

The Global Goddess Oracle

First Harvest Season 2015

Welcome to the First Harvest

The summer is flying by. My granddaughters came down for a visit and we had a wonderful time. They helped me prepare the oat projects for my article. We also made bracelets and lavender eye masks. The lavender made the house smelt so good. I cannot believe it is August already. School will be back in session before we know it. It is hard to believe I have been out of school for a year. It seems like only yesterday I walked across the stage.



I am still recovering from my illness but know I am getting better. I still have a problem going outside because of the humidity makes the hard too thick to breathe. New breathing medicine has made all the difference in my breathing. So although the year of good health hasn't turned out the way I would have liked I have seen healthy changes in my life. Who knows maybe next year the health I was hoping for will happen.

Every day I think about Viktor Frankl's book *Man's Search for Meaning*. I thought it was a coincidence I reviewed, *The Practical Art of Divine Magic*. The author asked a question about what ideals you value. He asks the reader to take inventory with a pen and paper and record them in order of importance. At first I had a hard time with this exercise because I wasn't sure which values I thought were more important. After reading the author's example I agreed the most important value for me was freedom. If I didn't have freedom I would not have accomplished what I have. This is a value some may take lightly. We must remember there are others who put their lives on the line for freedom

and others who may never be fortunate to find it. So I ask, which values are precious to you?

We have been in the rainy season since June and with the weather we had recently there is no doubt in anyone's mind. In the neighboring county people are being forced from their homes because of flooding. You always say it will



could never happen to you and then it does. We have been lucky and I always thank Goddess for that. This is a view of one of our summer storms.

May your harvest season be fruitful and safe.

Dawn

All photos by Dawn Thomas

Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with husband. Other book reviews can be found on her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

Contents

Welcome to the First Harvest.....	1
From Belladonna's Garden: Oat by Dawn Thomas.....	4
Treasures of the Cailleach's Apron by Deanne Quarrie.....	10
Oceans Within by Amy Martin.....	13
First Harvest Solitary Ritual by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas	14
Let Go by Molly.....	18
Ask Your Mama by Donna Hennes	22
What is Happiness? by Dawn Thomas.....	24
Pagan Every Day Vertumnalia, Nemesis, the Moirai by Barbara Ardinger, PhD	26
Pagan Every Day Ilmatar by Barbara Ardinger, PhD	27
Moon Schedule Lammas to Fall Equinox by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas	28
Book Review Ikaria by Diane Kochilas	30
Book Review – Lughnasadh: Rituals, Recipes & Lore for Lammas by Melanie Marquis	31
Book Review The Practical Art of Divine Magic by Patrick Dunn.....	33

From Belladonna's Garden: Oat by Dawn Thomas

This time of year, we are celebrating the first harvest. Although it is August, we feel the wheel of the year turning towards fall. In less than a month schools will be in session and leaves will fall from trees. I was excited to select oat for this issue. Oats are versatile and have a long history. You can eat oats or bathe in them.

Folk Names: Groats, Oatmeal, Joulaf

Gender: Feminine

Planet: Vulcan

Element: Earth

Parts Used: Grain and Straw

Eating oatmeal also lowers cholesterol. According to Mrs. Grieves there are approximately 25 varieties of oats. *Avena sativa*, the common oat, has a smooth stem and grows up to four feet in height. Homeopaths use the common oat for colds with mucus discharge. People suffering from exhaustion or insomnia would benefit by using tonics made of oats.

Culinary Uses

One of my favorite cereals is homemade granola. A friend of mine gave me this recipe. I have shared it with friends and everyone likes it. The only change I made to the recipe is to double the craisins to replace the raisins. I also use a Silpat in the baking sheet (you can also use parchment paper) which makes it easy to pour the granola into a container after it cools.

Granola

4-1/2 cups old-fashioned oats,
uncooked
1/3 cup sliced almonds
1/2 cup shredded sweetened coconut
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup apple juice
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup dried cranberries



Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine oats, almonds, coconut, cinnamon and salt in a large bowl. Whisk together honey and apple juice; pour over oat mixture and stir to coat thoroughly. Spread mixture in an even layer on a large baking sheet. Bake 25-30 minutes until golden brown, stirring twice during baking time. Let cool; add raisins and cranberries. Serves 12.

Nutritional Information: Per (2/3 cup) serving: 230 calories, 4.5g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 5g protein, 44g carbs, 4g fiber, 60mg sodium.

Cranberry Oatmeal Bars

I found this recipe while going through an older catalog from *Penzey Spices*. Instead of using regular raisins I used blueberry raisins. I also didn't have enough flour so I added more oatmeal instead. The bars were more crumbly and was really good with vanilla ice cream. The crumbles are good to snack on fruit too. I put them on a cut up nectarine and it was like eating peach cobbler.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Baking time: 25-35 minutes

Serves: 16-20

Ingredients

3/4 Cup butter, melted (1-1/2 sticks)

3/4 Cup packed brown sugar

1/4 Cup white sugar

1 egg, lightly beaten

1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1 tsp, cinnamon

1 Cup flour

2 Cups raw rolled oats (not quick-cooking)

1 Cup dried cranberries



Directions

Preheat oven to 350" (325" for a glass or nonstick pan). Line an 8x8 pan with parchment paper or grease lightly. In a large bowl, stir together the butter, sugars, egg, vanilla and cinnamon. Add the remaining ingredients and stir with a spatula until just combined. Spread in the prepared pan and bake for 25-35 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out with a few moist crumbs, rotating the pan halfway through the baking time. Cool completely in the pan and then cut into squares. Serves 20

Nutritional Information: Serving Size 1 bar (47g): Calories 200; Calories from fat 80; Total fat 8g; Cholesterol 30mg; Sodium 70mg; Carbohydrate 29g; Dietary Fiber 2g; Sugars 16g; Protein 2g.

Oatmeal Jars

Need to have a quick on-the-go breakfast? Then you should try these oatmeal jars. They are easy to make and can be stored in zip-seal bags. I got this recipe from MyFitnessPal blog.

Make-Ahead Instant Oatmeal Jars

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup (40 grams) uncooked quick oats
- 1 pinch salt
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon spice
- 1 tablespoon dried cranberries (or dried fruit of your choice)
- 1 tablespoon almond slivers (or nuts of your choice)
- 1 cup water

Directions

To make your oatmeal Jar, layer the ingredients in the following order: oatmeal, salt, cinnamon, cranberries and almond slivers. Make as many jars as you'd like and store in a dry area. If you don't have jars, you can make oatmeal packets using zip-seal bags. Remember to label with the date so you can keep track of freshness.

To cook the oatmeal with boiling water: bring 1 cup water to a rolling boil. Pour water into oatmeal jar and stir. Let the oatmeal stand for 4-5 minutes to soften. Then, stir and enjoy!

To cook the oatmeal using a microwave: pour oatmeal into a microwave-safe container large enough for it to bubble without spilling, then add 1 cup water. Cook for 2 minutes.

Nutrition Information Serving Size: 1 oatmeal jar

Per serving: Calories: 229; Total Fat: 6g; Saturated Fat: 1g; Monounsaturated Fat: 2g; Cholesterol: 0mg; Sodium: 152mg; Carbohydrate: 38g; Dietary Fiber: 5g; Sugar: 7g; Protein: 6g



Nutrition Bonus: Potassium: 170mg; Iron: 12%; Vitamin A: 0%; Vitamin C: 1%; Calcium: 4%

Energizing Tips (optional)

- Swap water for 1 cup of reduced fat (2%) milk to bump up calories and protein. (Per serving: Calories: 351; Total Fat: 11g; Carbohydrate: 49g; Dietary Fiber: 4g; Sugar: 19g; Protein: 14g)
- Mix in 1 tablespoon of peanut butter before serving to bump up calories and healthy fats. (Per serving: Calories: 334; Total Fat: 14g; Carbohydrate: 41g; Dietary Fiber: 6g; Sugar: 8g; Protein: 10g)

URL to article: <https://blog.myfitnesspal.com/make-ahead-instant-oatmeal-jars/>

Homeopathic and Cosmetic Uses

There are many recipes for oatmeal in body products. In fact the Aveeno product line is known for its oatmeal. Add oatmeal to bath water to alleviate itching or rashes especially caused by poison ivy or poison oak and insect bites. My daughter and granddaughter usually get rashes from poison ivy at least once a year.

The three recipes I included are easy to make and are good for your skin. To make 1/2 cup of ground oatmeal, place 3/4 to 1 cup of oatmeal (I use old fashioned) in a food processor and blend until the consistency of flour. If you do not have a food processor you can use a blender or a coffee grinder.

Oatmeal Smoother

This smoother is good for all types of skin. You can use it daily. Skin will feel very soft and smooth.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup ground oatmeal
- 1/2 cup powdered milk

Store the dry mix in a jar or tin. If you don't have either you can also use a plastic zip-seal bag. This recipe will make 24 treatments.



Directions:

Mix two teaspoons of mix with two teaspoons of water. Stir until smooth. Massage onto the face and neck then rinse. Follow up with a moisturizer.

Oatmeal Mask



This mask is good for all types of skin. Make the mask just before use. Do not be stored since the milk will spoil.

Ingredients:

1-1/2 Tablespoons ground oatmeal

1-1/2 Tablespoons milk (I used cashew milk)

Directions:

Mix ground oatmeal and milk. Allow to stand so the mixture can thicken. Apply to face and neck. Allow the mask to dry then rinse. Follow up with a moisturizer.

Oatmeal Foot Scrub

This scrub is good for rough and dry feet. You can use the scrub every day. My granddaughters and I made this and enjoyed treating ourselves to a spa day.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup ground oatmeal

1/4 cup cornmeal

1 Tablespoon sea salt

Peppermint essential oil

Water

Directions:

Combine dry ingredients and mix with water until it forms into a paste. Stir in a few drops of essential oils. With pressure massage paste into feet. Pay attention to rough areas. Rinse and pat dry then follow up with a moisturizer. You can make a large batch of the dry mix and store it in a jar or tin. If you don't have either you can also use a plastic zip-seal bag. This recipe will make 24 treatments.



Magical Uses and Divination

Oats are used when invoking or worshipping Brigid. To bring prosperity into your life carry oatstraw in your purse, pocket or wallet. When cooking or eating oats visualize prosperity and abundance. Many people use oat cakes as an offering to Goddess.

All Photos by Dawn Thomas

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<http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

Treasures of the Cailleach's Apron by Deanne Quarrie

Yellow is the color of joy. It is the color of courage. It is the color associated with the Third Chakra, the source of personal power that governs self-esteem, warrior energy, and the power of transformation.

The color yellow represents happiness and fun. The traditional meaning for yellow is inspiration. It is associated with vitality, energy and illumination.

We associate yellow with the expression of thoughts and the intellect. It can aid memory and clear thinking, decision-making and good judgement.

Yellow is also good for anyone who suffers from low moods and depressive states because of its uplifting qualities.

With all of that said about yellow, let's look at some yellow stones!



Citrine

Citrine is a stone of joy! It is known as a success and prosperity stone and is often called the "Success Stone." Citrine is a solar plexus chakra stone used to increase, magnify and clarify personal power and energy. This increased personal power can be used for the focused intent of the individual, as it brings will power as well.

Citrine is also a stone that brings hope. Since citrine eliminates negative energies, it is good for protection in general and helps bring stability energetically.

Because citrine can clear negative energy and influences from the aura, it is useful for meditation, psychic awareness, and spiritual development. It is also excellent for dream recall and dream work.

Citrine enhances mental clarity, confidence, and will power. Since citrine brings self-confidence as well as positive energy, it can also help eliminate fears of being judged or fear of being alone or unworthy of love.

Citrine is a happy stone. It brings happiness to the person who carries or wears it. It is useful for bringing positivity, relieving depression, self-doubt, anger, and irrational mood swings.



Heliodor (yellow beryl)

Heliodor radiates the warmth and the power of sunshine. It illuminates higher thought as well as centered, and vibrant physical well-being.

Heliodor stimulates the higher mind and enables the brain to function more efficiently. It is a stone of true nobility and selfless leadership. It helps one to make decisions based on wisdom instead of emotion or reaction.

Heliodor helps develop assertiveness, self-confidence, physical and mental strength, benevolence and power.



Yellow Sapphire

Yellow Sapphire helps to attract wealth and financial abundance into one's life. It does this by helping one to manifest one's creative energy into form through action. Yellow Sapphire stimulates the intellect, helping to formulate ideas and goals. It also encourages the exploration of moving in new directions, bringing excitement and joyful expectation about the possibilities in life.



Yellow Amber

Amber is not actually a stone at all, but a fossilized resin. It has marvelous properties for psychic protection. The person who wears amber has a lovely sense of health and healing.

Amber helps to balance the emotions, clear the mind and release negative energy.

It aids manifestation and eases stress by clearing phobias and fears.



Yellow Fluorite

Yellow fluorite increases creativity. It is known as a stone of unity. It harmonizes group energy and creative thoughts. It has been used with liver illness as well as those of the kidneys and spleen. Some have even claimed its use with cholesterol levels. Yellow Fluorite brings understanding and manifestation to dreams.

A little side note here – Yellow is the color of the rune Wunjo. The primary meaning of Wunjo is JOY! The first time I meditated with the image of Wunjo, not knowing its meaning at all, I saw a man running in a race with other people. He had this beautiful expression of joy on his face as he burst through the ribbon as the winner of the race. He carried a flag in his hand and it was yellow! So when you want to feel more joy in your life – carry yellow stones!

Deanne Quarrie, D. Min. is a Priestess of the Goddess. She is the author of five books. She is the founder of the [Apple Branch](#) and [Beyond the Ninth Wave](#) where she teaches courses in Feminist Dianic Witchcraft, Northern European Witchcraft and Druidic Shamanism. She mentors those who wish to serve others in their communities. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Ocean Seminary College and is the founder of [Global Goddess](#), a worldwide organization open to all women who honor some form of the divine feminine.

Oceans Within by Amy Martin

For nine long months you rested, in the warm salty water of the amniotic sack in your mother's womb, rocking gently in the waves of her motion. It was dark and quiet, with only the rhythmic pulsing of her heart to break the silence. This was the ocean within, the salty sea of your origins, where you grew from a one-celled organism into a many-celled wonder. You and the water were one. When your heart formed and began to beat, it beat along with your mother's, their two rhythms in perfect sync. Once you had eyes to see, they stared open and trusting into nothing but darkness, the darkness of deep water.

You were formed in darkness, born of water, immersed in rhythm. Darkness, rhythm and water are at the very core of who you are. Even now you remain 70 percent water, the same amount of water to solid as this blue planet we call home. When the Moon is waxing toward full, its gravitational powers pull our internal tides along with the oceans, urging us upward into the silver light and into the consciousness within.

The genesis sea of our creation formed when hot tumultuous gases in the atmosphere cooled and condensed to form water. An epic rain fell for thousands and thousands of years, quelling the volcanic fire of a still-forming planet, filling the basins and crevices until salty, mineral-rich water spread across the face of the Earth. The primordial ocean rested, still and dark and deep. Then the orbital pattern of the Moon and that of the Earth began to sync up, like your infant heart with your mother's.

From this rhythmic interplay, tides arose in the ocean, stirring the seas to their depths. Molecules mixed together and complex diverse life forms developed, from single-cell plankton to wriggling invertebrates. The rocking of the primordial ocean spread this living water onto the shores where tidal pools arose. In the warm shallow basins along this dynamic edge, the intersection of liquid and land, breathing beings came to be and spread across the Earth.

Water is our origin, from the amniotic sack to the genesis sea. All the water that will ever be is right now. No more will ever be created. It is the lifeblood of this planet, rivers and streams like veins through its body. Eventually, writes Norman Maclean, "All things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of the rocks are timeless raindrops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs."

Within yourselves are the waters of the world, stirred by rhythm of the Moon above just as they were millions of years ago. Feel the flow, immerse yourself into what water has to offer. Dissolve the barriers that create the illusion of separation. Feel the oneness of the waters. Let your tears be the ocean and your laughter its waves. Return home to the water tonight.

First Harvest Solitary Ritual by Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

The Feast of the First Fruits: Ripening

Items Needed for Ritual:

Green, yellow, and orange candles (representing the changing seasons)

Small loaf of bread

Cauldron

Wicker basket with fruits and grains

Chalice with grape juice, wine or mead

Salt and water to cleanse and cast the circle

Relaxing music

Preparations for the Ritual:

Prepare to answer the following seasonal questions for yourself during the ritual.

What can be, or needs to be, sacrificed for my harvest?

How do I share my abundance with others?

How do I manifest my power?

How do I support myself and others in attaining or manifesting our life goals?

Altar:

The altar is decorated with fruits and grains. There is a cauldron with a candle at the center of circle. At the edge of the cauldron is a loaf of bread. Candles representing the changing seasons will be placed in a triangle shape.

Cleanse the area with salt water and incense as you cast the circle.

Calling the Goddess

Hail to Demeter, the Earth Mother and Goddess of the Harvest. You have provided for us with your abundant harvests. Please join me today.

Calling the Elements

Hail to the Element of the East, Ancient Spirit of Air. The warm breeze cools and cleanses me in the summer heat. Please join me today.

Hail to the Element of the South, Ancient Spirit of Fire. The sun warms the earth during the long summer afternoons. Please join me today.

Hail to the Element of the West, Ancient Spirit of Water. Your warm rains provide nourishment to the harvest. Please join me today.

Hail to the Element of the North, Ancient Spirit of Earth. The earth is full of golden fields full of ripe fruit and grain. Please join me today.

Reflection and Affirmation

The harvest season is here and with it come the first fruits. This is a time to be thankful for the labor and struggles needed for the harvest. This is the height of the year. May the bounty of this season keep me strong in body, mind, and soul.

What do I ask of the harvest? What did I begin earlier in the year that has grown and is ready to come fully into my life? What can be or needs to be sacrificed for my harvest? How do I share the abundance of my harvest with others? How do I manifest my power? How do I support myself and others in attaining or manifesting our life goals?

I sacrifice to the Goddess the behaviors and attitudes that will hinder the completion of my own personal harvest. I will weed out anything not essential that might impede it coming to fruition. I will change my priorities so that they are what I want or need and I will make any changes necessary to achieve my goals. I give thanks for the gifts around me and for the good fortune in my life.

Meditation and Crafts

Meditate on my personal harvest: growing prosperity and accomplishing the needs or goals for the good of all.

While making a corn doll or making a braid with onion and garlic bulbs, say the Song of the Corn Maiden (by Carol Christ©).

There's plenty to eat, plenty to drink,
Plenty to keep us toasty warm
Plenty to clean, plenty to heal,
Plenty to keep us from harm;
The power is ours to work and share
Our mother's plenty is everywhere!

There's plenty to say, plenty to sing,

Plenty to dance, and dare to do;
Plenty to weave, plenty to unwind,



Plenty for me and you!

There's plenty of work, plenty of play,
Plenty of rest when day is done;
Plenty of corn in the Maiden's hands.

Enjoying the Feast of the First Fruits

Wine is from the fruit of the season. It is a symbol of the earth's abundance, and represents all the elements of summer and fall, the elements that mature the grapes and grain. This is a time of turning inward toward the darkness, of inner and individual work, a time of maturing and aging, of experience, growing wisdom, fulfillments past and to come.

The First Harvest is a time for change. The transformation of grapes into wine, or grain into baked bread, of summer into winter, the Mother into Crone, of life into death and back again.

"She changes everything she touches, and everything she touches changes."

Great Goddess of Mother Earth, Goddess of the Harvest, accept my thanks for my growth, insights, accomplishments, and the food you have given me.

Drink from the chalice. Offer a toast to the coming harvest and give thanks to the Goddess. Bless the food and enjoy the feast. Set a portion of food aside for the Goddess and leave the rest of the food and drink out for the wildlife.

Closing the Circle

Element of the North, Ancient Spirit of Earth, your harvest will sustain me. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and farewell.

Element of the West, Ancient Spirit of Water, your rains are gentle on the harvest. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and farewell.

Element of South, Ancient Spirit of Fire, the warmth of the sun has helped in the prosperous harvest. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and farewell.

Element of the East, Ancient Spirit of Air, your warm breeze has helped cool the heat of the summer sun. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and farewell.

O Great Goddess, the bounty of your harvest has provided for me. Thank you for joining me today. Hail and farewell.

The Circle is opened by never unbroken.

Blessed Be.

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Let Go by Molly

Weed it out
cast it off
let it go.

Let it sink
into the body of the Earth
where it will be recycled
renewed
refreshed
reborn.

Let the seeds drift where they may
let your fear drift where it may.

Roll your shoulders
Tip back your head
Open your hands

Let it all fall away
unclehn your life.*

Open your heart
be vulnerable
say, oh well
keep going.

It is time to sit on the rock
watch the leaves change colors
feel the winds shift into winter

It is time to let go
to recognize what has dried up
what is falling down
what can be chopped into firewood
and burned.

The spiral twists of the wheel
the turn of the stone
the rhythm of the seasons



which care not a thing
about your to-do list.

It just happens.
It unfolds.
It blooms and withers
takes root again
grows something new, but familiar
and surprises us
with the consistent,
wildly mysterious
Return.



This year I've experienced a recurrent "let go" message from all kinds of places, but I persist in arguing with reality and my tendency to be controlling. Also, I think the "let go" can be interpreted in many different ways. My husband says it can be seen as a "let go and *soar*" type of reminder. I see it sometimes as being told to surrender and also to "give up" (and that makes me wail and gnash my teeth). Sometimes it is a gentle reminder to sink into the moment and breathe, feeling the weight of the baby on my shoulder, sniffing his head, looking out the window at sunlight and shadow. Sometimes it is permission to literally let go of something—possessions, tasks, adding something else to the calendar. Sometimes it is a mental "unclenching" and letting go—ideas, should dos, possibilities for later. I also find a connection between the *let go* message and our word of the year, which is "Grow." So, *let go in order to grow*.

This reminder is also helpful:

"Would a weight lift off my shoulders if I realized that it's normal to feel pulled between choices, that it's normal to want to do more than I have time or energy for, and that it's normal to have to choose between two equally wonderful things, that it's actually a sign I'm a fascinating, amazing person?"

—Jennifer Loudon, *The Life Organizer*

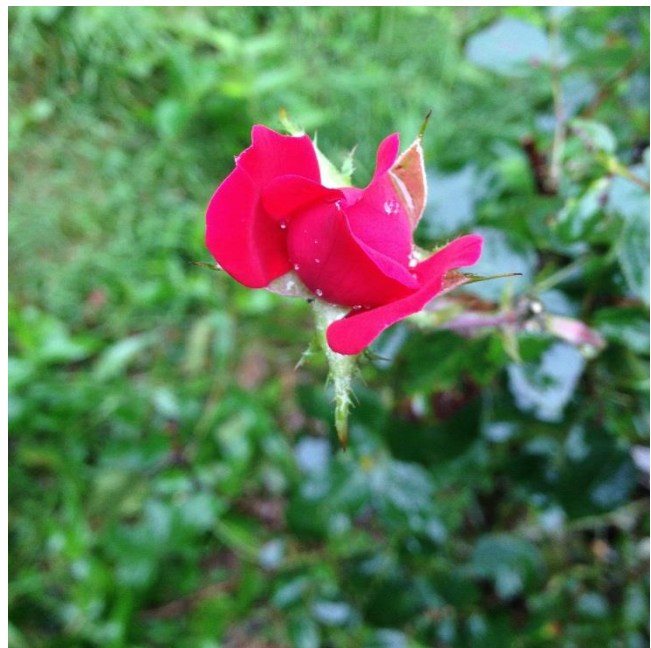
I always say that **I want to live well and wisely my one wild and precious life** and to me that means making conscious decisions every day to pull my actions into alignment with my values. It is an ongoing process. I live in a rich and fascinating world full of endless possibility and promise. Letting go can be about wise *discernment* as well. (I joke

that my other word of the year is “ruthless.” Ruthless discernment about how, where, and why to spend my time and energy.)

I went to the woods a few days ago feeling taut and tight and pulled between choices and right in front of me was yet another lesson from the forest, the big tree I so enjoy had let go of one of its large branches. I walked down to look at it more closely and noticed the bark on the trunk is starting to decay and I anticipate that in the next two years or so, I will need to let go of this tree’s companionship in the woodspace, because it is letting go of its life here on the hillside.

I come to the woods to let go and to be cleansed. To sit with myself. To uncover truths. To salve wounds. For clarity, focus, for the feeling of the sweet wind blowing it away, the solid earth absorbing it. The grand sweep of the sky from horizon to horizon like a bowl. To look at the leaves on the ground. To notice the fallen branch of the tree. To feel the coldness of rock under my bones. To make contact with the wild sweeping majesty of it all and the size so vast that my own little feelings and concerns become dust and the well-worn, unhelpful thought processes that wind their way through my brain and twist me up can become unkninked, unknotted, and released to drift away on the breeze, dissolving, unclenching, letting go.

As the wheel of the year turns towards fall, I often find myself feeling overbooked, overwhelmed, tense and taut more than like to feel. One morning, I woke up before the rest of my family and headed for the solace of the woods, this place that never fails to soothe me and bring clarity. I found myself pulling up a bunch of fuzzy-headed weeds, clearing them away where they had grown up between the rocks. Yes, I was trying to *weed the forest*, even though my list for the day was very long. As I did so though, I realized I felt good. Calm. Mind stilled. The ache I’d been feeling in my sacrum disappeared and the tears that had been stinging behind my eyes did too. I remembered that this is a common feeling in the fall for me—the sensation of needing to “stop the world,” the sensation that I’m spinning too fast and trying to do too much. I have documented these feelings for at least the last six years. It felt comforting to recognize the turn of the wheel of the



year right there in my own life and to know that the woods simply don't care whether I cross items off my list or not, the leaves keep falling, the squirrels keep running up the trees, and the sun rises and sets every day.

Molly is a priestess, writer, teacher, and artist who lives with her husband and children in central Missouri. She is a doctoral student in women's spirituality at Ocean Seminary College and the author of [Womanrunes: A guide to their use and interpretation](#). Molly and her husband co-create at Brigid's Grove: <http://bridgetsgrove.com> and she blogs about theapoetics, ecopsychology, and the Goddess at <http://goddesspriestess.com>.

*from [a poem by Andrea Potos](#).

Ask Your Mama by Donna Hennes

Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more.

*Ask Your Mama™

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Spirituality and Didn't Know Who to Ask™

by

©Mama Donna Hennes, Urban Shaman

A Question of Rain

Dear Mama Donna,

Rain dance. Rain dance. There is no such thing as drought. Our lack of consciousness and our scarcity thinking bring it about. The Rain Dancers pray with abundance for what is our god given right — rain. I witnessed a deluge of rain on the Hopi reservation like I have never seen before — five days of pure water. We can claim our divine inheritance now, Water Goddess is always with us and in us. We can restore our connection to the thunder beings and lightning beings. Aho Mitukye Oyasin,

- Dancing for Rain in Arizona

Dear Dancer for Rain and Life,

Thank you for your beautiful testimonial.

Rain is the vital, vivifying fluid, which flows down from the heavens to recycle and replenish the world's water stores. To refresh and revitalize the lands and all those species who live upon it. Celestial substance of necessity, rain is absolutely elemental and essential. But quite quirky. You never know with rain. Too much, too little, too late, too soon, too hard, too long. You can't really depend on it. And yet you have to.

I agree totally about our limiting ourselves by questioning divine abundance. However, I also believe that each one of us has a responsibility to protect and not waste or abuse our rich natural legacy. We are ethically bound not to take the precious gifts of Mother Nature for granted. Native peoples across the globe have always seen themselves as caretakers of Earth, Sky, Fire, and Water. They believe not only in god/dess given rights, but also in god/dess-centered responsibility. They

have always participated in partnership with the planet to preserve, conserve, and create in reverence and due respect.

While water is a renewable resource, it is not inexhaustible. We all need to be conscious about conserving water. Flush fewer times, take shorter showers, shut the faucet when brushing teeth or shaving, watering plants with bath water, use low flow toilets and shower heads, etc. There are many creative ways. We all need to do our part and not simply depend on divine largesse.

I wish us all abundant rain and sun and wind and dew.

xxMama Donna

*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. Send your questions about seasons, cycles, and celebrations to CityShaman@aol.com.

Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for The Huffington Post, Beliefnet and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she offers intuitive tarot readings and spiritual counseling and works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

www.DonnaHenes.net

www.TheQueenOfMySelf.com



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Read her on the Huffington Post:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/donna-henes/>

Read her on Beliefnet:

<http://blog.beliefnet.com/thequeenofmyself/>

What is Happiness? by Dawn Thomas

I was watching a television show and saw a man staring at a computer. The only words on the screen were, "Happiness is" That got me thinking, what is happiness? Happiness varies from person to person. It can even vary within a person depending on the circumstances. On most days I am happy. I ask myself what triggers my happiness. Are the reason intrinsic or extrinsic or both? My answer is both depending on the time and the day. When I worked I was motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. I enjoyed getting paid, like most people, but was so grateful if I received a "You did a good job today." I had a job in a male dominated environment. I worked harder than the men but did not get the same recognition. In fact I had to finish their jobs because I was more diplomatic than they were. Many times it made me angry and I would look for happiness in other ways. Other times actions are more important than words. You can tell someone you love them but they may appreciate it more with actions than words.

For me happiness is

Walking around outside after a rain when the air smells clean and seeing a rainbow in the sky.

Watching a butterfly getting ready for its first flight.

Giving or getting a hug.

Finding a love note by my bed.

Listening to a child giggle wildly while watching an inch worm crawl.

Getting an email or telephone call from someone special.

All of these things are intrinsically motivated. There is no cost involved. I think sometimes people believe they need to shower others with gifts to make them happy. I know people that go shopping as a form of "retail therapy" when they are down to make them feel better. Unfortunately, it is just part of a cycle. If you buy things to make you feel better and then the bill comes and you don't have enough to pay it, you go shopping to feel better and cycle begins again.

We are a society that spends money on stuff and want instant gratification. It is a "we want it now" mentality. It started with fast food and microwaves. Who knows where it will end. People are less inclined to invest a lot of time in something if it is free. They believe, "you get what you pay for." So, if something is free it must not have any worth. That isn't true. Time is money. The time you invest in something has a cost associated. The time you invest in one thing takes time away from something else. So, if you sit inside reading you give up the opportunity to sit outside and watch a sunset. If you go to a restaurant for dinner you miss the opportunity of creating a meal at home with someone special. You can be watching television or sitting outside looking at the night sky and hoping to catch a glimpse of a shooting star. You just have to decide what is more important to your happiness.

In our house we do not have a microwave. We take time to cook meals together. They are the little things that mean the most. People come to our house and cannot believe we do not have a microwave. I ask them what they did before they had microwaves. For the younger generation it is a new experience to make popcorn on the stove instead of the microwave. Or to sit outside by the fire pit and make s'mores instead of using some new-fangled gadget. Life should be enjoyed and happiness found. Happiness doesn't have a price tag on it. There is much to enjoy in this world that is free. You just need to look and find it.

So what does happiness mean to you? Did it mean something different to you yesterday than it does today? I challenge you to find your happiness in whatever form it may be. Always look for it and find a way to keep it in your heart.

Pagan Every Day Vertumnalia, Nemesis, the Moirai by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

August 23rd

Like most Roman gods, Vertumnus was originally Etruscan. A shape-changer whose name comes from *vertere*, "to change," he's in charge of the transformation of flowers to fruits and the harvesting of every delicious, nourishing thing—the grains, the fruits, the vegetables and herbs. We can give thanks today for the bounty of our harvest.

Today is also the feast day of Nemesis, daughter of Erebus and Nyx. Also called Adrasteia ("the Inevitable One") and originally from Asia Minor, she's the defender of divine law and the voice of divine anger against those who break it. If you've had too much good luck, they say, look out. Maybe you should sacrifice something to Nemesis...just in case. She also defends the relics and memory of the dead from insult.

Also honored today are the three Moirai. Like the Norns and the Mania, the Moirai represent youth, maturity, and old age. They may be the fairies who come and speak charms over our cradles. They may also be the hags who judge us as we weave the threads of our lives. No one can overrule the Moirai, and we never know for sure when they are present.

Reader, it's time for another feast. Make it a barbeque. Go to your local farm's market and buy every vegetable and fruit that appeals to you. Invite your friends. As you eat, talk about how much easier it is these days, when we don't have to harvest the wheat and slaughter the animals ourselves. At the end of your meal, rise and give thanks four times. First to Vertumnus, who transformed plantings into harvest. Second to a god or goddess of fire for cooking your dinner. Third, to Nemesis, may she preserve your good fortune. Fourth to the Moirai for bringing friends into your life.

Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, **Secret Lives** is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are *Finding New Goddesses*, *Quicksilver Moon*, *Goddess Meditations*, and *Practicing the Presence of the Goddess*. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of *Finding New Goddesses*, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Pagan Every Day Ilmatar by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

August 26th

Ilmatar ("Mother of the Waters"), sometimes also called Luonnotar ("Nature's Daughter"), is the Finno-Ugric creation goddess and daughter of Ilma, the god of air. For seven centuries she floated on the sea until she was impregnated by the East Wind and gave birth to the first human, the Finnish bard, Vainamoinen. Alternatively, a duck or an eagle laid eggs on her knee, which the bird mistook for an island. The eggs rolled into an abyss and became the earth, the heavens, the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Although most of the languages of Europe derive from Indo-European roots, the Baltic languages (Finnish, Saami, Estonian, Livonian, and Karelian) have a different linguistic base, Finno-Ugric. Not only did the Baltic lands not become part of the Roman Empire, but they also didn't speak a language related to Latin. There was, however, considerable trade with Rome along the amber routes, which reached as far as Delphi. Amber was sacred to Apollo. When the sun faded in winter, he was said to be visiting the Hyperboreans, who lived beyond the north wind, Boreas. Amber was also sacred to the sun goddess and, out of respect to her, maidens carrying amber were given safe passage across Europe.

The people who lived north of the north wind were considered to be magical by southern peoples. Some Arctic peoples are pagan to this day, and many tribes close to the Arctic Circle have leaders who are shamans.

As nearly every modern pagan knows, Santa Clause is a shaman. He travels between the worlds in a magical sleigh drawn by magical reindeer (pregnant females—the males don't have antlers in the winter). When he goes up and down our chimneys, he's traveling up and down the world tree. He knows all things and brings us gifts appropriate to our behavior.

*Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, **Secret Lives** is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net*

Moon Schedule Lammas to Fall Equinox by Dawn “Belladonna” Thomas

(Times are Eastern Time)

4th Quarter – August 6th: 10:03 p.m.

New Moon – August 14th: 10:53 a.m.

2nd Quarter – August 22nd: 3:31 p.m.

Full “Corn” Moon – August 29th: 2:35 p.m.

4th Quarter – September 5th: 5:54 a.m.

New Moon – September 13th: 2:41 a.m.

2nd Quarter – September 21st: 4:59 a.m.

Moon Void of Course Schedule

Date	Starts	Ends
August 1 st	6:02 p.m.	6:36 p.m.
August 3 rd	4:35 p.m.	7:24 p.m.
August 5 th	7:29 p.m.	9:29 p.m.
August 8 th	12:46 a.m.	1:40 p.m.
August 10 th	7:45 a.m.	8:08 a.m.
August 12 th	1:44 p.m.	4:52 p.m.
August 15 th	12:36 a.m.	3:46 a.m.
August 17 th	1:16 p.m.	4:23 p.m.
August 19 th	10:56 p.m.	August 20 th 5:24 a.m.
August 22 nd	3:31 p.m.	4:41 p.m.
August 24 th	6:04 p.m.	August 25 th 12:22 a.m.
August 27 th	3:20 a.m.	4:03 a.m.

August 29 th	3:03 a.m.	4:51 a.m.
August 31 st	2:53 a.m.	4:33 a.m.
September 1 st	12:37 p.m.	September 2 nd 5:02 a.m.
September 4 th	6:20 a.m.	7:40 a.m.
September 5 th	7:04 p.m.	September 6 th 1:40 p.m.
September 8 th	9:28 p.m.	10:36 p.m.
September 11 th	9:03 a.m.	9:56 a.m.
September 13 th	10:08 p.m.	10:41 p.m.
September 16 th	12:22 a.m.	11:43 a.m.
September 18 th	3:49 p.m.	11:32 p.m.
September 21 st	4:59 a.m.	8:33 a.m.
September 22 nd	7:13 p.m.	September 23 rd 1:51 p.m.

Planting Days

August: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 29th, 30th
September: 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 8th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 26th, 27th, 30th

Harvesting Days

August: 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 13th, 31st
September: 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, 28th, 29th

Book Review Ikaria by Diane Kochilas

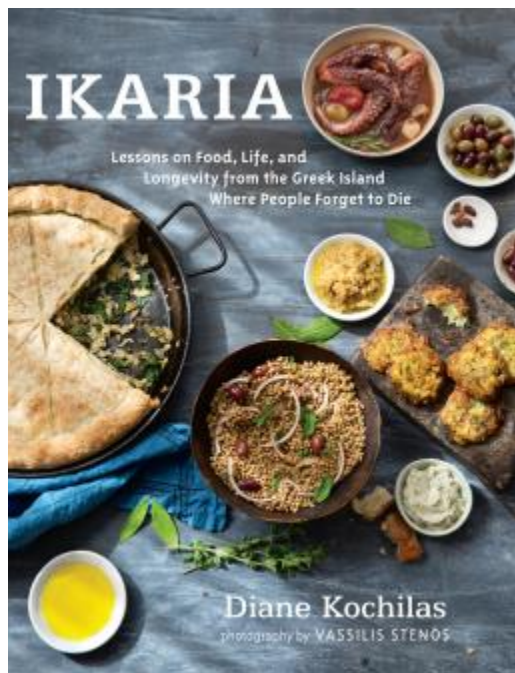
Review by Dawn Thomas

Publisher: Rodale Books

320 Pages

Cooking, Food & Wine

Published October 2014



This was a very interesting book. It was part cookbook and part travel guide. I have been waiting to read this book for a while but something always got in the way. When I was 16 I traveled to Greece and visited a few islands. I would like to go back and visit with an adult perspective. The author grew up not far from where I lived as a young child in Queens, New York. In Florida, we live less than an hour from Tarpon Springs, a city infused with Greek culture.

I was intrigued to learn Ikaria was home to some of the longest-living people on earth. This could be why so many people, me included, are turning to a Mediterranean diet. The author describes the average Ikarian breakfast as being liquid. Big breakfast are the norm for us and reports say it should be the biggest

meal of the day. That isn't the case here.

A few of the people interviewed for the book talk about the herbal teas their mothers made for them especially when they were sick. Also there is a discussion of foraged foods, especially greens, and the important role they play in the Ikarian diet. What didn't surprise me was rye and barley being more popular than wheat. The chapters are dedicated to different courses beginning with appetizers and ending with dessert.

I loved so many recipes it is hard to pick a favorite. The directions were easy to follow and although some ingredients were exotic others were easy to find. Many of the herbs mentioned in the book I had in my garden. I was happy to read most of the participants in the study napped regularly since I enjoy naps. The Ikarian people are living longer, happier, and healthier lives. This is something we all should strive to achieve.

Book Review – Lughnasadh: Rituals, Recipes & Lore for Lammas by Melanie Marquis

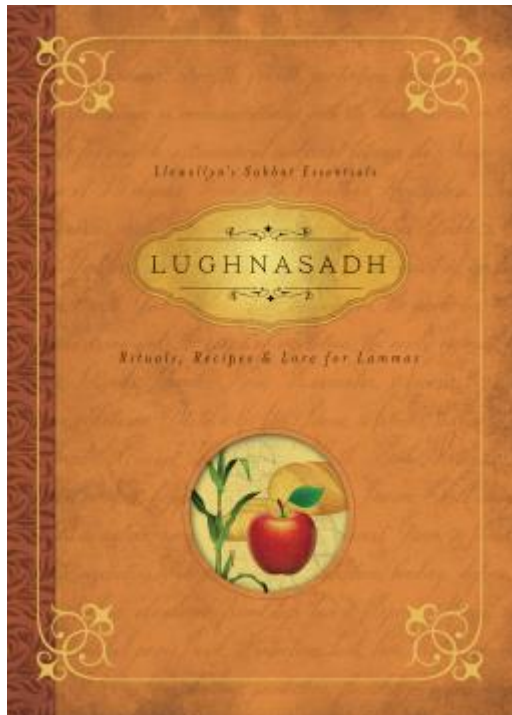
Review by Dawn Thomas

Pages 240

Llewellyn Publications

Publication date: June 8, 2015

Religion and Spirituality



This is another book in the Llewellyn Sabbats Essentials series. Like the other books in the series this one also covers topics related to the Sabbat. The author describes different feasts and celebrations for this time of year. The book begins with a recap of the wheel of the year and a short description of each Sabbat. The book ends with a list of correspondences for the Sabbat.

The section Old Ways describes how people celebrated the holiday in different regions. Lughnasadh gets its name from the Celtic deity Lugh. It was a time for harvests, partnerships, fairs and games. In the New Ways section, the author reminds us of the difficulty associating the first harvest to our modern lives. She states that although many of us do not plant and harvest all

of our food the food doesn't magically appear. Someone must tend to the crops in order for us to buy them. She also includes ways modern pagans celebrate the season.

In the section Spells and Divination, the author provides different types of spells for success, protection and good fortune. She also provides ways to perform divination and ways to forecast the weather.

Since Lughnasadh is about harvesting there is no surprise the recipes found in the Recipes and Crafts section revolve around harvest foods: fruits, vegetables and grains. The directions for the Blessed Bread, a traditional Irish soda bread, are simple to follow and produces a hearty bread. In the crafts section I thought the corn silk blessing wand was unique. I fell in love with the magickal berry ink since I have an abundance of blueberries. She also includes instructions for the traditional corn dolly.

The Prayers and Invocations section included a variety of meditations, prayers and invocations. My favorite was the Gratitude Meditation. The author includes several types of rituals in the Rituals of Celebration section. The first is a group ritual to honor the corn followed by a solitary ritual to honor the goddess. There is a quick mini ritual to do when blessing bread.

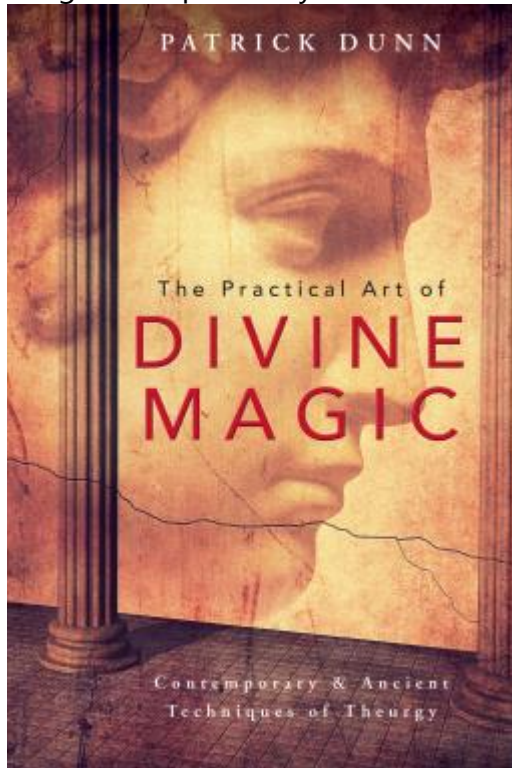
Book Review The Practical Art of Divine Magic by Patrick Dunn

Book Review by Dawn Thomas

Publisher: Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.

360 Pages

Religion & Spirituality



The book begins with an introduction that includes an historical account of theurgy. The author goes into detail of the different times. He acknowledges a few great philosophers such as Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. He also discusses the influences of Hermeticism on theurgic practices. The author shows how the scientific revolution influenced people and how it affected theurgy. It seems people thought they had to accept one or the other but not both. Mr. Dunn's goal is for the reader to discover information and incorporate it into a working system. He believes theurgy is the engine of magic and that it adds value to a spiritual path. These are the titles of the chapters in the book.

Chapter 1 A Divine Technology

Chapter 2 What is a God?

Chapter 3 The Addresses of the Gods

Chapter 4 Rituals and Tools of Theurgy

Chapter 5 Divination and Oracles

Chapter 6 Daimonology

Chapter 7 Thaumaturgy

Chapter 8 Know Thyself

The book has many exercises with step-by-step instructions. They start out small and build from there. The first exercise helps the reader with visualization. There are conversations between a teacher and student which the author uses as examples of the topics in the book. At the end of the book there is an appendix with the pronunciation of Greek words of power.