

Boudicca's Bard

Different Pagan Traditions

Collected and partially (re)written by GardenStone

What are the differences between the different traditions and how many actually are there....

There are probably about as many different traditions out there as there are pagans. ;-)

But to help answer this question, below a text that discusses some of the various traditions.

BRANCHES OF THE WICCA

There are many different traditions or branches of the Wicca. These depend upon the original location of each coven's ancestors within the area known as Western and Insular Europe. Each is different in many ways -- the way in which the rituals are performed, the wear (or lack of wear) within the circle, the language which is spoken within the circle, the system of training, the symbols used, etc. All are the same in that they honor the Deities of Nature, live by the philosophy of "Harm none and do what you will," believe in reincarnation, and

have the knowledge of working a specific form of magick.

There are many so-called "courses" on "How to become a Witch" ranging in price from a dollar to several hundred dollars, none of which are enlightening to the well read, nor do they reveal any of the secrets of the Wicca. For the curious, perhaps, they can be of benefit - for the serious, they are at most worthless, and more often than not, dangerous and inaccurate.

The following are brief descriptions of some of the various traditions within Wicca:

GARDNERIAN

A branch of Wicca deriving its name from Gerald B. Gardner who was initiated into a coven of Witches in the New Forest in Britain and who helped greatly in the advancement of the truth about Wicca by his love for it and his writings on the subject. It is inherently Celtic in origin encompassing rituals as practiced in Southern England. Ritual nudity is required at all times.

TRADITIONAL

Many branches of the Craft which claim to be pre-Gardnerian. This covers a lot of territory, again depending upon the area of origin (i.e., Wales, Scotland, Ireland, etc.). Ritual nudity is sometimes required. Some groups are strictly robed.

ALEXANDRIAN

A branch in Wicca deriving its name from Alexander Sanders. This is a form of Gardnerian Wicca (rather, a form which "borrowed" much of Gardnerianism). It is very ceremonial, encompassing much of Quabalistic magick, etc. Ritual nudity plays a part but it is not required, the choice being left to the individual Witch.

CONTINENTAL

This can be put under the heading of "Traditional," again depending upon origin (France, Germany, Spain, Basque, etc.).

STREGERIA

This can be put under the heading of "Continental." It is Witchcraft as practiced in Italy and Sicily, each area of Italy and Sicily practicing according to their own folk-tradition. These are extremely secretive peoples, but much can be learned about them by reading Leland's *ARADIA: THE GOSPEL OF WITCHES* and Leo Martello's *WITCHCRAFT: THE OLD RELIGION*.

HEREDITARY

Pockets of Hereditary Witches do exist in Europe and America, carrying on their family traditions. They are usually the most secretive, preferring to work alone or only within their families. Their form of Witchcraft is almost entirely different than what we know as Wicca.

DIANIC

This branch of Wicca lays a great stress on the Goddess, sometimes entirely ignoring Her Horned Consort. I do not know much about them, but they seem to be similar to Gardnerian (or vice versa). Perhaps this was the original tradition that Gerald Gardner was initiated into.

THE NEW REFORMED ORDER OF THE GOLDEN

DAWN

A neo-Gardnerian or quasi-Gardnerian group founded by a Californian named Aidan Kelly. They are a beautiful and idealistic form of the Wicca, constantly researching into our ancient heritage.

AMERICAN-CELTIC

Perhaps the largest and fastest growing form of Wicca in America originating out of the Twin City area (Minneapolis-St.Paul). Their form is akin to Gardnerian, though ritual nudity is not required by all of their covens.

SEAX-WICCA

One of the newer branches of the Craft are the SEAX-WICCA, formulated by Dr. Raymond Buckland (formerly a Gardnerian), based upon the religion of the Saxons. It is a unique system which has eliminated the Degrees and operates upon a democratic level. Unlike other traditions, non-initiates are permitted at times to witness the rituals.

WICCA

Another recent one is simply called WICCA and was formulated by Edmund M. Buczynski from nine years of study and research into pre-Celtic and Celtic religions. It also is operated upon a democratic level. However, the three degrees have been kept as well as ritual nudity. Only initiates are permitted to attend meetings.

WELSH TRADITIONAL

This is a Celtic-derived tradition which incorporates the teachings

and mythology and traditions of Ancient Wales. There is a large group at present in Georgia, California, and New York.

MINOAN BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD

These groups are worshippers of the Cretan snake goddess whose holy priests and priestesses were historically homosexual. The Brotherhood and Sisterhood meet separately at the Esbats, but meet together at Sabbats.

There are many other groups, many are "underground" and shun any publicity. Most are small and isolated (like the **BOREADS**, a lovely tradition who call themselves the "children of the north wind"). The fact remains that all of these groups are legitimate representatives of Wicca in the world today.

Over the last few years new traditions were formed; f.i. there are now also:

Gipsy-Wicca
Nordic-Wicca
Greec Wicca
Egyptian Wicca
Voodoo-Wicca
Indian Wicca

etc. They can be recognized by the names the use for the Gods, the difference in rituals is just flavoured compared to the usual practice as f.i. described by the Farrars.

And, at last, there are within some of the bigger traditions (f.i. Gerdnerian and Alexandrian) differences that depend on local facts; there exist f.i. a 'West-coast' Wicca, a 'Scottish Wicca', where local myths, habits and such are adopted.



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