

Hades Hunter

BOOK INFORMATION

The following books can be found by the students in Arkham's libraries:

Common Deities in Irish Paganism by *Connla McFarin*

Common Deities contains a description of The Lord of The Hunt, commonly called **Herne** in later times, or **Cern**, and originally **Cernunos**. Cernunos is described as a "large powerful, bear-chested man, wearing a stag pelt draped over his head and shoulders" This is the commonly depicted horned god of the hunt. His is associated with all kinds of midnight mayhem in Europe. McFarin cites a case from 1893 in England:

One day two local Windsor youths and a Gypsy boy were playing truant in Windsor Great Park. They were up to the usual no good, breaking trees and generally fooling around, the local youths being led on by the Gypsy.

The troublesome trio were in an area of forest when the Gypsy noticed a curious old hunting horn hanging from a tree, and immediately picked it up. The local youths, knowing something of the legend, told him to put it down and walk away, so as an act of bravado instead, he blew upon it. All three immediately heard the sound of baying hounds, and horses crashing through the trees, close by and getting closer.

The local boys threw themselves to the ground and covered their eyes, and told the Gypsy to do the same, as the sounds of the hunt drew ever nearer. In no time the deafening racket was all about them, and it was all they could do to stay still while the thud of horses hooves and snarls of great dogs were all about their heads. One of the youths sneaked a look at his companion, who's eyes were screwed tightly shut, then the Gypsy boy, just in time to see him panic and turn to regard the source of the din all about them. The Gypsy's eyes widened in fear, and he began to scream, at which the other lad buried his face once again in the soil and prayed. He heard the sound of a single arrow being loosed and striking its target, and then the noise began to fade, until the forest was quiet once again.

When they finally got to their feet the forest was as quiet as before and the two lads were safe, but the Gypsy boy had vanished, never to be seen again.

Heroic Sorrows: A Study of Loss in Irish Myth and Legend by *Constance Pettigrew*

Heroic Sorrows contains academic treatments of a number of mythical tales from Irish history, focusing on the theme of loss as a requirement for true heroism in Irish folk lore. One of the stories is about a Celtic priest who sacrificed his maiden daughter to stop a deity (commonly referred to as **Cernunos**, and later **Cern**, then **Herne**) from ravaging the countryside with his pack of supernatural hounds.

The gist of the tale is that the Cernunos was loose in the countryside tearing up fields, slaughtering flocks, and decimating (in the classical sense) villages with a pack of large, almost

ghostly hounds. Why he was doing this is unclear -- it is merely said that the Celts in that region had gained Cernunos' disfavor.

The priest spoke a magical ritual in a circle of stones deep in the night and called Cernunos to him. When he arrived the priest plied him with wine and song. As the night drew on Cernunos became quite drunk. The priest offered up his maiden daughter, and while Cernunos took his pleasure with the girl the priest stole Cernunos' horn. With the coming of dawn Cernunos disappeared taking the priest's daughter with him, both never to be seen again.

The priest guarded the horn until his death, when he and the horn were interred in a dolman. The horn was notable because legend holds that it was a giant sea conch.

Invocation and Supplication: Calling the Gods by *Thaddeus Fox* (in German)

This is a late 18th Century Gnostic text which contains numerous rituals for summoning a litany of deities outside the Judeo-Christian pale. One of the rituals is for calling The Lord of the Hunt. Two versions of the ritual are presented -- one in Latin, and the other in German. In game terms this is a Tier II ritual with a casting time of two hours. No indication is given of either a binding or dispelling ritual. Though the text does not name Cernunos directly, it is clear that the god in question is Celtic and matches the common description of Cernunos.

The Merry Wives of Windsor by *William Shakespeare*

In Act 4 Scene 4 of this play there is the following:

There is an old tale goes that Herne the Hunter,
Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,
Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
In a most hideous and dreadful manner.
You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious idle-headed eld
Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
This tale of Herne the Hunter for a truth.