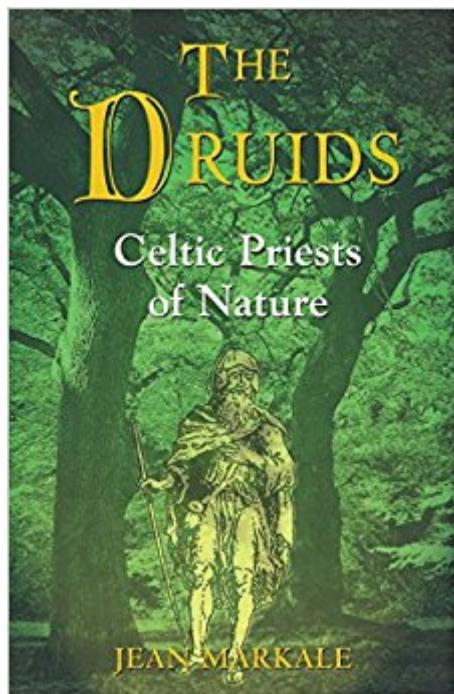


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# The Druids: Celtic Priests Of Nature



## Synopsis

A comprehensive and revealing look at the druids and their fundamental role in Celtic society that dispels many of the misconceptions about these important religious figures and their doctrine. Written by the world's leading authority on Celtic culture Druidism was one of the greatest and most exalting adventures of the human spirit, attempting to reconcile the unreconcilable, the individual and the collective, creator and created, good and evil, day and night, past and future, and life and death. Because of the oral nature of Celtic civilization our understanding of its spiritual truths and rituals is necessarily incomplete. Yet evidence exists that can provide the modern reader with a better understanding of the doctrine that took druidic apprentices 20 years to learn in the remote forests of the British Isles and Gaul. Using the descriptions of the druids and their beliefs provided by the historians and chroniclers of classic antiquity--as well as those recorded by the insular Celts themselves when compelled, under Christianity's influence, to utilize writing to preserve their ancestral traditions--Jean Markale painstakingly pieces together all that is known for certain about them. The druids were more than simply the priests of the Celtic people; their influence extended to all aspects of Celtic life. The Druids covers everything concerning the Celtic religious domain, intellectual speculations, cultural or magical practices, various beliefs, and the so-called profane sciences that have come down from the Celtic priesthood.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"There is no better spokesman for the ancient Celts than Jean Markale." (AndrÃ© Breton, author of

Manifestoes of Surrealism)" . . a very fascinating and informative book (no fluff here), definitely not to be missed." (Belladonna's Book Shelf, Feb 2007)"Do yourself a favor and expand your view of Druids and Celtic culture. Buy this book and read it. Decide for yourself if you agree with the author's premise. Then take the time to think about it in depth and see if your opinions change." (Mike Gleason, Witchgrove, 2007)

Text: English (translation) Original Language: French

Jean Markale's book "The Druids: Celtic Priests of Nature" must be read several times to grasp all that it says. This is not in any way because the book is poorly written - on the contrary it is very well written, and contains so much information that it must be read several times just to begin to grasp the depth of its content. Markale begins by looking at the history of the druid's name throughout history, where both Greek and Latin historians recognized that druids were knowledgeable of the secrets of nature ~ they were much more than mere magicians. Furthermore he shows a link between druids and the disciples of Pythagoras. (Though it is quite unlikely that the druids had any direct contact with Pythagoras himself.) We see the role of druids in society. Often serving as judges, counselors and advisors to kings, and peacemakers between nations; the role of peacemaker in no way prevented the druids from participating in combat if there was a need to do so. The druids are contrasted with the revealed religions of Islam and Christianity. Without disparaging the great revealed religions, Markale clearly shows that druidry and all the texts that belong to it are well worthy of interest and study. The great knowledge and power of the druids naturally leads to the question: Where did the druids come from? Markale explains the common misconception that the druids were the builders of the megalithic monuments (such as Stonehenge). We then see good evidence (in "The Battle of Mag Tured) that druidry was studied by the mysterious 'Tuatha de Danann'. It is said that "The Tuatha de Danann were in the Isles of the North of the World, learning science, magic druidism, sorcery and wisdom, and they surpassed all the sages in the pagan arts." This of course leaves us to question just where are the 'Isles of the North of the World'. If we are to take this as literal we have a clear connection to Nordic culture. This seems to be incontestable for there is certainly a strong connection between the druids and the vitki (rune masters) of the North. It was the Tuatha de Danann that brought the four fundamental talismans of Celtic Theology: The Stone of Fal (or Coronation Stone); the Fiery Spear of Lugh; the Sword of Nuada; and Dagda's inexhaustible cauldron. Markale continues by offering insight to the 'gods of the druids'. Although we read of "The Father of All" and "The Three-Faced Goddess" we also see that the druids did not

follow their "gods" in the way of those who profess one of the revealed religions, rather they interacted with the gods of a well established 'mythology (?)' / faith. Though the druids did not 'worship' in the manner of today's religions, they did have a number of initiations and rituals. Markale gives us insight into the druid sanctuary, the mistletoe and plant rituals, sacrifices and the four elements. It was (and is) the four elements that reveal the power of the druids in that they have the ability to control earth, air, fire and water. Each element is used in various rituals bringing the druid into closer contact with nature. Finally, Markale comments on neo-druidry. Today there are many groups that attempt to follow the traditions of the druids. The religious thought and theology of the druids carry on today... offering knowledge, wisdom and insight to those who seek it. Overall, I found "The Druids: Celtic Priests of Nature" a very interesting and enlightening book, well worth study and reading.

Yes, the author certainly does seem to know his stuff. This is not a book about Faeries, nor does it cater to the modern ceremonial gown-wearing set. It seems that specific Druidic wisdom has been hidden well over the centuries. Marcale digs deep and comes up with some interesting and plausible interpretations for those who are interested in more than archeological artifacts and poetry. Especially interesting was the mention of the Druid "speaker" who apparently put the concept of Logos to work as a matter of everyday living. My Webster's defines Logos as "constituting the controlling principle of the universe and as being manifested by speech." It is obvious after reading (and studying) this splendid work that each ancient initiate who was sent away to a Druid school - for say twenty years(!), did not just go to frat parties and memorize poems. No, there must have been more than that; perhaps hands-on psychology, politics, psychism, medicine etc., to make a graduate super-human who would then have had the nous to advise a king to rule wisely. Imagine, twenty years! Most of us try to run a seventy year life-time only on what we learn in grade school.

Very Academic and heavy going but exceptionally well documented.

Great book for those interested in the Druid religion or history of the Celtic people!

If you are interested in celtic ancient druids, this is a very interested read. Well researched. If you aren't a believer already, you will be after reading this book. Another source to beginnings of christianity. Highly recommend.

This book is informative, and well written. It came in perfect condition, and has been quite useful so far. Great book!

I know that there is a guy on this page who reviewed it saying the same thing. But it IS the truth. This man does his research, shows WHY historically and/or mythologically, he makes claims. He debunks a lot of the crapola out there available just by presenting the evidence. I started with his book on Halloween and moved on to this one. If you want to get a feel for what the Celtic ancestors believed and what they did and have it make sense (unlike direct translations of mythology and dry academic texts) both books a superb! I was on a search for this for 13 years, looking for the truth not what neo-pagans and Wiccans claimed to be truth. I did not like the cut and paste methods the former use to make something "Celtic: i.e. use Greek ritual structure and use Celtic gods. Talk about whacky. If you don't know what I mean by that, read his books and you WILL understand. This book is a little hard to get into at the beginning. I would recommend starting on a chapter that sounds interesting and reading the first few chapters later. Go for it!! Reconstructionist Celtic imbas.org

Have started to read it twice, having some trouble enjoying it.

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