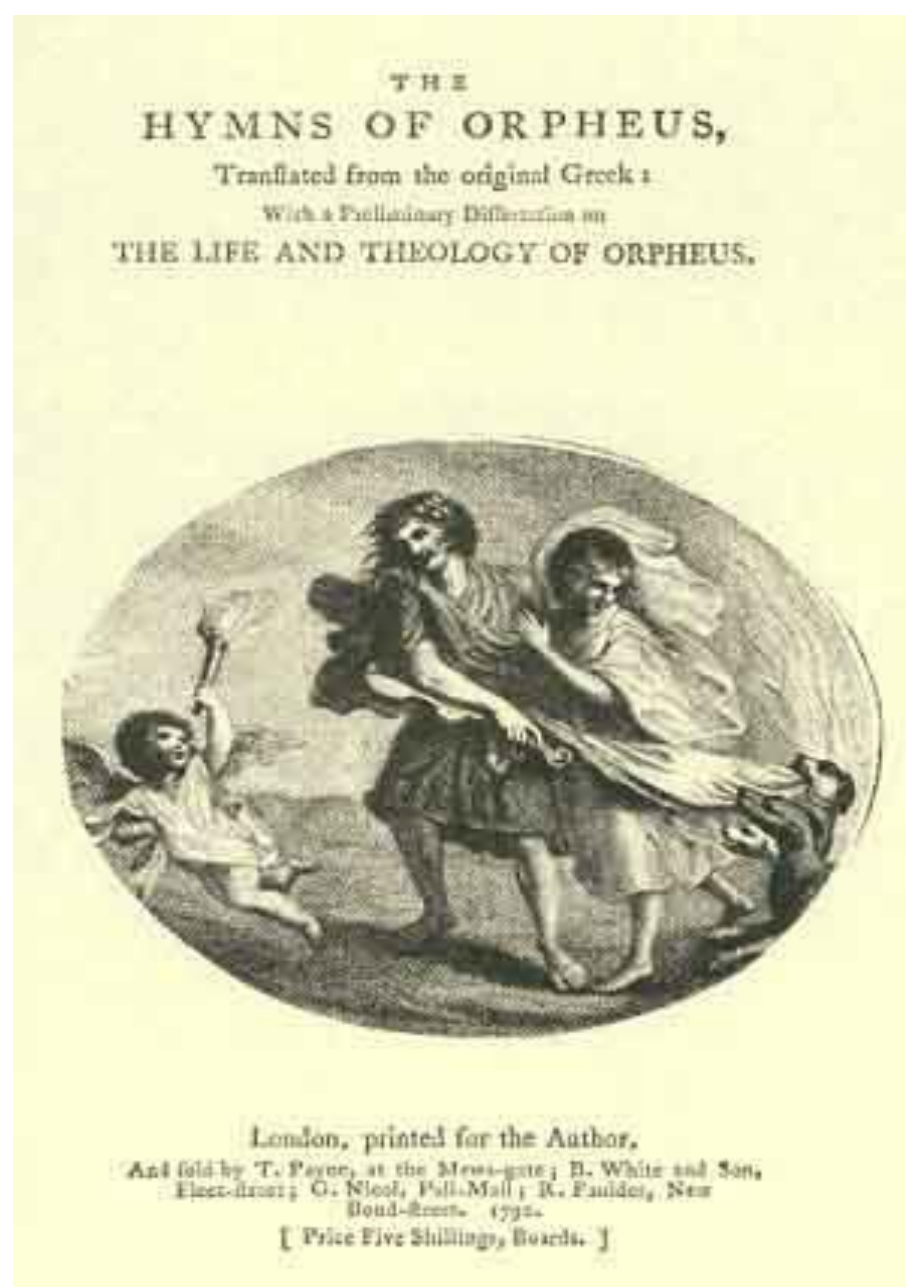


Online Reconstructed Neopagan Religions: Asatru, Hellenism, and Kemetism

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Hellenic Hymn Text

Introduction

Neopaganism is a broad category of religion that extends from shamanism to the New Age movement in America. Many people think of Wicca immediately after hearing the word 'neopagan,' but there are many different traditions that fall under the neopagan category. There are Nature religions, eclectic paganism, and reconstructed religions, which look to reconstruct the basis of ancient religions in places such as Greece, Rome, and Egypt. These religions are alternatively called ethnic religions, due to the fact that they are started by descendants eager to connect with the past of their people. However, these groups are not exclusive, as some practitioners become a member of simply because they feel a connection to the teachings, though their ethnicities may differ.

Though multiple groups of practicing neopagans are formed and learn together, they are not usually permanent as other religious organizations are. Since many neopagan Americans tend to practice their religion solitarily, a large amount of importance is given to books and websites about their particular religion basics. There are a few membership organizations based online for the more traditional, reconstructionist religions such as Hellenism, Asatru, and Kemetism. Additionally, individual practitioners write blogs and other websites in order to provide interested parties their personal description of how they practice their religion's rituals and set up their personal shrines or temples.

Because of the solitary nature of these religions, surely a big question in the forefront of many peoples' minds is how? How can a person participate in a religious ritual when they are only a member online? How do they interact with their peers, and how do they interact with their god(s)?



Kemetetic shrine

Abstract

The many religions that fall under the umbrella of Neopaganism in America are normally practiced individually or in small groups. Those ancient religions that have been reconstructed to be practiced in modern times— such as Nordic paganism (also Asatru), Egyptian religion, or Kemetism, and ancient Greek religion, or Hellenism— also follow this practice. Certain official organizations have memberships online, though they do not meet regularly. Small, local groups may meet on occasion, for specific holidays or rituals, but for such things as daily prayers and/or rituals, practitioners are on their own. In each of these religions, there are daily rituals which may be performed, such as caring for their god's shrine, leaving offerings, or meditation. A sense of community is needed for members of a shared religion, and online membership, supplemented with intermittent meetings between local members (if possible), accomplishes this. There may be weekly gatherings, as in church-Sundays in Christianity and Catholicism, but for the most part these religions are individualistic in nature. Many people follow these religions, but they are not as popular as Christianity. Hence the internet is an important source of information for those interested in their practices. People can sign up for classes about the religion, have their questions answered by an experienced follower, and receive support they are unable to get from their daily peers.



(Asatru) World Tree Publications Logo



Prayer beads

Online Membership in Neopagan Religions

Each of these three religions – Asatru, Hellenism, and Kemetism – have a few different organizations that offer both information and membership online. Some of these organizations even have classes that people can sign up for to learn more about the specific beliefs and practices of the religions. Additionally, many practitioners create blogs as more resources for curious passersby and those serious about becoming a Hellene/Asatruar/Kemet devotee. The abundance of online information about these religions may be due to the limited amount of practitioners. Though there are thousands of neopagans that follow these religious paths, they are a minority culture, and one that is not always judged fairly. Many members may not talk openly about their beliefs because of people's negative views. This makes it extremely difficult for exploring members to find those with the knowledge and discuss the possibility of beginning a life immersed in one of these religions.

Practicing members of Asatru, Hellenism, and Kemet are spread throughout America. Having a "home base," where existing members, potential members, and curious strangers can go to learn more about the beliefs of a particular religion, talk to a more knowledgeable follower, find a local group of practitioners, and find out about events, such as holidays and festivals. In addition to having their own website, some organizations, such as Hellenion, also have a Facebook page. Multiple organizations have their own newsletter site, which contain articles and essays written by members, newspaper articles of note that have been published, and in some cases, a list of blogs that members have posted. Other organizations have online shops, where people can support the group by buying such things as homemade jewelry. Hence, just because there may not be a large group gathering every week to celebrate and practice their faith, the people of these reconstructed religions still have strong communities, and practice their faith dutifully and individually.

THE VIKING RUNES				
5. Uruz Strength	4. Othila Separation	3. Assez Signals	2. Gebo Partnership	1. Mannaz The Self
19. Algiz Protection	9. Elhaz Defense	8. Jagan Fertility	7. Nauthiz Constraint	6. Perth Initiation
15. Teiwaz Warrior	14. Kano Opening	13. Jera Harvest	12. Wunjo Joy	11. Fehu Possessions
20. Raido Journey	19. Hagals Disruption	18. Laguz Flow	17. Ehwaz Movement	16. Berkano Growth
25. Othala Inknowable	24. Sowilo Wholeness	23. Isa Standstill	22. Dagaz Breakthrough	21. Thyrzaz Gate-way

Asatru runes