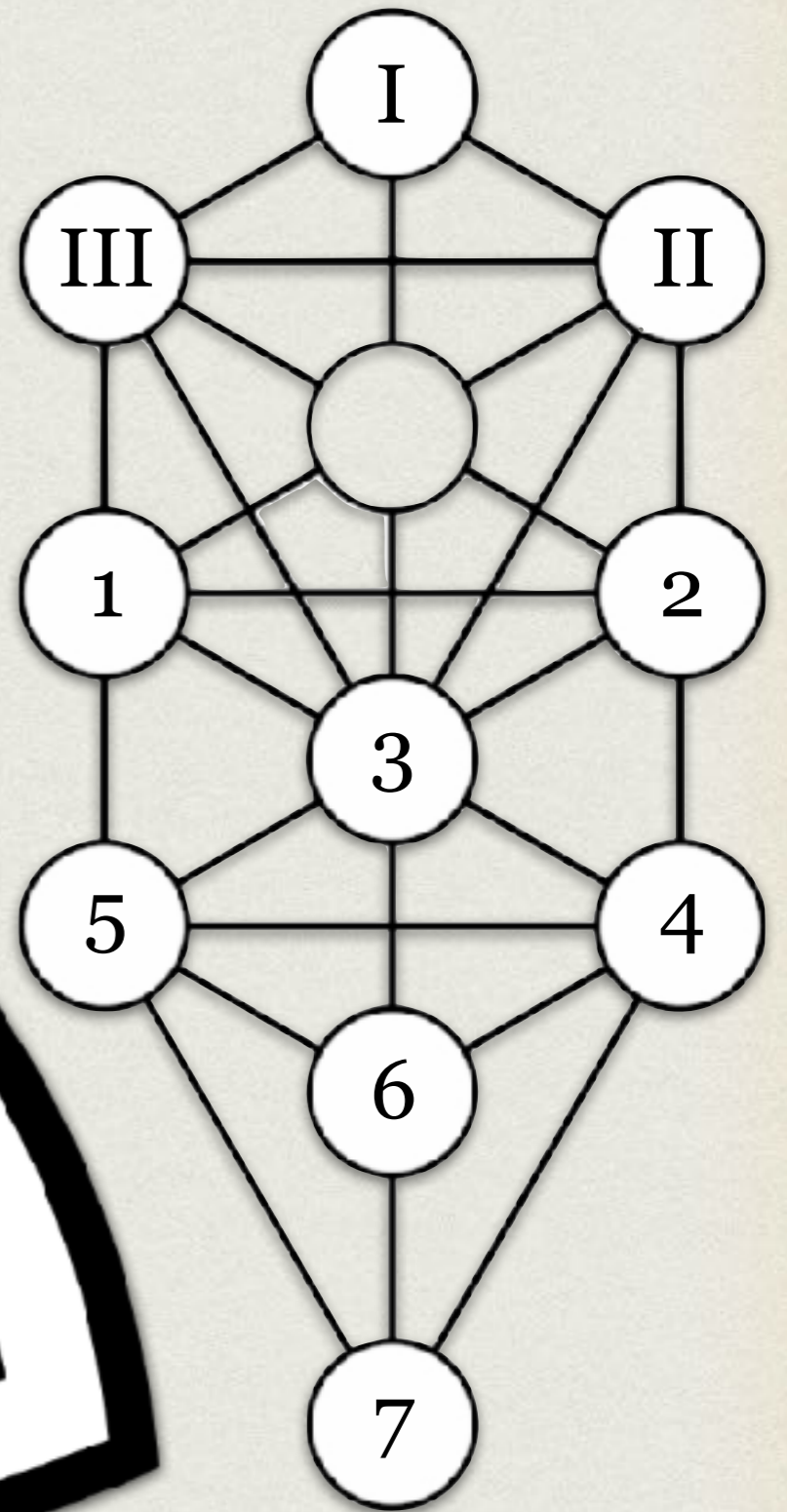
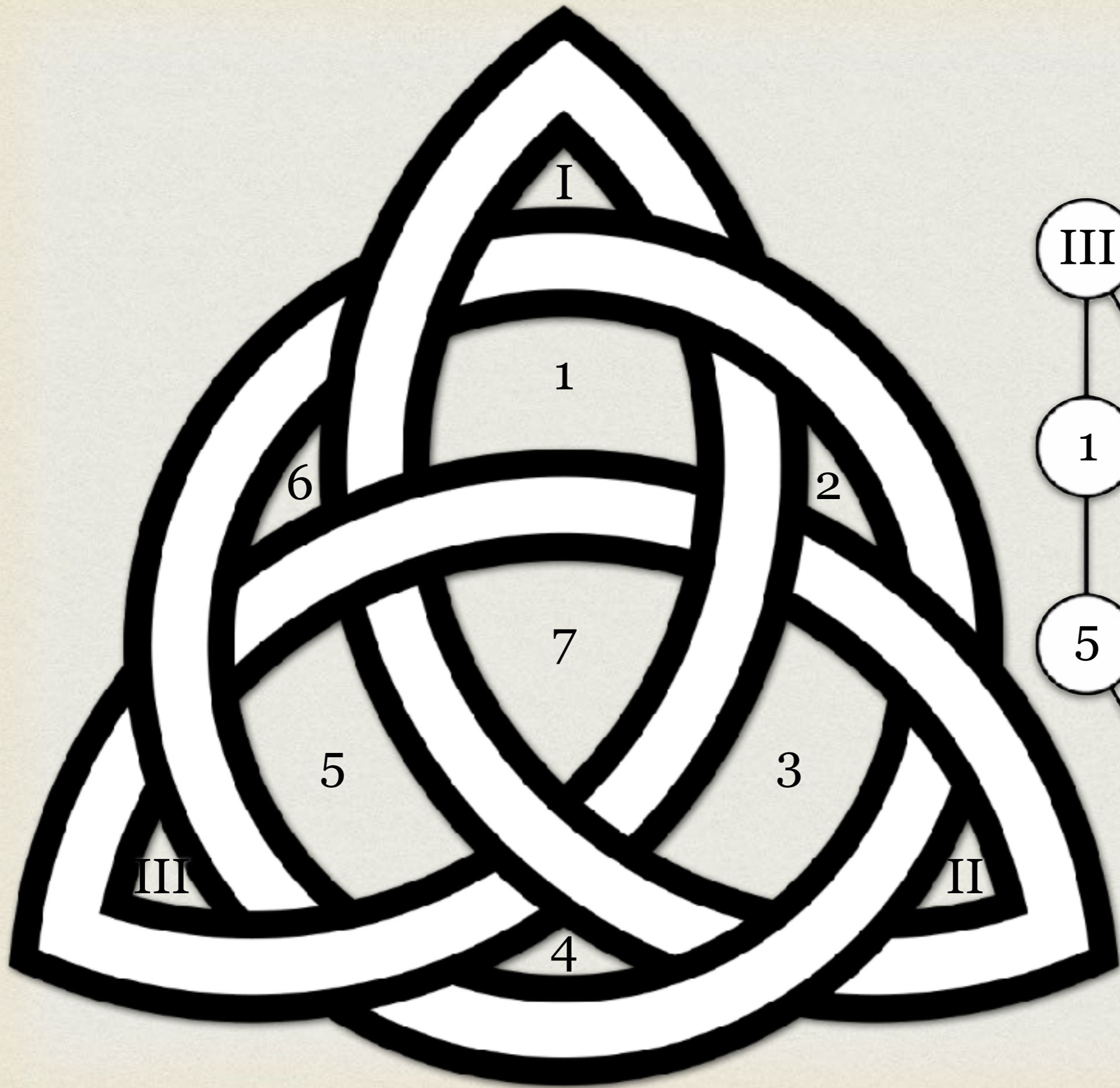
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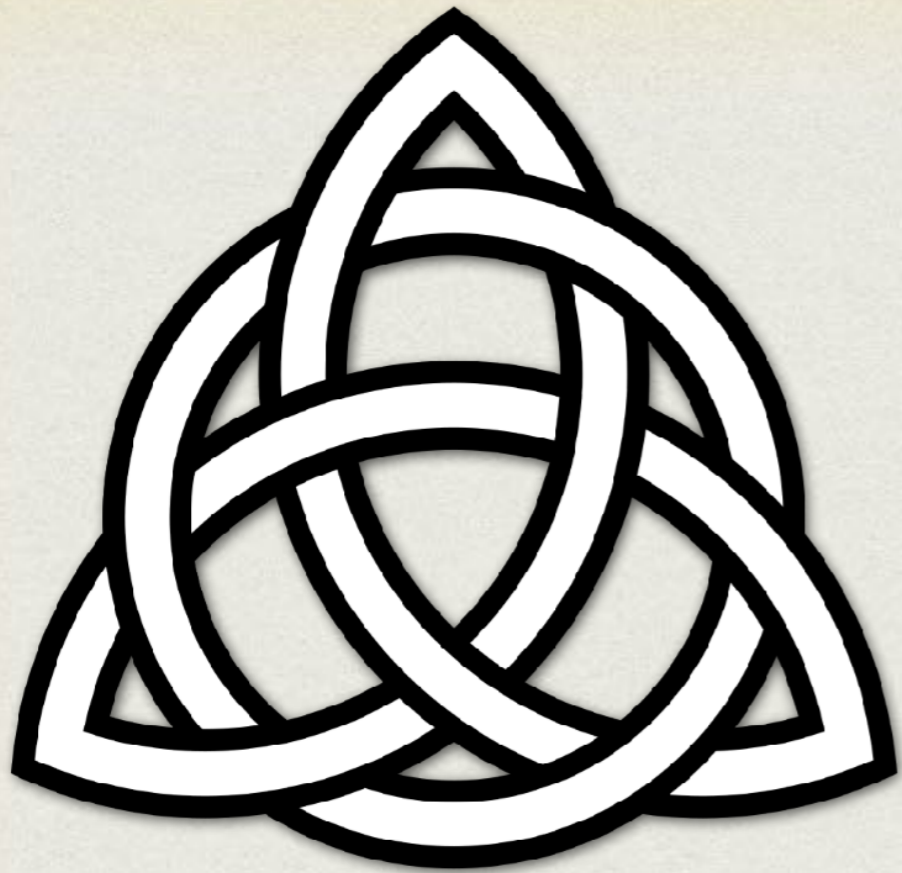
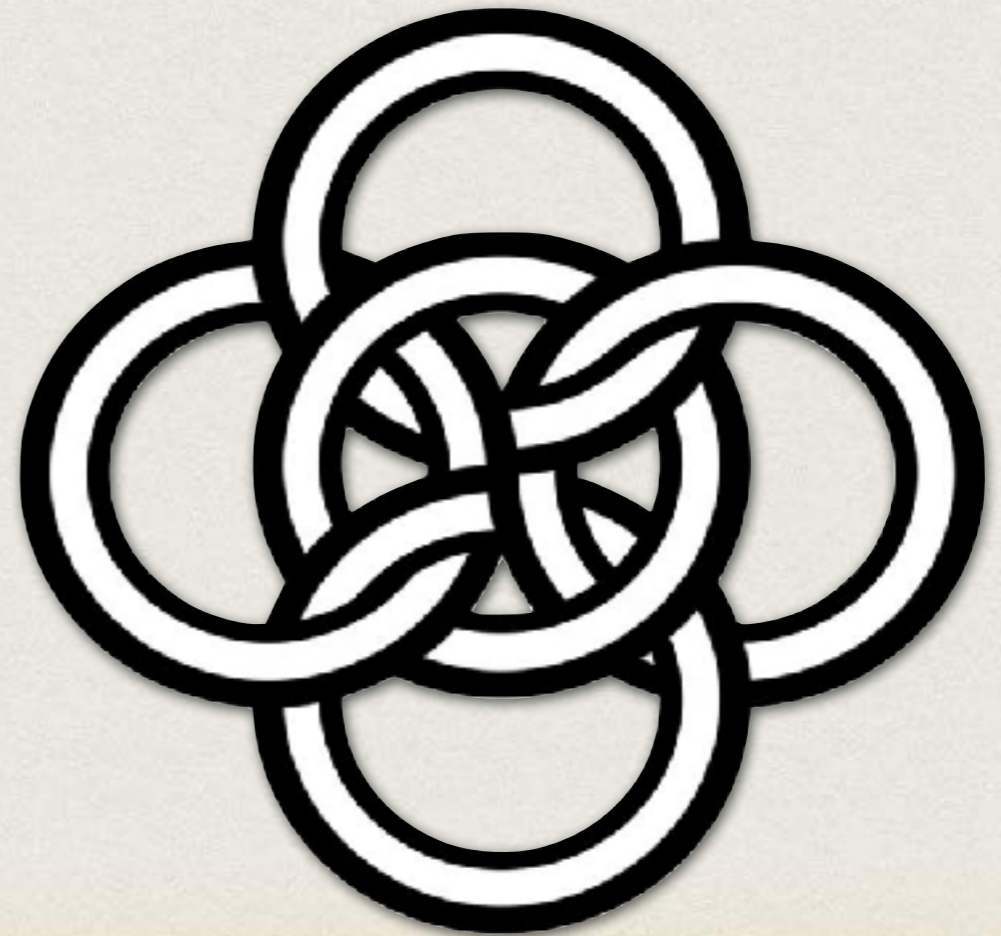
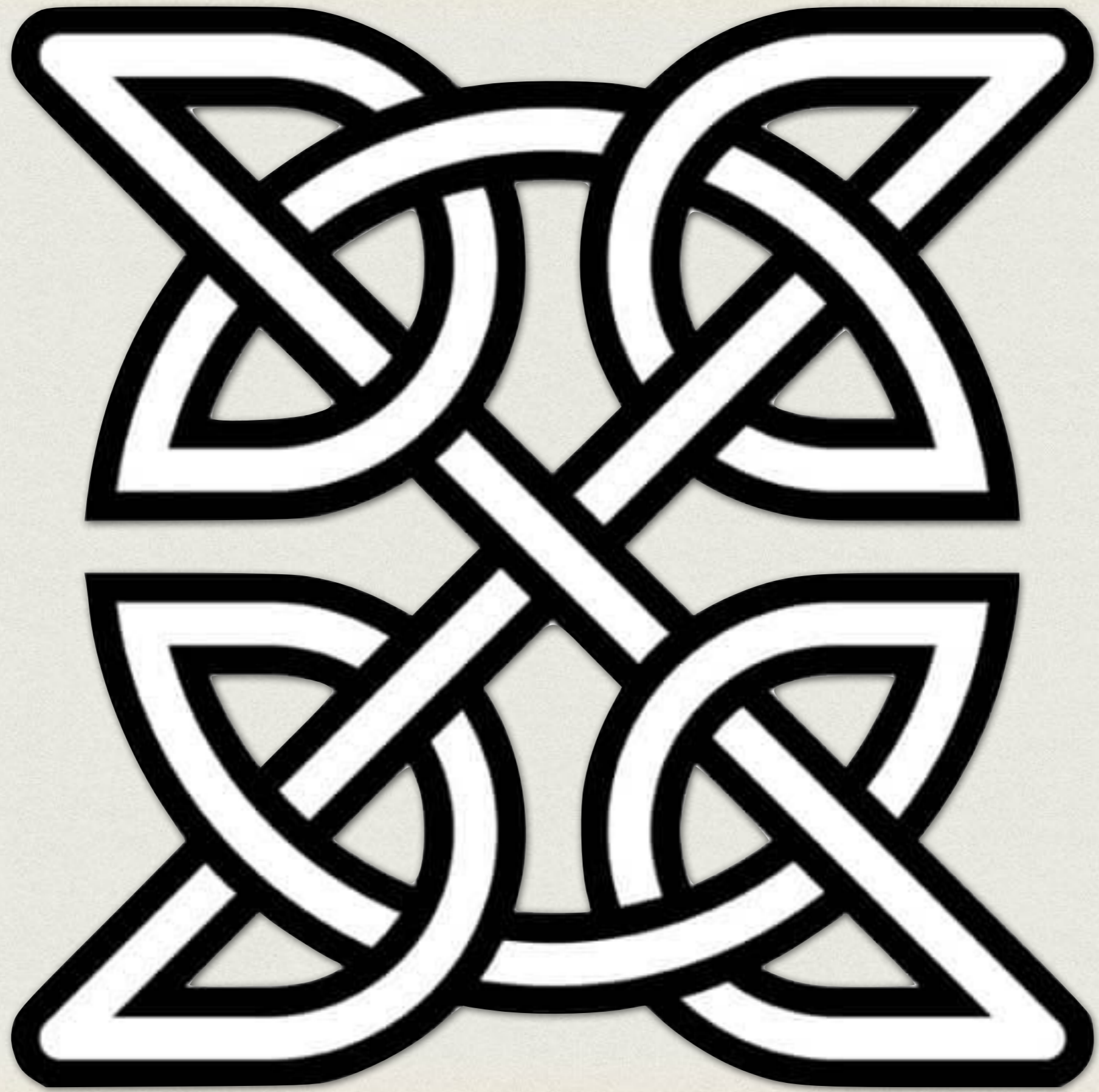
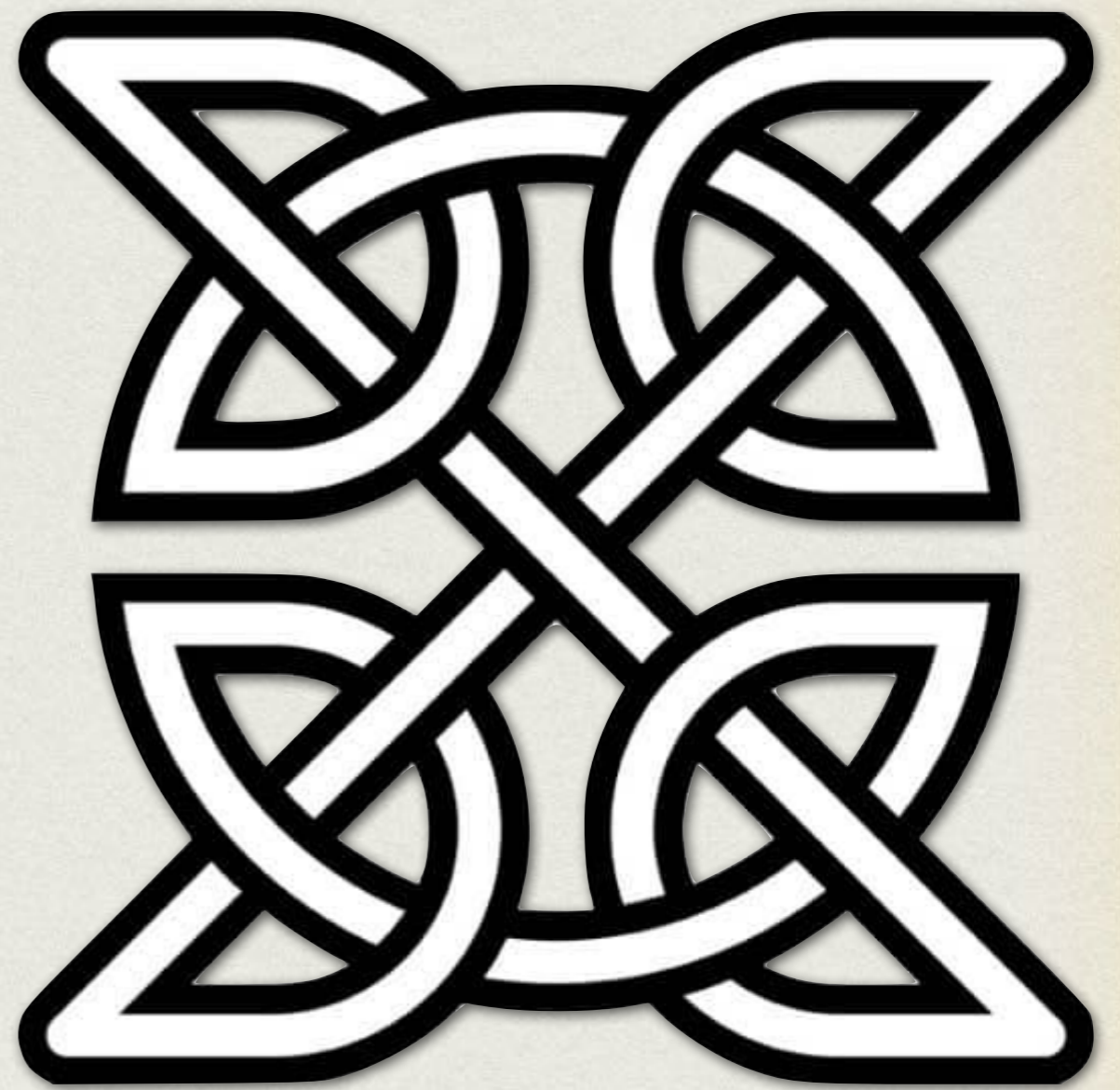
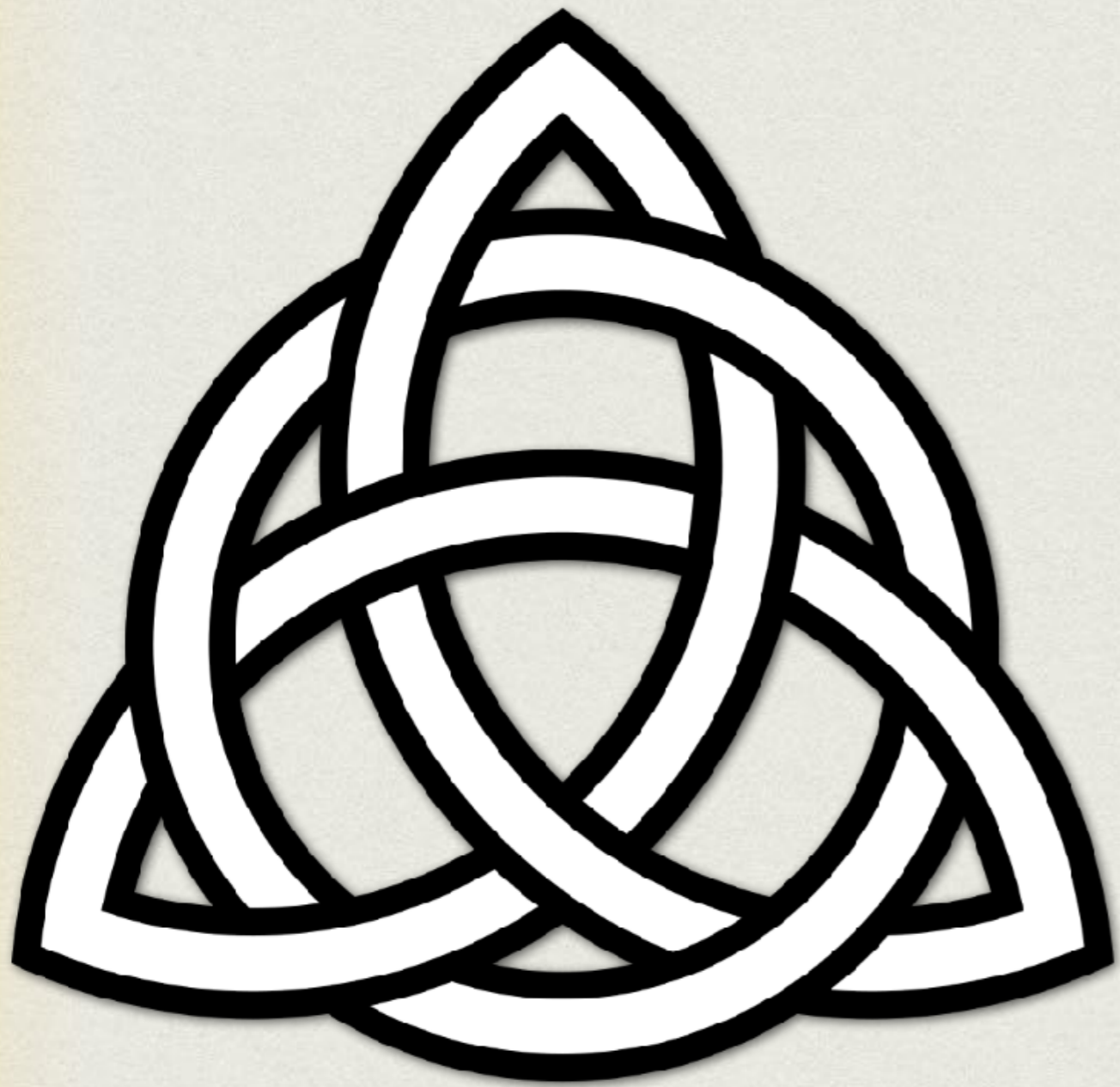


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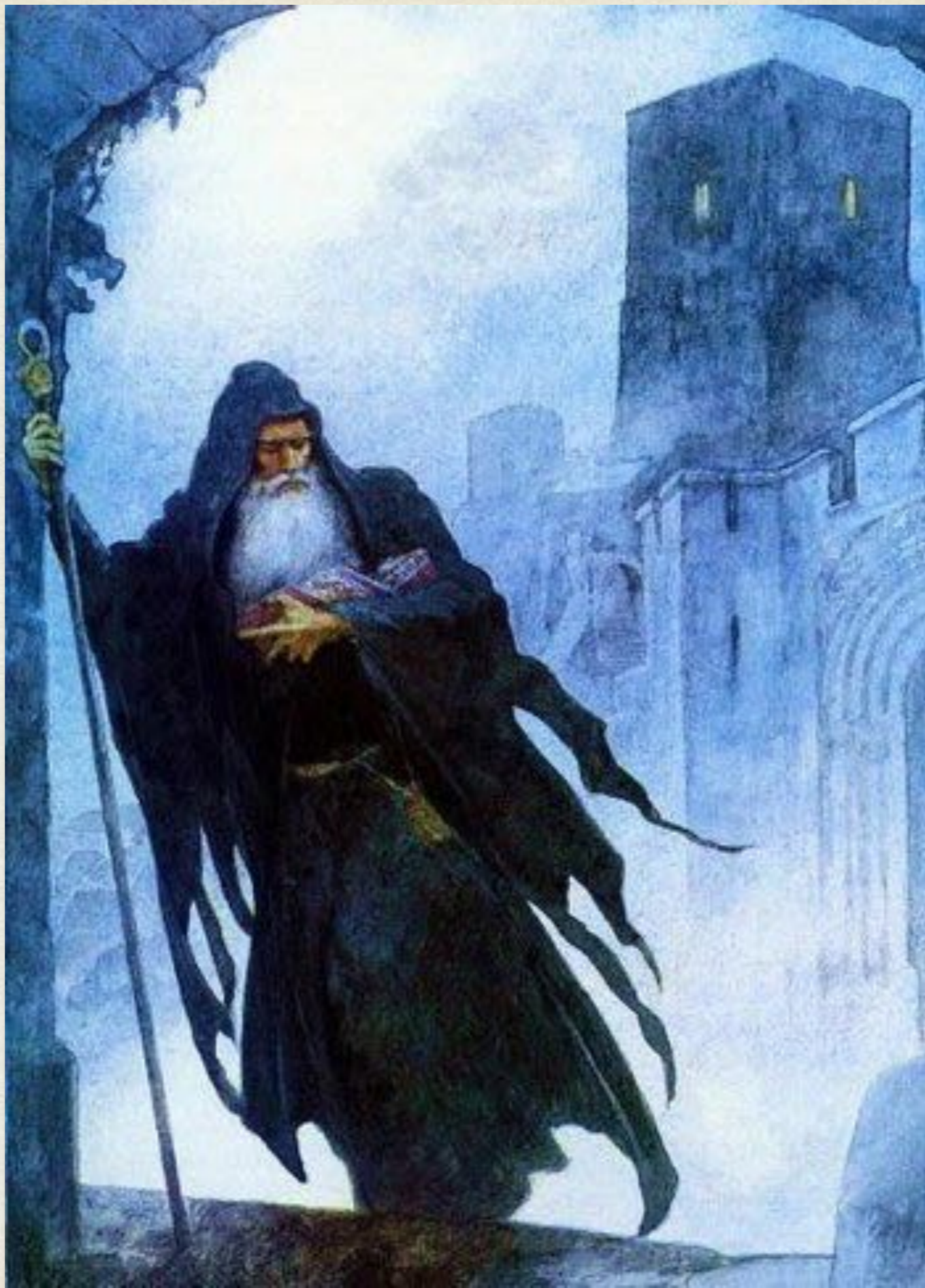
The Druids are said to have been much addicted to the study of the qualities of vegetables, plants, and herbs. Vervain was amongst their greatest favourites; they used it in casting lots and foretelling future events; they used it to anoint persons to prevent fevers, etc.; but it was to be gathered with certain ceremonies and at certain seasons of the year. The selago, a kind of hedge hyssop, resembling the savine, and the samolus, or marsh wort, or the round-leaved water pimpnel, were also supposed to have supernatural powers, to prevent evils and cure diseases, and were gathered at particular times with great ceremonies... –Celtic Druids:286



Whelk Egg Casing

[The Druids] venerated the serpent of Genesis, by whom they denied that sin was brought into the world; maintaining, that it was a personification of the good principle, who instructed Eve in all the learning of the world which has descended to us...

The Anguinum or serpent's egg, was a congeries of small snakes rolled together, and incrustated with a shell, formed by the saliva and viscous gum, froth, or sweat, of the mother serpent. The Druids say, that this egg is tossed in the air by the hissings of its dame, and that before it falls again to the earth it should be received in the Sagus, lest it be defiled. The person who was to carry off the egg must make the best of his way on horseback, for the serpent pursues this ravisher of its young ones, even to the brink of the next river; they also pretend, that this egg is to be taken off from its dame only at one particular time of the moon... For getting the better of their adversaries in any kind of dispute, and introducing them to the friendship of great men, they think nothing equal to the Anguinum... -Celtic Druids:286-9





On arriving at the court of Maelgwn, Taliesin cast a spell upon the Bards, so that on appearing before the king, instead of reciting verses in his praise, they could only pout out their lips, make mouths at him, and play "Blerwm, blerwm" on their lips with their fingers. Maelgwn, imagining them to be drunk with many liquors, "ordered one of his squires to give a blow to the chief of them named Heinin Vardd; and the squire took a broom and struck him on the head, so that he fell back in his seat. This seems to have broken the spell, for the chief Bard thereupon explains to Maelgwn that they were affected not by strong drink, but by the influence of a spirit sitting in the corner of the hall, in the form of a child. Forthwith the king commanded the squire to fetch him; and he went to the nook where Taliesin sat, and brought him before the king, who asked him what he was and whence he came; and he answered the king in verse. —Taliesin, or, The Bards and Druids of Britain:160



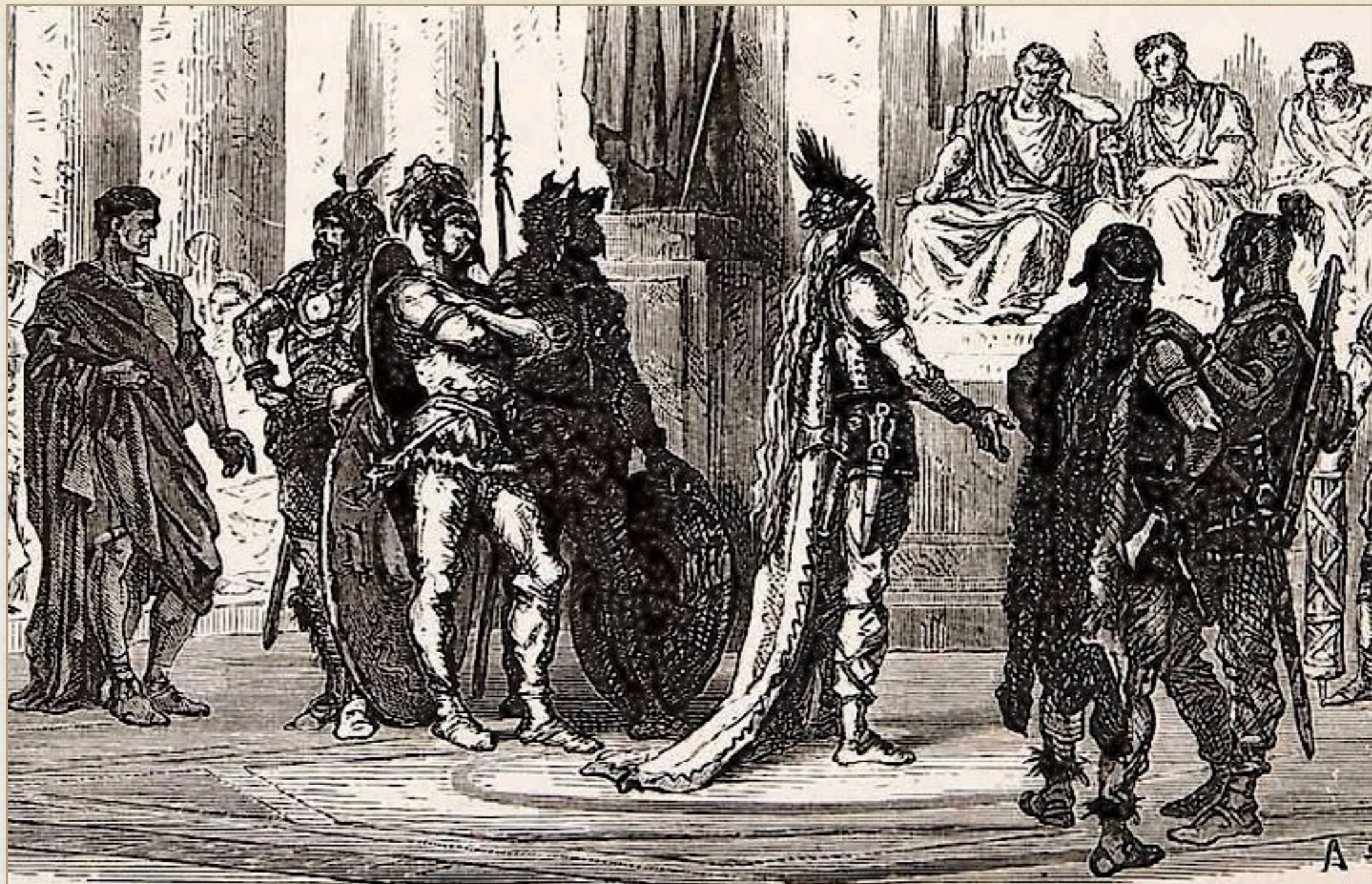
## The Gundestrup Cauldron

The whole system is called *Samhan-draoic*, that is to say, the magic of *Samhan*. *Draoic* signifies magic; *Draoith*, a magician. In the Irish glossaries *Seanoir*, which signifies an old magician, a sage, is always applied to the Druids. In the Gaelic translation of the Bible, the three magi who came to the birth of Christ are called *Draoithe*... Pliny said, "*Britain at this day celebrates the magic rites with so many similar ceremonies, that you might suppose them to have been given to them by the Persians.*" –CelticDruids:175, 183









DIVITIACUS BEFORE THE ROMAN SENATE.

“Caesar wasn’t the only Roman leader to have first-hand experience with Druids in the decades after Posidonius. In a dialog with his brother Quintus, the orator and consul Cicero speaks of a meeting he held with an important Druid: “I know there are Druids in Gaul because I met one myself– Divitiacus of the Aedui tribe, who spoke well of you. He professed to be master of the wisdom of nature, which the Greeks call *physiologia*, the search for causes and phenomena, and, partly by auguries, partly by conjectures, predicted the future.”

–The Philosopher and the Druids:162



The grand periods for initiation into the Druidical Mysteries, were quarterly; at the equinoxes and solstices. In the remote times when they originated, these were the times corresponding with the 13th of February, 1st of May, 19th of August, and 1st of November. The time of annual celebration was May-Eve, and the ceremonial preparations commenced at midnight, on the 29th of April. When the initiations were over, on May-Eve, fires were kindled on all the cairns and cromlechs in the island, which burned all night to introduce the sports of May-day. The festival was in honor of the Sun. The initiations were performed at midnight; and there were three Degrees... Taliesin, describing his initiation, says: "The secrets were imparted to me by the old Giantess (Ceridwen, or Isis), without the use of audible language." And again he says, "I am a silent proficient."

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## Skellig Michael Celtic Monastery

On the twenty-fifth of December, at the first moment of the day throughout all the ancient world, the birth-day of the god Sol was celebrated. This was the moment when, after the winter solstice, and the lowest point of his degradation below our hemisphere, Sol began to increase, and gradually to ascend. At this moment, in all the ancient religions, his birth was kept: from India to the Ultima Thule [a mysterious island 'north' of Britain], these ceremonies partook of the same character: everywhere the God was feigned to be born, and his festival was celebrated with great rejoicings.

The Druids called Sol 'Lord'. This was enough for them; everything which related to this Lord they seized on. Their monasteries, many of them built before the Christian era, had from time immemorial been dedicated to the God Sol. And the rites of this Lord became, after long and bloody feuds between different Celtic tribes, spliced into and amalgamated with Christianity. Thus was the 25th of December, the Heathen festival of the God Sol, selected as the birth-day of Christ, and the Druidical festival of the Winter Solstice became a Christian rite. –CelticDruids:164-5

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“Notre Dame de Sous Terre”  
at Chartres Cathedral





The first Druids were the true children of the Magi, and their initiation came from Egypt and Chaldæa, that is to say, from the pure sources of the primitive Kabbalah. They adored the Trinity under the names of *Isis* or *Hesus*, the Supreme Harmony; of *Belen* or *Bel*, which in Assyrian means Lord, a name corresponding to that of ADONAI; and of *Camul* or *Camaël*, a name that in the Kabbalah personifies the Divine Justice. Below this triangle of Light they supposed a divine reflection, also composed of three personified rays: first, *Teutates* or *Teuth*, the same as the *Thoth* of the Egyptians, the Word, or the Intelligence formulated; then Force and Beauty, whose names varied like their emblems. Finally, they completed the sacred Septenary by a mysterious image that represented the progress of the dogma and its future realizations. This was a young girl veiled, holding a child in her arms; and they dedicated this image to "The Virgin who will become a mother;--*Virgini parituræ*."

—Morals and Dogma:112

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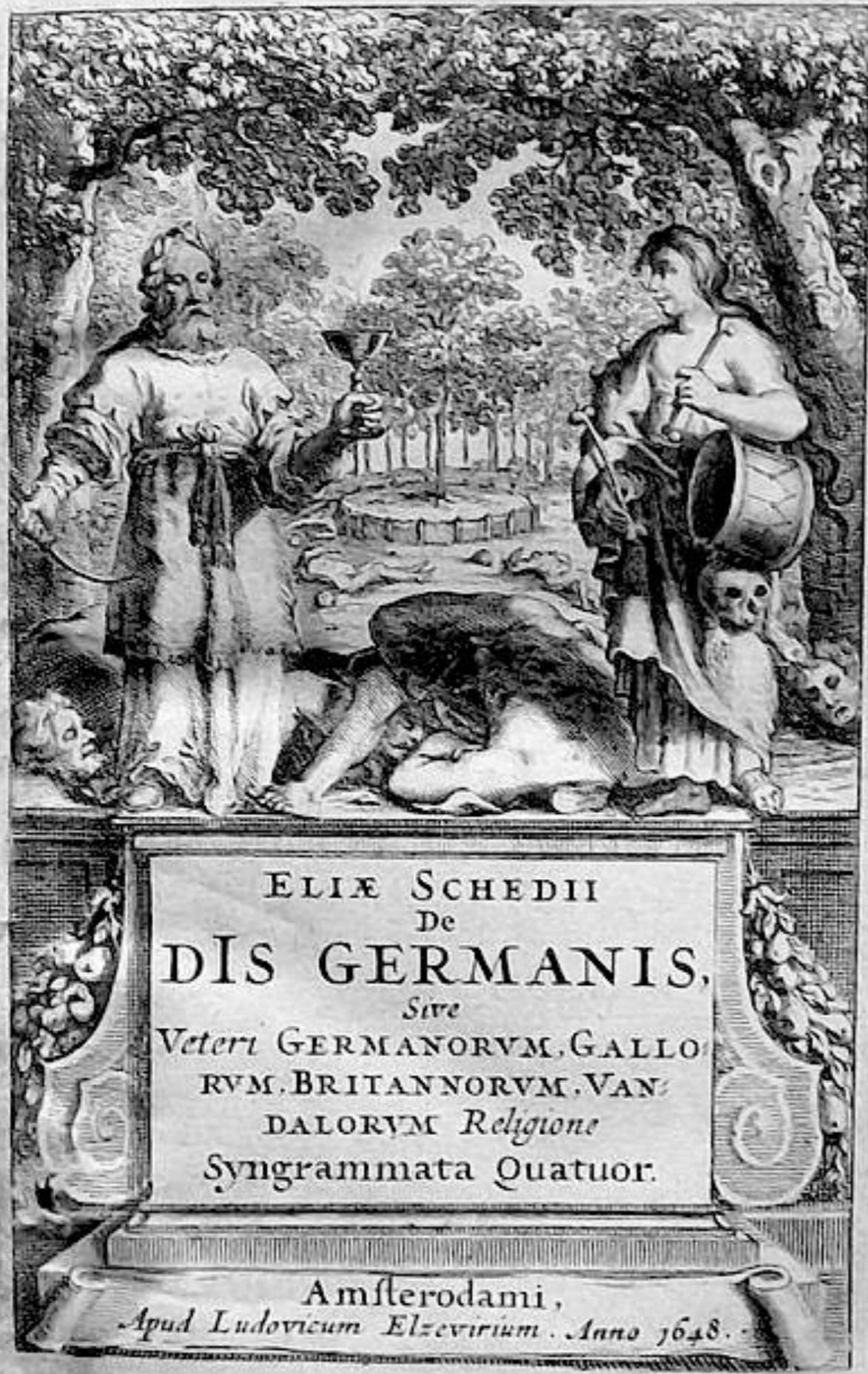
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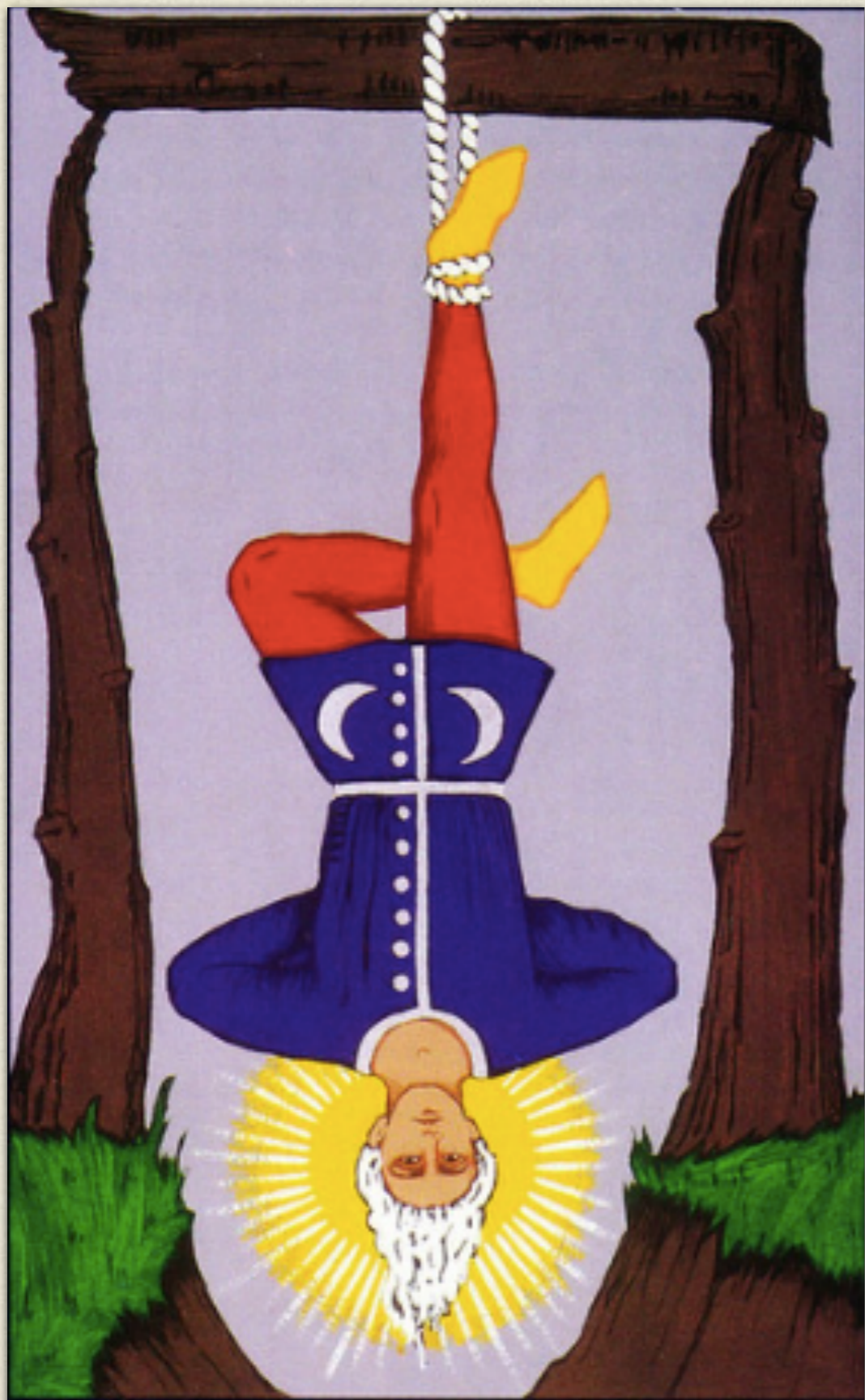


“The Druids seek studiously for an oak tree, large and handsome, growing up with two principal arms, in form of a cross, beside the main stem upright. If the two horizontal arms are not sufficiently adapted to the figure, they fasten a cross-beam to it. This tree they consecrate in this manner. Upon the right branch they cut in the bark, in fair characters, the word HESUS, upon the middle or upright stem the word TARAMIS, upon the left branch BELENUS, over this, above the going off of the arms, they cut the name of God, THAU, under all the same repeated THAU.

“This tree so inscribed, they make their *kebla* in the grove cathedral, or summer church, toward which they direct their faces in the offices of religion...” –Elias Schedius, “De Dis Germanis: Sive Veteri Germanorum, Gallorum, Britannorum, Vandalorum, Religione, Syngammata Quatuor”



“This Tau was the symbol of the Druidical Jupiter. It consisted of a great oak, deprived of all its branches, except only two large ones, which, though cut off and separated, were suspended from the top of its trunk, like extended arms. –CelticDruids:130



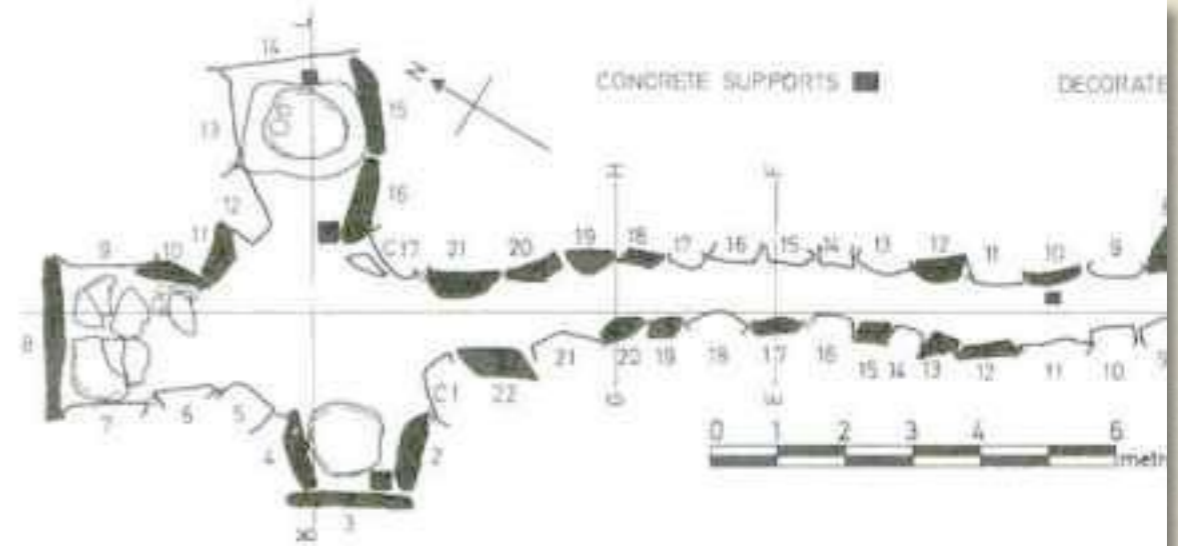
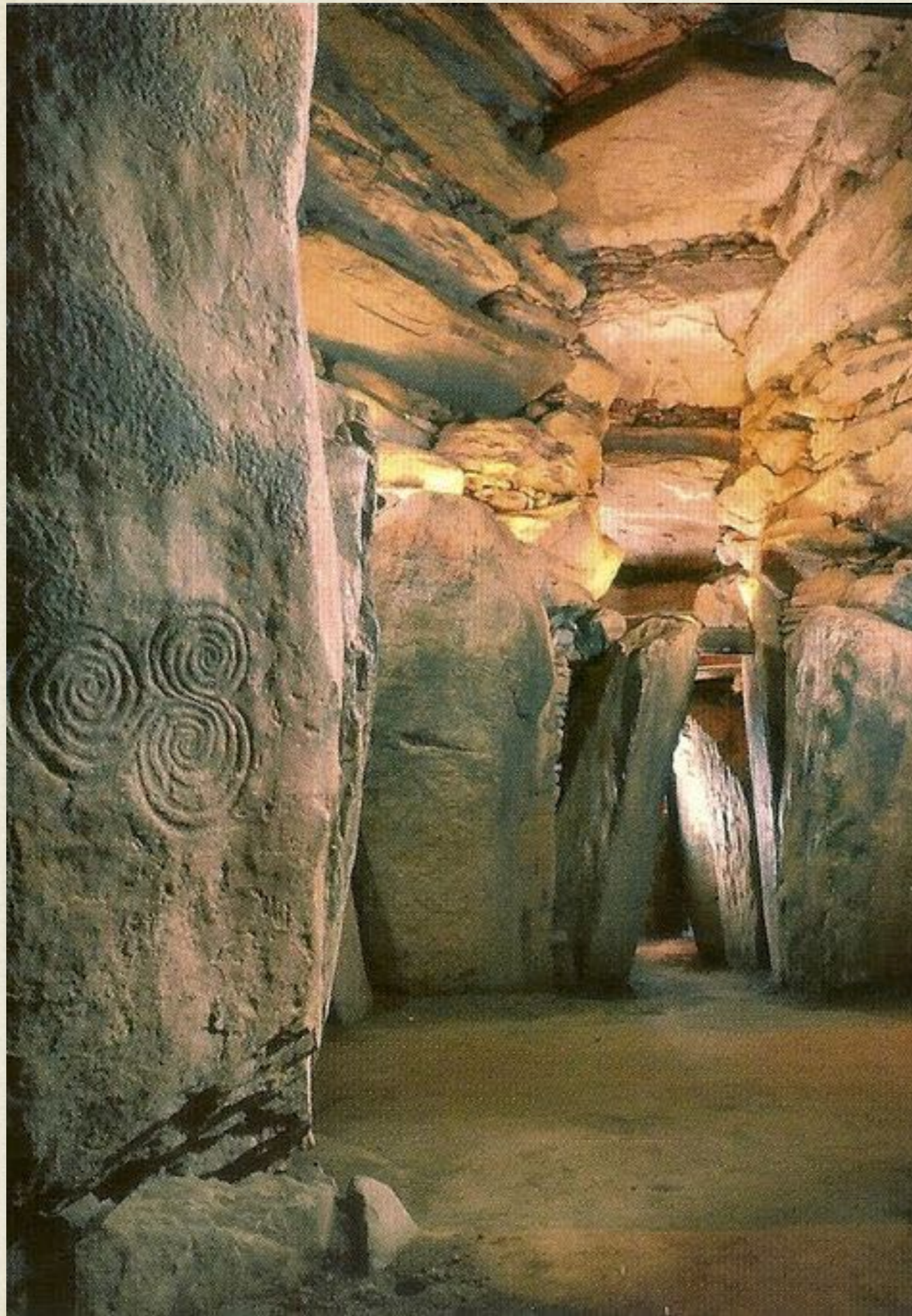
12

**HANGED MAN**



The T-Cross is a cross of living wood to symbolize the cosmic life, and is shaped like the Hebrew letter Tav.

–The Tarot, by Paul Foster Case



The Grotto at New Grange in Ireland

It is certain that the Indians, Egyptians, and Arabians paid veneration to the sign of the Cross, thousands of years before the coming of Christ. Everywhere it was a sacred symbol. The Hindus and the Celtic Druids built many of their Temples in the form of a Cross, as the ruins still remaining clearly show, and particularly the ancient Druidical Temple at Classerniss on the Island of Lewis in Scotland. The Circle is of 12 Stones. On each of the sides, east, west, and south, are three. In the centre was the image of the Deity; and on the north an avenue of twice nineteen stones, and one at the entrance. The Supernal Pagoda at Benares is in the form of a Cross; and the Druidical subterranean grotto at New Grange in Ireland. –Morals and Dogma:533

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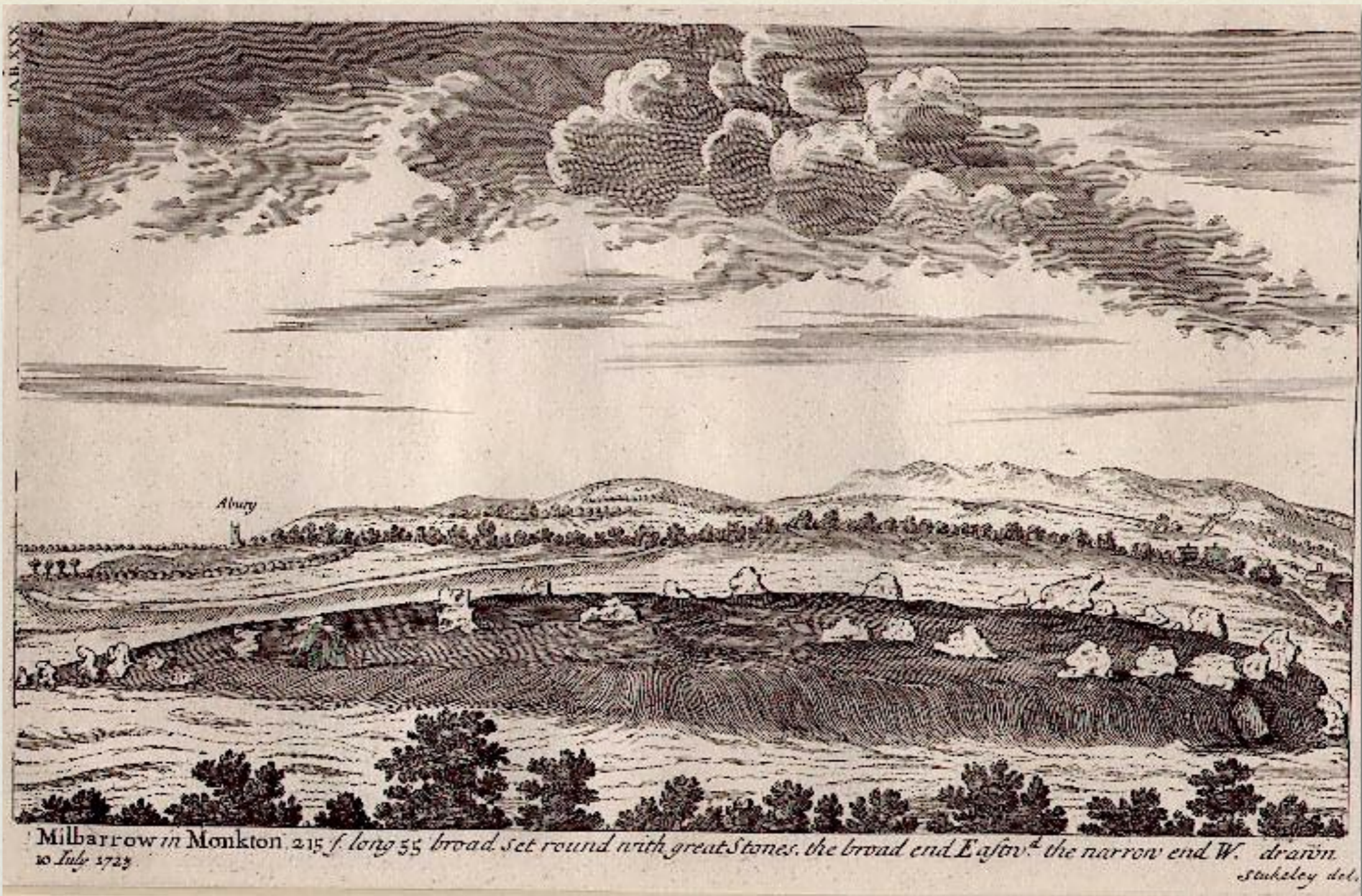
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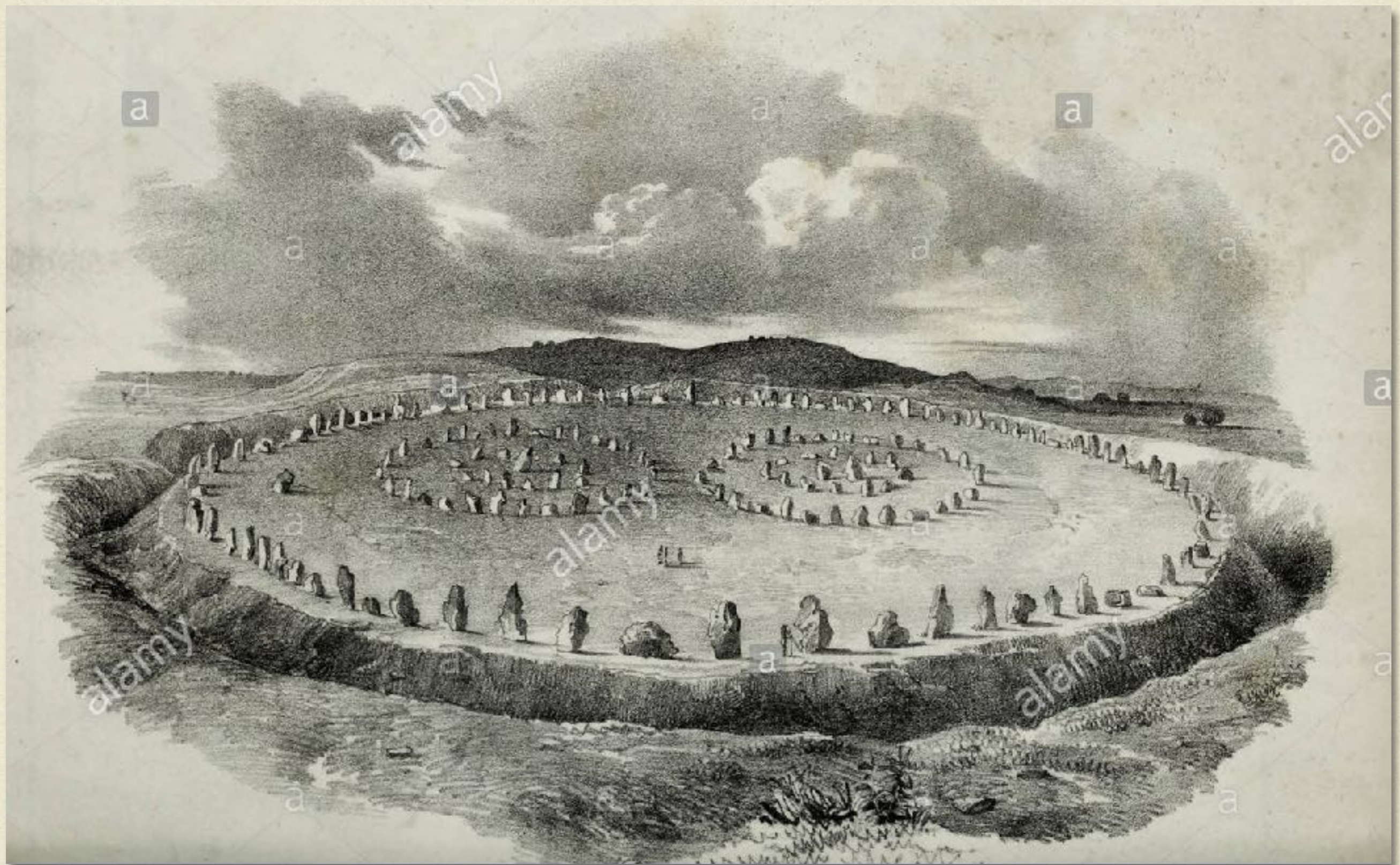




Prior to Catholicism, the Irish practised a form of Celtic paganism, similar to the Dogon religion. The serpent and fish-like alien *Nummo*, who were most often referred to as "the Serpent" by the Dogon elder Ogotemmêli, appear all over Celtic Ireland. –shannondorey.com



An infinity of learning has been displayed by Dr. Stukeley, to prove, that the Druids worshiped serpents. And I should suppose, that everything which any one of the ancients has ever said upon the subject of serpent worship, may be found in his book upon Abury. I think the shape of that temple must satisfy anyone, that they did pay it some kind of adoration. Dr. Borlase allows that if the Druids had groves consecrated to Mithras, a God whose common symbol was a serpent, and temples in a serpentine form, they must have been worshipers of serpents.



All temples were originally open at the top, having for roof the sky. Twelve pillars described the belt of the zodiac. Whatever the number of the pillars, they were mystical everywhere. At Abury, the Druidic temple reproduced all the cycles by its columns. —Morals and Dogma:248

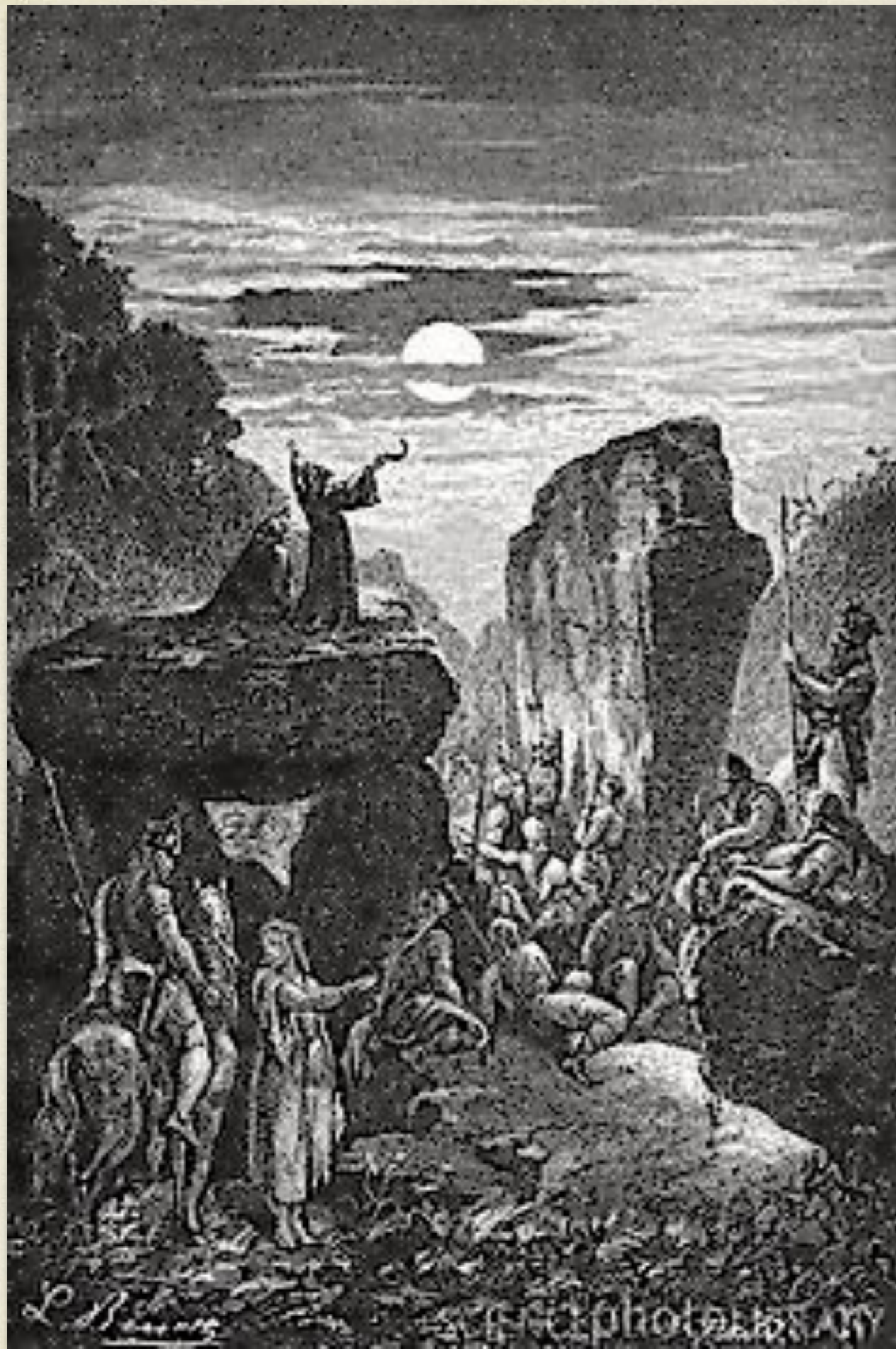
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By the bright circle of the golden sun,  
By the bright courses of the errant moon,  
By the dread potency of every star  
In the mysterious Zodiac's burning girth,  
By each, and all of these supernal signs,  
We do adjure thee, with this trusty blade,  
To guard yon central oak, whose holy stem  
Involves the spirit of high Taranis:  
This be thy charge. —Druid prayer

Like nearly all schools of the Mysteries, the teachings of the Druids were divided into two distinct sections. The simpler, a moral code, was taught to all the people, while the deeper, esoteric doctrine was given only to initiated priests. To be admitted to the order, a candidate was required to be of good family and of high moral character. No important secrets were entrusted to him until he had been tempted in many ways and his strength of character severely tried. The Druids taught the people of Britain and Gaul concerning the immortality of the soul. They believed in transmigration and apparently in reincarnation. They borrowed in one life, promising to pay back in the next. They believed in a purgatorial type of hell where they would be purged of their sins, afterward passing on to the happiness of unity with the gods. The Druids taught that all men would be saved, but that some must return to earth many times to learn the lessons of human life and to overcome the inherent evil of their own natures.

Before a candidate was entrusted with the secret doctrines of the Druids, he was bound with a vow of secrecy. These doctrines were imparted only in the depths of forests and in the darkness of caves. In these places, far from the haunts of men, the neophyte was instructed concerning the creation of the universe, the personalities of the gods, the laws of Nature, the secrets of occult medicine, the mysteries of the celestial bodies, and the rudiments of magic and sorcery. The Druids had a great number of feast days. The new and full moon and the sixth day of the moon were sacred periods. It is believed that initiations took place only at the two solstices and the two equinoxes. At dawn of the 25th day of December, the birth of the Sun God was celebrated.

The secret teachings of the Druids are said by some to be tinctured with Pythagorean philosophy. The Druids had a Madonna, or Virgin Mother, with a Child in her arms, who was sacred to their Mysteries; and their Sun God was resurrected at the time of the year corresponding to that at which modern Christians celebrate Easter.

Both the cross and the serpent were sacred to the Druids, who made the former by cutting off all the branches of an oak tree and fastening one of them to the main trunk in the form of the letter T. This oaken cross became symbolic of their superior Deity. They also worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. The moon received their special veneration. Caesar stated that Mercury was one of the chief deities of the Gauls. The Druids are believed to have worshiped Mercury under the similitude of a stone cube. They also had great veneration for the Nature spirits (fairies, gnomes, and undines), little creatures of the forests and rivers to whom many offerings were made. Describing the temples of the Druids, Charles Heckethorn, in *The Secret Societies of All Ages & Countries*, says:

"Their temples wherein the sacred fire was preserved were generally situated on eminences and in dense groves of oak, and assumed various forms— circular, because a circle was the emblem of the universe; oval, in allusion to the mundane egg, from which issued, according to the traditions of many nations, the universe, or, according to others, our first parents; serpentine, because a serpent was the symbol of Hu, the Druidic Osiris; cruciform, because a cross is an emblem of regeneration; or winged, to represent the motion of the Divine Spirit. \* \* \* Their chief deities were reducible to two— a male and a female, the great father and mother— Hu and Ceridwen, distinguished by the same characteristics as belong to Osiris and Isis, Bacchus and Ceres, or any other supreme god and goddess representing the two principles of all Being." ST0AA:23

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*L. Hughes del.*

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AN INWARD VIEW OF STONE-HENGE.





## Temples at Bramham Grove, Yorkshire

From an examination of the Teutonic words for “temple” Grimm has made it probable that amongst the Germans, the oldest sanctuaries were natural woods. However this may be, tree-worship is well attested for all the great European families of the Aryan stock. Amongst the Celts the oak-worship of the Druids is familiar to everyone. Sacred groves were common among the ancient Germans, and tree-worship is hardly extinct amongst their descendants at the present day. At Upsala, the old religious capital of Sweden, there was a sacred grove in which every tree was regarded as divine. –The Golden Bough:59

Strabo says that the poets call temples by the name of groves; which Dr. Stukeley says was often done in Scripture. These groves were kept by priests who dwelt there for that purpose. It is evident from Tacitus, that the temples of the Druids in Anglesey were in oaken groves. Bramham in Yorkshire, was an immense forest of oak.

—CelticDruids:229

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Godfrey Higgins states that *Hu*, the Mighty, regarded as the first settler of Britain, came from a place which the Welsh *Triads* call the Summer Country, the present site of Constantinople. Albert Pike says that the Lost Word of Masonry is concealed in the name of the Druid god *Hu*. The meager information extant concerning the secret initiations of the Druids indicates a decided similarity between their Mystery school and the schools of Greece and Egypt. *Hu*, the Sun God, was murdered and, after a number of strange ordeals and mystic rituals, was restored to life.

There were three degrees of the Druidic Mysteries, but few successfully passed them all. The candidate was buried in a coffin, as symbolic of the death of the Sun God. The supreme test, however, was being sent out to sea in an open boat. While undergoing this ordeal, many lost their lives. Taliesin, an ancient scholar, who passed through the Mysteries, describes the initiation of the open boat in Faber's *Pagan Idolatry*. The few who passed this third degree were said to have been "born again," and were instructed in the secret and hidden truths which the Druid priests had preserved from antiquity. From these initiates were chosen many of the dignitaries of the British religious and political world. (For further details, see Faber's *Pagan Idolatry*, Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*, and Godfrey Higgins' *Celtic Druids*.) STOAA:23



The British God Hu was called “The Dragon-Ruler of the World,” and his car was drawn by serpents. His ministers were styled adders. A Druid in a poem of Taliesin says, “I am a Druid, I am an Architect, I am a Prophet, I am a Serpent (Gnadi).” The Car of the Goddess Ceridwen also was drawn by serpents.

In the elegy of Uther Pendragon, this passage occurs in a description of the religious rites of the Druids: “While the Sanctuary is earnestly invoking The Gliding King, before whom the Fair One retreats, upon the evil that covers the huge stones; whilst the Dragon moves round over the places which contain vessels of drink-offering, whilst the drink-offering is in the Golden Horns...” —Morals and Dogma:531



All that lies hidden behind the sense-world, as the sun behind the clouds, the hidden spirit, was known in these Mysteries by the name of “Hu.” “Ceridwen” was the seeking soul. And all the rites of Initiation were a means of revealing to the pupil that death is only one of the many processes in life. Death changes nothing at all in the innermost kernel of man's being. — In the Druidic Mysteries (*Druid* denotes an Initiate of the third degree), the neophyte was put into a condition resembling death; his senses could not function as organs of perception. A man whose only instrument of perception is the physical body or the physical brain has no consciousness in a condition where his senses cease to function. But in Initiation, the senses — feeling, hearing and so on — cease to function, and yet the neophyte is able to experience and observe. The principle which observes was called “Ceridwen” — the soul. And that which comes to meet the soul, as light and sound come to our outer eyes and ears, was called “Hu” — the spiritual world. The Initiate experienced the union between Ceridwen and Hu. Such experiences are described in the myths. When we are told today that the ancients paid homage to a God Hu and a Goddess Ceridwen, this is simply another way of describing Initiation. The true myths are always concerned with Initiation. It is empty chatter to say that these myths have an astronomical meaning, that Ceridwen is the moon and Hu the sun, and so on. These myths originated because their creators were conscious of an inner union between the aspiring soul and the *spirit* of the sun, *not* the physical sun. The Mysteries of Hu and Ceridwen, then, were those into which men were initiated in the regions of which we are speaking.

—The European Mysteries and Their Initiates, a lecture by Rudolph Steiner



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The main features of the Druidical Mysteries resembled those of the Orient. The ceremonies commenced with a hymn to the sun. The candidates were arranged in ranks of threes, fives, and sevens, according to their qualifications; and conducted nine times around the Sanctuary, from East to West. The candidate underwent many trials, one of which had direct reference to the legend of Osiris. He was placed in a boat, and sent out to sea alone, having to rely on his own skill and presence of mind to reach the opposite shore in safety. The death of *Hu* was represented in his hearing, with every external mark of sorrow, while he was in utter darkness. He met with many obstacles, had to prove his courage, and expose his life against armed enemies; represented by various animals, and at last, attaining the permanent light, he was instructed by the Arch-Druid in regard to the Mysteries, and in the morality of the Order, incited to act bravely in war, taught the great truths of the immortality of the soul and a future state, solemnly enjoined not to neglect the worship of the Deity, nor the practice of rigid morality; and to avoid sloth, contention, and folly.

The aspirant attained only the exoteric knowledge in the first two Degrees. The third was attained only by a few, and they persons of rank and consequence, and after long purification, and study of all the arts and sciences known to the Druids, in solitude, for nine months. This was the symbolical death and burial of these Mysteries.

The dangerous voyage upon the actual open sea, in a small boat covered with a skin, on the evening of the 29th of April, was the last trial, and closing scene, of initiation. If he declined this trial, he was dismissed with contempt. If he made it and succeeded, he was termed thrice-born, was eligible to all the dignities of the State, and received complete instruction in the philosophical and religious doctrines of the Druids. –Morals and Dogma:453-4