

CELTIC CREATION MYTH

Celtic Creation Story

Once upon a time, when there was no time, no gods or humans walked the surface of the land. But there was the sea, and where the sea met the land, a mare was born, white and made of sea-foam. And her name was Eiocha.

Not far from where the land met the sea, a tree grew, a strong and sturdy oak. On the oak grew a plant whose seeds were formed of the foam tears of the sea. To sustain her, Eiocha ate the seeds, these white berries, and they were transformed within her. Eiocha grew heavy with child and gave birth to the god, Cernunnos. So great was her pain in childbirth that she ripped bark from the one tree and hurled it into the sea. The bark was transformed by the sea and became the giants of the deep.

Cernunnos was lonely and he saw the giants of the deep who were numerous, so he coupled with Eiocha and of their union came the gods, Maonos, Tauranis, and Teutates, and the goddess, Epona.

Eiocha soon tired of the land, being a creature of sea-foam, and she returned to the sea, where she was transformed into Tethra, goddess of the deep water, also known as Tethys.

The gods and goddess were lonely for they had none to command or worship them. They took wood from the oak tree and fashioned the first man and the first woman.

Cernunnos also made other animals from the oak tree - the deer and the hound, the boar and the raven, the hare and the snake. He was god of the animals, and he commanded the oak tree to spread and grow into vast forests to serve as a home for his children.

Epona also made animals, but she made only the horse, mare and stallion alike, in remembrance of Eiocha, who was no more.

Teutates took limbs from the one tree, and fashioned a bow, arrows, and a club.

Tauranis took limbs from the one tree, and fashioned thunderbolts made of fire and noise. He would leap to the top of the tallest trees and hurl his weapon at the ground. The ground would shake, the grass would burn, and the animals would run in fear

Maonos also took limbs from the tree, but he fashioned not a weapon but a harp. He stretched strings of wind from its limbs and spent his days in Cernunnos' forest. The winds and the birds would join in the melodies. And all Cernunnos' animals would come from near and far to hear Maonos play.

The giants of the deep saw the gods and goddess happy on the land, and the giants were very envious, for they had nothing to command, nothing to worship them. So the giants plotted against the gods. They would overwhelm them with the sea and take the land under the water. But Tethra in the deep sea heard the murmuring of the giants in the waves and she remembered her days as Eiocha and so she warned her sons and daughter.

The gods were prepared the day the giants came against them. The gods took refuge in the oak tree. Tauranis hurled his thunderbolt and split the land, and the sea overflowed its boundaries. Maonos broke the sky and hurled it at the giants. Teutates' deadly aim with the bow and arrows from the one oak tree cut down many of the giants.

The giants of the deep were not without weapons; they had the strength of the waves. The gods overwhelmed the giants, but could not destroy them. The giants of the deep were driven back into the sea, and Tethra bound them in the deep waters. But a few escaped Tethra and fled far from her reach. They called themselves the Fomhoire, and built a life on the outer edges of the world. But the Fomhoire dreamed of conquest, and vowed to once again take the land from the gods. Of their later battles, our histories tell us much.

The sea returned to its bed and Maonos repaired the sky. The gods then searched for Epona, who had been absent from the victory. Epona had rescued one man and one woman from the watery and fiery destruction, and the three of them waited deep in Cernunnos' forest. From this man and this woman Epona saved would come our mighty people. The gods and the goddess left the deep of Cernunnos' forest and returned to their home near the one tree of oak which still stood strong and sturdy, and the sacred berries were still white as sea-foam.

Where the fiery pieces of the heavens Maonos had torn from the sky had mingled with the waters of the sea, there were born new gods. The god Belenus and his sister Danu sprang from where the heavenly fire had been but little quenched. The god Lir sprang from where the waters of the sea had almost quenched the fire of heaven. From Lir, as the histories tell, there would come the mighty Manannan, the beautiful Branwen, the wise Bran. But from Danu many children would come, the Dagda, Nuadha of the Silver Hand, the wise Diancegth, the smith Goibhio, the fearsome Morrigan, the gentle Brighid. The Children of Danu and the Children of Lir are the two mighty races our songs tell of, ever opposite.