Notes from the Underground

Even before The Pomegranate began publishing, we were receiving requests for articles which addressed the wider interests of the broader Neopagan community. We are pleased to present two such offerings in this issue. The first is by Jenny Blain, from Canada’s Dalhousie University, and deals with an exciting oracular element as it appears in both modern Heathen practice and its related history. The second, by England’s Robert Wallis, has been adapted from a paper he presented at last year’s Anthropology of Consciousness conference in Portland, Oregon. This controversial piece represents its author’s evaluation of the current relationship between native shamans, Neoshamanic practitioners, and the interest taken by the academic community in both.

We are also delighted to be able to reprint an article, “The Old Religion”, which originally appeared as the introduction to Gnosis magazine’s recent issue on Neopaganism. In our editorial opinion, Gnosis magazine, from its beginning in 1985, has always stood head-and-shoulders above those current alternative religions publications which are aimed at the broader reading public. Pom readers are encouraged to check out its early issues, particularly #9: “Northern Mysteries” and #13: “Goddesses”. We especially recommend the recent issue #48: “Witchcraft & Paganism” (in which this article appeared) and the subsequent #49: “The New Age?” (especially those Letters to the Editor addressing issues raised in the previous issue) as required reading for all those interested in continuing to push the edges of the Neopagan envelope.

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We are also pleased to present yet another article on the Gimbutas paradigm, this one original to The Pom, written from the point of view of academic archaeology.

And speaking of Letters to the Editor, we would like to thank all our subscribers who contributed to the Readers’ Forum — which we are happy to reinstate in this issue. Because of space constraints we were only able to publish a fraction of the many letters we received. We hope that this enthusiastic engagement with the process of scholarly dialogue on the part of our readers in not a one-time event. Keep up the good work, and keep those cards and letters coming! We hope, by the next issue, to be able to continue our ‘Workings’ and ‘Book Review’ sections, to which we encourage our readers to contribute.

Persephone’s Hard-working Minions