

Notes from the Underground

It is with great pleasure that we welcome back Jenny Blain and Robert Wallis, whose work first appeared in our Fall 98 issue. In this instance, they are the co-authors of an article on the fascinating subject of seidhrwork and gender. Those of us who are (still!) running into people who believe that only women can be Witches will be interested in the parallels between this all-too-common misunderstanding and the challenges faced by Heathen men who engaged in the oracular practice of seidhr.

In the earliest days of Neopaganism, nearly all of us believed that the basic elements of our religion were descended from either Classical Paganism or Neolithic tribal practices, and that these had survived in Europe alongside the official state religion for a millennium or so, only to be ruthlessly and (almost) completely wiped out by the terrors of the Inquisition. Subsequent, however, to the publication of Brian Levack's *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe* in 1987, and Aidan Kelly's *Crafting the Art of Magic* in 1991, these beliefs have generally fallen out of favour, at least among the majority of educated Neopagans.

Two senior Pagan scholars, Donald Frew and Max Dashu, have continued to resist this trend, and we are happy to be able to present articles by both of them, written especially for *The Pomegranate* at our request. Frew, well known for his critiques of Kelly (and more recently of Ronald Hutton and Jacqueline Simpson; see the most recent issue of

Ethnologies), writes about a hitherto unsuspected vector for the transmission of religious ideas and sacred texts from Classical Antiquity to Medieval Europe by way of the Islamic center of scholarship at Harran. Dashu writes in response to Jenny Gibbon's article in our Summer 98 issue, questioning the new models of the Witch Hunt which are being proposed by social historians such as Robin Briggs, Norman Cohn, and Brian Levack. Those who wish to learn more about the work of Ms Dashu and her Suppressed History Archives should refer to the bio sketch on p 43.

We have followed these articles with an essay on the difference(s) between myth and history by John Michael Greer, co-author of the now-famous (or infamous) 'Red God' article that appeared recently in *Gnosis* magazine.

The new edition of Leland's *Aradia* is reviewed here by Sabina Magliocco. Further reviews or letters about this landmark publishing event are actively encouraged.

We mentioned in the introduction to our previous issue that no one had yet commented on our new layout and typeface. We've received several responses since that time—one of which appears in our letters column—and as a result we have returned to a denser typeface, while maintaining our two-column layout. We have also reversed the previous trend toward longer and longer call outs, restricting ourselves to short quotes surrounded by more 'air'. We hope you continue to enjoy our evolving appearance, and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Persephone's hard-working minions.