

Magic



*A Brief Introduction
For Pagans*

by Porphyry

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Disclaimer

Throughout this paper I consistently ignore any non-Western traditions. And several Western ones. Does that mean that none of them are interesting? No. Does it mean we can't learn anything from them? No. It was a matter of time and focus.

I also leave out a lot about "Celtic" magic, mainly because most of the tradition we see comes from the Egyptian-Greco-Roman tradition, not the Celtic tradition. There is some evidence that "Celtic" traditions in historical times, particularly for common or popular craft, were very similar to Roman and Greek practices. In pre-historical times it appears that some form of divinatory or runic magic was practiced, along with much else that is lost without a written record.

I also have to apologize for the often cryptic or abbreviated form of this essay. I didn't have enough time to polish it, and, frankly, a lot of the history and traditions of magic are opaque to just about everyone involved. Some deliberately so. For example, there are few good texts that lay out the historical path of ceremonial magic in a readable format. Most books either focus on impenetrable academic study or breezy "how to" discussions without a lot of historical or theoretical focus.

Finally, in some of this you'll find my conjecture or opinion. I try to identify it as such, but in some cases I don't, and in some cases I'm mixing up conjecture with fact. You can interpret that as me just running off at the mouth, or my keeping with the best traditions of magical writing!

Magic in theory

Historical perspective

Magic has been around a long, long time. One can conjecture that the cave paintings from the early lithic periods were designed as sympathetic magic, in order to produce success in the hunt. In fact in one of the Les Trois Freres, France paintings there is a depiction of the “shaman” wearing antlers and a skin, possibly invoking the spirit of the deer for the hunt. Early magic is almost always assumed to have been “sympathetic” magic. That means if I do something on a representation of an object, it will affect the object represented. So if I draw an image of the deer, I can affect the deer during the hunt.

The other thing that has been around a long, long time is a tendency to make stuff up, particularly about things like magic. What has come down to us as “official” occult or pagan information about magic is often more “lore” than provable fact. When you look at the archeological record you can only say so much. So you have to be careful when listening to claims of great antiquity. The Key of Solomon was most likely constructed as part of the medieval grimoire period of the 13-16th centuries instead of Solomon himself. Most of what we have in “hard” form on early magic comes from curses or objects tossed in wells or rivers, cryptic drawings or sculptures, or other artifacts buried for protection of assistance. Clearly much more was going on that we can reconstruct, it just we don’t know what it was.

And the manuscripts we do have all tend to point toward magic almost immediately dividing into two parallel paths very early, with a division between “folk” or “low” magic of charms, amulets, curses, and spells, and “high” or “religious” magic associated with conjuring, summoning, and invoking deities for someone’s benefit. I suspect that this division is fundamental: you’d almost call it “superstitious” magic and “deity” magic. Superstitious magic has no particular reason for working; the person who performs it just believes it will. Magic based on a deity or external spirit will work in the same way that prayer works. In many ways magic is the Pagan version of the Christian prayer. Just as the Pagan sacrifice is our version of the Christian eucharist.

Egypt

Magic was both important and well documented in ancient Egypt. It was a force that had existed from the beginning of the world and had been essential to the creation of the world. In turn, the creator gave magic to humanity as a “weapon to ward off what may happen”. We actually have pretty good text descriptions of these weapons. The earliest texts include a variety of spells, rituals, and prescriptions:

- Threats that named snakes, scorpions, and crocodiles and were directed at violators of tombs.
- Rites where crude, inscribed figurines of enemies were buried

- Treating illnesses and snakebite
- Communicating with the dead

Lector priests were reputed to be the principal magicians and they probably provided magical services to the rest of society. Magic was considered elite because it gave people access to the special, exotic, and rare. People tended to integrate magic into their normal lives. The methods they used included many of the things we still use: stones or amulets, figurines, pictures and formula, names, and ceremonies.

Egypt is important in the history of occultism because Egyptian magic forms the foundation for all other Western traditions. Almost all current magical traditions practiced in the West today can trace some or all of their lineage back to Egyptian magic. You have to be careful though, traditions claiming a direct lineage to the Egyptians are often 18th-20th century revivals instead of direct descendents.

Greece and Rome

The word magic derives from the Greek *mageia* or Latin *magia* and originally meant the knowledge or art of the magoi or magi, a hereditary caste of Persian holy men responsible for divination, sacrifices, and funerals. When it was first introduced it had negative connotations. The magos was a “crafty beggar, hatcher of plots” and tended to be only in it for the money. Magi were also associated with “black magic” or “evocations and magical bonds”. As early as the Greeks there was the tradition of throwing curse tablets down wells or burying them. From the time of Plato we also have curse dolls or figurines for use in harmful magic. *Magoi* could also “placate *daimones* who could bring disorder...Therefore the *magoi* perform this sacrifice as if they would pay off an amend”

Magical Greek papyri fall into five broad groups:

- Judicial spells in which one attempts to harm one’s adversaries at a trial
- Erotic spells which cause “wild” love in the beloved
- Agnostic spells which had to do with the amphitheater or spectacle
- Defenses against slanderers and thieves
- Defenses against economic competitors

Magical binding was the general term for this work. As in:

I bind down Theagenes, his tongue and his soul and the words he uses. I also bind down the hands and feet of Pyrrhias the cook, his tongue his soul and his words.etc.... All these I bind down, I make them disappear, I bury them I nail them down.

Magic was practiced in Rome both in religious mysteries as well as sacrifices to the local deities, in Rome the Magna Mater. Lead tablets were inscribed with curses or spells and thrown into wells representing holy sites to the Magna Mater. Outside of Rome these spells could invoke local deities, sometime ones specific to individual locations. Binding magic was also important in Rome, and Roman common magic resembled Greek magic. A typical spell might be:

You, Phrygian goddess, nymph goddess, Eidonea, I invoke you by your..., so that you may help me and restrain and hold in check Cardelus and bring him to a bed of punishment, to be punished with an evil death, to come to an evil conditions, him whom his mother Fulgentia bore. And you, holy EULAMON, and holy Characters, and holy assistants, those on the right and those on the left, and holy Symphonia. These things have been written on this (EULAMON, restrain) tables made from a cold-water pipe, so that just as I entrust you this impious and accursed and ill-fated Cardelus, whom his mother Fulgentia bore, bound tied up and restrained, Cardelus whom his mother Fulgentia bore, so that you may so restrain him bring him to a bed of punishment, to be punished and to die an evil death....

It was written on a lead tablet, with every other line inscribed backwards, it was decorated with pictures, one of which is a horse-headed daemon with a chariot wheel, two other figures, perhaps the victim and the perpetrator, and a guy peeping out of a coffin. It was thrown into a tomb, probably to be consistent with its general theme.

Magical tokens appear to appeal to both Gods and daemons as well as where they were deposited. Which would explain why so many end up in holy wells. This tendency to throw spells into water persists all the way up to the near-modern period.

As with a lot of “lore” on magic and witchcraft there was a lot written in contemporary classical texts about witches and sorcerers. It was routinely somewhat negative, actually a lot negative. As these were generally written by men, and magic and witchcraft they write about was generally seen as a bad thing. It is possible the texts are somewhat slanted. It is also possible that scholars in the Middle Ages and from the early Christian church picked up this slanted and highly negative view of magic, witchcraft, and sorcery and incorporated it into Christian belief. Furthermore, more recent texts regarding Greek and Roman magic (18th-19th centuries) are also slanted against magic and have very much a “Christian” perspective. You are therefore left with possibly slanted sources and interpretations on one hand, and mute archeological evidence on the other.

Magic was not static during the Roman period. It went through various political and social upheavals, the last being the Christianization of the Empire by Constantine. Throughout this period magic evolved as the Empire’s thinking evolved, and as the Empire conquered new territories and integrated new influences into its culture.

Medieval period

The Medieval period was dominated by the attitude of the Christian church toward magic. There were roughly three periods:

- Magic was wrong, but not much of a threat
- Magic done by the rabble was bad and they should be punished, but magic done by priests and nobles was fine
- Magic done by anyone was consorting with the devil and they all should be punished, and severely

In the Middle Ages magic also clearly divides into two components: high and low or the popular and courtly. These intermingle occasionally in various grimoires of the time, but in general low magic was the magic of curses and sour milk, and high magic was the magic of the Catholic mass, daemons, and angels. This is also the time period when many of the “classical” Grimoires were authored, almost certainly as a result of Arab and Egyptian influence on learned scholars coming back through the Crusades.

During this time herbals, animals, stones, words, and signs were all used to heal. Protective formulas, rituals, amulets, and talismans, many dating from Greek and Roman times were employed. Also during this period the character and practice of magic by the elite evolved. It grew every more Byzantine and complicated, culminating in several magical traditions that were founded in the 17th through 19th centuries. These traditions are what have come down to us in current magical practices. They share certain ceremonial elements, a fascination with languages, signs, and symbols, and an integration of Jewish Kabbalistic magic, Arabic traditions, Egyptian papyri, with Christian traditions.

The medieval period for magic actually continues well into the 18th century in some places. Magic was believed in and practiced up to the point when the renaissance made belief in any sort of divine or magical concept suspect. Magic took a much earlier blow from the scientific revolution and movement toward reason than religion did. Probably because it was already marginal and prohibited, magic was the first great belief system of the middle ages to fall to reason and science. It happened, strangely enough, when laws began to treat magic as a hoax or inherent fraud instead of a sin, heresy, or great threat to the social structure. When reason won the practice of magic changed from being equivalent to shooting a gun at someone to playing a practical joke on them.

18-19th Centuries

Magic declined dramatically during the 18th and 19th centuries. But it was saved by the social counter reaction to the not so good aspects of modernization: the romantics. During the 19th century there was a growing movement to look back to our Pagan ancestors. Likewise there was also a tendency for some to grow very bored with being rich elites (the Hellfire Club) or good Christians (the Hellfire Club). Likewise the emergency of Masonry in the 18th and 19th centuries as an important social movement, with its mystical/magical/Egyptian trappings, cause some of those interested in gaining an extreme experiences to begin to adapt Masonic rituals to magical rituals.

The Golden Dawn was one such Masonic-inspired magical lodge. It was founded in 1888 by William Westcott and Samuel Mathers (both Freemasons and heavily involved occultists). Needless to say there are many questions surrounding the founding of the Golden Dawn, but what resulted was a very large, some say effective, and in my opinion impenetrably complex and annoying, set of magical procedures and rituals designed to advance the initiate in his understanding of the magical world. Their rituals inspired a whole path of ceremonial magic that has the following characteristics: magicians work in lodges or groups, they engage in elaborate and prolonged rites, and as they have an

obsessive fascination with degrees and advancement. There are many descendents from the Golden Dawn but their influence on Crowley and the Rosicrucians were perhaps their most important contributions. The reason they survived was due to three magicians: Crowley, Dion Fortune, and Israel Regardie. Dion Fortune became a significant contributor to magic literature in general and ceremonial magic in particular. Regardie documented the Golden Dawn tradition and made it public, thus pretty much ensuring its survival.

Toward the end of the 19th century Alister Crowley joined the Order of the Golden Dawn, and events were set in motion that lead directly to where we sit now. At the turn of the century Crowley had a dramatic falling out with the order, and, claiming he was the rightful heir to the order, began his own branch of magic (or magick as he would spell it): Thelema. Thelemetic magic is Golden Dawn plus Crowley's own religious concepts and continues on to this day in various traditions. Crowley believed that a new age had started with him and the revelations he received in a hotel room in Egypt.

In the last years of his life Crowley may, or may not, have met with Gerald Gardner and may, or may not, have assisted in creation of the Gardnerian book of shadows. Whether or not he was directly involved the incorporation of elements of the Golden Dawn and Crowley's magical concept is unmistakable. In fact the "as long as it harm none..." is pretty much a quote from Crowley.

20th century

During the 20th century you had a variety of traditions forming, splitting, and going through all sorts of machinations. The key traditions seem to be:

The Golden Dawn/Lodge Magic

Crowley' Thematic magic (essentially Golden Dawn rituals)

Gardnerian magic, a grafting of folk magic onto Golden Dawn material

Imports from other cultures, such as Buddhist or Santeria

Satanism as "pioneered" by LeVay

New Age varieties of magic, including:

- Stones and crystals
- Ley lines and areas of geographic power (vortexes)
- Communication with all sorts of near neighbors in the universe
- Various forms of "energy" and energy manipulation

Shamanism of which there are three general categories:

- New or synthetic traditions
- Original peoples traditions (Native American, Siberian, Mexican)
- Made-up but nonetheless compelling (Don Juan)

This covers a lot of territory. Historically I believe that the most significant development in the 20th century was Gardner. He brought back together three distinct threads of magic. One, the religious and Goddess centered, had more or less died out during the post-Constantine age, the other, Christian ceremonialist, had devolved into absurdly

complicated lodge activities and more or less become an excuse for old men to con young women into doing some things that they otherwise might not, and, finally, “hedge” witchcraft from a variety of traditions but most importantly England. This combination has resulted in a powerful and malleable magic tradition in which we now participate.

Types of Magic

There are many different ways to characterize magic:

- What you do. This is the most generally accepted and widely used form of categorization. With Bonewitz’s classification being the best considered and least developed, but there are also others.
- Who you hang around with. This type of classification divides magic according to the practitioners you work with or the tradition you work in.
- How it works. Magicians are not long on theology or considerations of exactly how or why magic works. Some (Starhawk) have thought carefully about the subject, but these thoughts are often buried in books that are not immediately associated with magic. Other thoughts are buried in the ceremonialist tradition of obfuscation (Crowley).

What you do

Bonewitz lists the following laws of magic: knowledge, names, association, words of power, contagination, similarity, identification, synthesis, polarity, balance, [the previous categories are normally associated with magic, in the next groups Elvis kind of leaves the stadium] infinite data, finite senses, pragmatism, infinite universes, true falsehoods, [Elvis returns], personification (evocation and invocation). That is a lot of laws, and they generally refer to how you exert power over something. For example if you know its name, or the right word, then you can exert magical influence over a person or object.

Perhaps a more common way to classify magic according to what you do is:

- Theurgy (“god” “work”) – magic designed to work spiritual transformation on the magician. This sort of magic was very popular in Greek and Roman times, and draws on ceremonialist and religious aspects. It can also involve in calling on the Gods (or the Christian god) as a way of accomplishing the magical task.
- Thaumaturgy – in this case the goal is to change the universe as opposed to changing the magician. This type of magic can also mean drawing on natural or your own energies to accomplish the magical task, vice those of the Gods.
- Necromancy – Magical operations focused on using, contacting, or bringing back the dead.
- Goetia – The branch of magic that deals with the summoning of daemons. This branch is almost exclusively ceremonialist in approach and Christian in orientation. However it has a long tradition with easily found summoning spells in Egyptian and Greek papyri. The Arab cultures also have a bit of a tradition (frowned on now) in this area.
- Alchemy – the transformation of the individual by the practice of working on natural elemental transformations.

Who you hang around with

Magical lodges
Ceremonialists
Traditional Witchcraft
Free form or American Witchcraft
Shamanism
New Age
Alchemists

How it works

I prefer to break magic down along the following lines:

- Where does the source of action come from?
 - The Gods/God/a divine (theurgy)
 - The individual or “will” (thaumaturgy)
 - The world (thaumaturgy)
 - Natural or human “energy”
 - A totem, icon, or object
 - The incantation itself
 - Some form of natural law beyond the world (“as above so as below”)
- What action is taken?
 - Psychical or physical effects
 - Summoning or speaking with spirits
 - Binding or protection
 - Learning and spiritual growth
- What is the intent or objective?
 - Harm
 - Healing
 - Information
 - Change in the magician (enlightenment)
 - Change in the world (world peace)
 - Change in another individual (love)
- How does the source, action, and intent relate to the intended outcome
 - Amulet/talisman/physical object
 - Poppet/doll
 - Incantation/poetry
 - Gestures
 - Magical instruments
 - A ritual
 - Raising energy (cone of power)

So how does magic work? There are a lot of ways to answer that question. I will cover most of them, occasionally injecting my own perspective of scientific skepticism:

- Appeal to the divine. This would suggest that the better your appeal is, and the more cooperative and strong the God is, the better your magic will be. This leads you down the road of appeasement, sacrifice, or, possibly union with the God.
- Appeal to your own will. This is Crowley's definition of magic, change brought about in the world in conformance with the will. This implies that the better focused, the more concentrated, or the better "connected" you are to the world, the better your magic will be.
- Appeal to a real no kidding energy field whether your own or the worlds. In the previous two cases you could make an argument from a faith position: I believe, therefore what is happening is consistent with my belief and an independent observer has no business verifying it or replicating it since the main focus is me and my own sphere of influence. However once you go beyond what is inside of your head, to appeal to something in the world, you invoke verification. Appealing to a real field of energy will result in some pretty significant challenges to verify it:
 - No such energy field exists that is consistent with modern physics
 - No matter how much pseudo physical mumbo jumbo you trowel out of the hole you dig you won't come up with a convincing argument.
 - No consistently verifiable experiments suggest that this sort of thing works
 - You risk looking silly if you do try and defend this position.
 - Sorry for the lecture

You can get out of this dilemma by appealing to the concept of an energy field, something that emanates from the divine, or from yourself, that is based on some sort of faith principle. In other words you don't claim the energy field exists in the world, rather in your mind or another, parallel world. This is essentially the same as any other unverifiable faith assertion.

- There exists "laws" in the universe that apply either through our own mental models for reality, or because the laws actually exist. There is no energy field needed: things just work like that. "As above so below" is one example, one that could be used to justify astrological influences without embarrassing appeals to gravity or particle fluxes too small to move a molecule. Likewise the law of sympathetic magic could be placed in this category. Just because we can't verify it doesn't mean that the laws of magic have to work like the laws of physics and admit to strict verification.
- Something you just did actually worked. Amazingly this is one of the most substantial and consistent arguments for why magic works. Herbology is one example of a magical act that can produce a verifiable and consistent effect. You take nightshade, and I can reliably predict the outcome. And it can reasonably be argued (perhaps with the exclusion of homeopathy) that just because we don't know how or why something works, we could know it in the future. The quiet stepchild to this line of argument is the "placebo" effect for magic. You do a magical healing, and like prayer, it creates a psychological state in your victim that makes a difference. Your actions do have an effect, magic works. And you don't have to appeal to any pseudo-science to get there. One colleague of mine did a referred scientific paper (epidemiological study) of magical death and voodoo in the Dominican Republic.

There is a slight variation on this line of reasoning that would suggest Magic works through the power of perceived coincidence. Carl Jung pioneered this line, and it suggests that by perceiving coincidences and believing in their effects we change the way we behave. The magic happens within us and in our lives, not in the world or on physical objects.

- There exists another side to reality, such as spirits (or daemons) that we can summon if we perform the right mental and physical tricks. Of course there are two lines of reasoning here: the spirits actually exist, or they exist in our minds sufficiently for it not to matter. Either way this falls, I believe, into the “faith assumption” category and should not be subjected to scientific verification (or ridicule).

Ceremonial Magic, the Golden Dawn, and Crowley

Frankly, as you may have guessed, I find most of ceremonial magic to be impenetrably boring claptrap. Some argue that it is made up that way in order to discourage those not sufficiently committed (worked for me) or in order to disorient the practitioner sufficiently so that they achieve the desired mental state and higher awareness (I can believe the disorienting part).

As discussed above ceremonialism has a long history. There are therefore many grimoires and much documentation. They tend to divide into the “Solomonic” (or Goetic) the “Hermetic” and the “Golden Dawn” traditions. I’ll touch on a few of the key texts and authors in what is an enormous area of study and complexity:

- Kabbalah. As mentioned, when the Crusades began bringing back various influences into European society, the Kabbalist tradition seems to have come in through Spain. It forms, along with Egyptian and Arab magic, one of the underpinnings of much of what goes on in ceremonial magic.
- Greater and Lesser Keys of Solomon the King. These are supposedly derived from King Solomon, but in reality were probably created sometime in the 13th century. They are focused on summoning and ritual work to connect with the higher planes. They form the basis of Golden Dawn work. They also represent the classical Goetic or invocative texts, preoccupied with summoning angels and daemons. These were very popular during the middle ages, but have fallen out of favor with the rise of the Hermetic traditions.
- Hermetic traditions. Hermeticism, to which this is related, is an ancient tradition that began as a synthesis of Egyptian and Greek magic, and came to its high point in the Renaissance with practitioners such as John Dee, Magician to Queen Elizabeth. Dee transcribed a series of magical workings from angels that eventually became known as the Enochian magical system. These rituals were incorporated into the Golden Dawn and matter to us, as the “witches” alphabet is the Enochian or angelic alphabet of John Dee. Cornelius Agrippa was also instrumental in moving away from medieval Christian grimoires and back to the Hermetic and Kabalistic traditions that preceded them. Hermetic traditions also influenced the Golden Dawn and much Christian oriented magic. The Emerald Tables by Hermes Trismegistus is an example of some of the hermetic philosophy

- (its short so I stuck it in an appendix). [The relationship goes Thoth -> Hermes -> Hermes Trismegistus].
- Elphais Levi. A French Magician in the 19th century, he was responsible for much of the revival of the Hermetic traditions and the beginnings of modern, ceremonial magic. He recast ceremonialism in spiritual transformation rather than practical magical results. This gave direct rise to the Golden Dawn.
 - SL McGreagor Mathers, Israel Regardie, and the Golden Dawn. This tradition accepted Levi's concept of the inner transformation of the magician and took it to rather elaborate heights. They formed the basis for what would come next.
 - Crowley. Alistair was perhaps the singular influence in the way magic is practiced in the 20th century. He took from the Golden Dawn and hermetic traditions, introduced Eastern influences, and added a large wallop of sex and drugs. This both made magic seem wicked, fun, and significantly changed the way magical focuses and energies are raised and used. Crowley also paved the way for the introduction of ceremonial magic to traditional forms of magic, the "natural" or low magic of the commoners.

Witchcraft and Gardner

As I said above, Gerald Gardner really did change magical practice when he blended lodge or ceremonial magic, with Pagan Goddess worship, and "hedge" or "cunning" magic as it survived in early 20th century England.

I believe that there is evidence that Witchcraft in some form was practiced in England prior to Gardner. This mostly took the form of Witches and Cunning Folk who passed out remedies, lifted curses, and conjured up various spirits. As practiced the Cunning Craft was a real blending of local folk custom and lore and what could be pulled from whatever Grimoire that the local Witch had laid their hands on. From what I can tell this was also what might be called "coarse" Witchcraft, focused on things that farmers and the superstitious would believe and be familiar with. At its best it was focused on "effectiveness" and not necessarily "nature" or earth centeredness, as we understand it. For example, one apparently fairly common practices was walling up a live cat in the foundation of a building for good luck... At its worst it was one cut above con artists and carnival games.

Gardner drew from this folk tradition in his incorporation of herbalism, healing, protective spells, and other "practical" elements into his version of Witchcraft. From the Golden Dawn rituals he took the concept of the protective circle, the quarters (or watchtowers), and many of the tools. He may have taken the concept of initiation and degrees from either the Golden Dawn or the Masons.

There is also an element of sex magic in Gardner's work. Going Skyclad stems from old Gerald's participation in British naturism, something he apparently was enthusiastic about. Ritual nudity is justified through two lines of argument:

- Clothes prevent energies from coming out of you and so lack of them makes you better able to project energies.
- Nudity establishes that bond of trust and love in ways that few other activities can. It also sets the rite apart from the everyday by its strangeness.

Gardner also incorporated sex magic directly into his ritual of “Drawing down the moon” with the Priest and Priestess “consuming” the union of the divine energies either symbolically or actually (in private). The incorporation of sex magic into Witchcraft is not at all surprising given the attention it got from Crowley and the believed effectiveness in it as a way to raise energy. [Editorial comment: old guy as founder of a movement plus many young HPS’s = ritual nudity and provision for sex magic...I’m positive it’s effective, just not necessarily magically effective].

And, finally, Gardner drew from the Pagan revival that had arising with the 19th century romantics and been encoded as “fact” by Margaret Murray in the 1920’s. While Druidic and Pagan revival magic is just too much to cover, the idea of a Goddess and God, one that was worshiped by the witches in old times who were the priestesses of the Goddess, is one that brought in a strong religious component to Gardner’s Witchcraft.

Starhawk and “American” magic

Something funny happened to magical practice on its way across the Atlantic, it changed. As is the case with many imported British practices, a lot of the change was in form rather than content. Much of the formality was lost between continents. “Traditional” British witchcraft is quite specific and consistent with regard to its practices. Syncretism is not provided for, as it asserts that it is a self-consistent religio-magical system.

Americans, from what I have seen, are not ones to dwell on tradition. The changes that occurred to Gardner’s witchcraft occurred for a variety of reasons and in a number of ways, but in general the magical system was de-formalized, democratized, and re-focused from a God/Goddess centered practice to one centered on self and nature. Natural magic, present in Gardner’s craft is more heavily asserted in American magic as presented to most witches and pagans. Of course there still are Gardnarian covens, and the descendents of the Golden Dawn and Crowley paths are actually now headquartered in the United States. But in addition to these imports there is also a strong, eclectic and freeform thread to magic in the US.

As is almost always the case Starhawk lays out some of the basis principles for this branch of practice very well and eloquently:

- “Magic...is an art. Like other arts, its efficacy depends far more on who is practicing it than on what theory they base their practice.”
- “Magical systems are highly elaborated metaphors, not truths.”...The value of magical metaphors is that through them we identify ourselves and connect with larger forces; we partake of the elements, the cosmic process, the movements of the stars. But if we use them for glib explanations and cheap categorizations, they

narrow the mind instead of expanding it and reduce experience to a set of formulas that separate us from each other and our own power.”

Ravenwolf has a similar (if less eloquent) take on it:

“It is not that spells must be elaborate, but is [sic] imperative that they are specific.”

The American branch of magic draws from native and Eastern traditions far more than Gardner does. (Which is surprising given the Gardner spent most of his career in the Orient). Meditations form a significant component of American magical practice, while they are not as emphasized in traditional British witchcraft.

The key words to look at in the above Starhawk passages are the ones that refer to the practitioner. Our “own power”, “who is practicing it than on what theory”. The relativist, inclusive, and assimilating elements of American culture that work on almost every imported ideology are also at work on Witchcraft. The magic we practice is therefore less structured and more inclusive, highly variable, but open and accepting. It is healing, not commanding.

Magic in Practice

As very few of us are going around walling live cats up in our houses anymore (so I've heard), or conducting elaborate Elizabethan ceremonialist rituals, it is worth seeing what we are actually doing. In this section I try to touch briefly on the modern, American, version of common magical practices. There are others, and there are other ways of doing most of the things I'll talk about here.

Ceremonial Magic

Ceremonialists tend to have the following things in common:

- They work in groups (lodges)
- It is an initiatory system and you advance by degrees
- The preparations for ritual can be excessively complex and demanding (no sex for a month, which may be more or less demanding depending on who you are, for example)
- They work in circles and symbols, dress, equipment, and other trappings are really important to the work.
- How the group works together, the mental model they have for what they are doing. Visualization, and shared visualization, are very important for them.

What Ceremonialists do includes:

- Try and gain insight into truths or greater planes of existence
- Manage and channel energy amongst the group and onto the work
- Summon and conjure spirits, with the expectation that the spirits will come

For ceremonialists it is the ritual, and the common bond amongst those engaged in it, that fuels the fires of magic. Since magic is primarily a means of mastering the will, and obtaining inner enlightenment, the rituals provide the context for the initiate to attain that enlightenment. In addition ceremonialists can bring in, and converse with, spirits.

Evoking (vs. invoking) and communication with spirits is not a common subject for those engaged in natural magic, but for ceremonialists it can be the essence of their work.

The reason we cast the circle and call the quarters comes about from the ritualist need to cast a protective circle and call in natural (or angelic) forces to protect them from bad critters that might be summoned. The goal of summoning or evoking for the ceremonialist is also significantly different from the natural magician, in that they intend to compel, vice ask or request, assistance from what comes to their call. This compelling can arise from the magicians own will, or it can be obtained from the use of words or names of power, primarily from the angels and Jehovah.

Natural Magic

Natural magic can be defined a lot of ways, none of which are terribly satisfactory. At its most basic natural magic is any magic that is not ceremonial. That implies that it does not involve the complex rituals of ceremonialism. Natural magicians rely on the physical world for their magic, using herbs, stones, and other stuff. The distinction between natural and ceremonial magic has become fuzzed recently due to the use of semi-ceremonialist elements in Pagan and Witch practice. I believe there are three primary distinctions between ceremonial magic and natural magic:

- Ceremonialists call on and appeal to entities outside of themselves for many if not most of their workings. Whether these entities exist may or may not matter.
- Ceremonialists use the degree systems, elaborate rituals, and initiation to bind and change the mindset of the initiates. This does not always have to be the case for natural magic.
- Their tradition flows from the three main streams of western, Judeo/Christian/Islamic magic: Kabala, Enochian, and Egyptian/Solomonic.

Now you could just as easily argue that Witchcraft as interpreted by Gardner fits into these categories. But it doesn't have to, and that makes all the difference. Ceremonialist, as I define them, would claim that you either get the rituals right, or they won't work. Natural magicians would claim that lots of things work, and the details don't matter as much as the intention.

In many ways it was the ceremonialist Crowley that paved the way for Natural Magic to flourish in the 20th century. By defining magic as "action in conformance with the will" he moved the center of gravity of magic from the world to the individual, from powers outside of us to those inside of us. This leads inevitably to a more personal, individual, "energy" centered magic. Ceremonies and props only matter insofar as they affect the individual's mental state and energy. This can lead to less prescription in rituals, and less fuss, and to more streamlined and conceptual magic.

That is not to say that the individual is the only place where natural magic can draw from. In Valiente's book she divides natural magic into magic of:

- The mind
- The four elements
- Herbs and flowers
- Numbers
- Colors
- Talismans and amulets
- Sex
- Dreams
- Weather

This is definitely a mixed bag of stuff, and, as is most often the case, lacks any underlying theory that ties it together. Other than the obvious salutatory physical effects of herbs and sex, the theory underlying natural magic falls into some rough categories:

- The effect that magical elements and activities have on the minds of those participating and the resultant changes that are created in the world or within individuals
- The principle of “as above, so below” or sympathetic magic.
- The interaction of inherent powers in particular objects or properties. Smoke or incense as purification, for example.

All of these are used in the context of “natural” laws, or magical laws of nature.

Within all of this there are some key activities and areas of magic that are worth focusing on. The reason they warrant special focus is because they have been better developed in the US tradition. These are:

- Divination. This is a form of magic, like alchemy, but is best covered as a separate activity from actual magic.
- Herb magic. The use of plants and other organic materials to create an effect. Often these are incorporated into a potion, oil, or burned.
- Candle magic. I’ll defer to our experts on this form of magic, but it does seem to be something of a focus of American magical practices, and may incorporate some aspects of Christian or Caribbean practice.
- Creating magical objects. This could include everything from wands to witch-bottles and talismans.
- Binding and protection spells. These spells either keep someone from doing something you don’t want them to do, or keep something away from something you care about. Generally binding involves visualizing or literally wrapping or tying something, while protection involves creating some sort of shield.
- Power raising and projection. This is the classical “cone of power” exercise and involves directing “energy” toward a specific object or goal.
- Summoning. This seems like something that is “just not done” but is one of the more common, older, reasons for magic and magical effects. And we do it every time we summon the elements...
- Poppet magic. These would be voodoo dolls if were practitioners of Voodoo, but we are not. These can be used for a variety of applications, but love magic is often one practical application. They work on the “as above, so below” principle. So be careful what you do with them.
- Knot magic. Tying knots, whether with special chords, in a special ritual, or placed in a special spot, knots in ropes can be used as magical tools. Generally the more knots the greater the effect.
- Intentional magic. This could also be termed “psychic” magic. It’s my own category that covers the focusing and direction of the magician’s will without external support or props. It can encompass astral travel, but it can also include protection and other magic that are done through the intention of the magician and not through natural or supernatural (God/esses) means.

Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturgy is the use of magic to accomplish practical goals in the world. Chords are intimately connected with magical traditions; many traditions such as Gardnerian Witchcraft see a knotted chord as a symbol of initiation or accomplishment when worn around the waist.

There are a lot of ways to divide up practical magic. I'll suggest the following:

- Divination – we've discussed this in detail elsewhere. However when a ritual component is included as part of the divination, when deity is invoked or a magical ritual or formula is repeated, divination then begins to draw on some of the same sources as magic.
- Herb magic – I would include all plant magic in this category. As this is definitely not my area of expertise I will defer to others in the room to discuss herb magic. I believe this type of magic can be divided by the method of delivery:
 - Food
 - Potions/teas
 - Smoke
 - Contact
- Talismans and amulets. This is a very, very ancient form of magic going back to the Egyptians. Amulets are magical devices designed to fulfill a general purpose, such as protection from evil. Furthermore amulets are not consecrated to a God/Goddess rather they contain the individual energy. An amulet could be as simple as a pentagram or as complicated as a Christian ceremonialist amulet. *Exercise for later: small bottles (obtainable from the Pagan Peddler) can be used to make small amulets. Find herbs, small stones, or other items associated with your purpose, place them in the bottle, fill the bottle with an appropriate oil (olive, walnut, almond, mineral). Fill the bottle with your energy, and then tie it to a leather lanyard. You might want to seal the amulet with a drop of wax.* Talisman: an object infused with magical energy for some specific purpose. This could be a tablet, statues, or scrolls. *Exercise for later: find a scrap piece of copper (garden stores often sell these), write down a spell in rhyme, or draw a series of symbols that reflect your intention. Call down the quarters and the God and Goddess, ask them to bless your mission, and consecrate the amulet. Meditate on it for several minutes a day for three days. Then bury the strip in your garden or planter if the wish involves family or persons. Otherwise you might (if you're feeling particularly unecological) cast it into moving water if it involves removing something or asking from the Mother Goddess. Or you might keep it if the spell requires a continual flow of energy.* Magic squares are often placed on the back of amulets. These are arrangements of letters (words) or numbers into a square. The squares really should read the same backwards or

forwards, up or down. Cunning Folk in England and elsewhere commonly used them. They survive on some ceremonialist “Christian” amulet designs taken from Grimoires.

- Candle magic.
- Dreams and astral magic. Through a technique called lucid dreaming you may be able to invoke out of body experiences. Sometimes this is called “astral travel”. The general technique involves keeping a record of your dreams, which will eventually lead to your “waking up” in your dreams and being able to consciously manipulate them. That’s when you can start wandering around and see if you can see something interesting! (Like someone practicing:
- Sex magic. Have fun. Be good. Raise energy. Don’t sell tickets the way they do in Salem!
- Poppets. Poppets have a long history and go back well before the popular “Voodoo dolls”. Essentially they are a small representation of a person made out of cloth and stuffing. In general they are stuffed with things related to their purpose and target: the ubiquitous nail clippings, hair, blood, and other nasty stuff. More recently you might stuff them with various appropriate herbs. If you were interested in defeating witchcraft you might include something sharp (pins, razor blades, etc.). They can be used in healings as well as attacks, one bound with string can bind, two bound together can be a love spell, etc. There are a lot of specific rules associated with poppets, perhaps if someone knows a tradition they can explain it. Poppets go all the way back to ancient Egypt and were popular in England as well.
- Writing. In the section on talismans I talked about one form of written charm. There are many, many others. Write up your wishes, throw in a few obscure astrological or other symbols, and dump it in a well or river. You have now practiced one of the most ancient forms of magic, one clearly dated back to Roman times and beyond, with examples from each age thereafter. Write it on a lead tablet (not the best for water sources!) and you’re exactly the same as an ancient written spell. More modern implementations of such spells have you writing using various alphabets, runes, Ogam, Theban (angelic or “witches” script), Egyptian hieroglyphics. Again this seems to be perpetrating the “obscure is better” tradition of magic.
- Healing and color magic. For some reason healing and color are associated, though they don’t have to be. Again, this is not my specialty so I’ll defer to audience expertise to discuss. In addition to colors, gems and minerals, poppets and other materials can be used for healing.
- Sprit summoning (necromancy) – Summoning of spirits is, in my opinion, easier to do than most realize. An inadvertent or inexperienced call, a HP or HPS with lots of potential but limited learning, and oops, something shows up that you didn’t expect. Controlling outside entities and doing away with them is beyond the scope of this discussion but is documented, or at least hinted at, in several of the more obscure books on witchcraft.

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Appendix 1 – The Emerald Tablet

Twelfth Century Latin translation
Sacred Source Archive

- 0) When I entered into the cave, I received the tablet zaradi, which was inscribed, from between the hands of Hermes, in which I discovered these words:
 - 1) True, without falsehood, certain, most certain.
 - 2) What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like that which is above. To make the miracle of the one thing.
 - 3) And as all things were made from contemplation of one, so all things were born from one adaptation.
 - 4) Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon.
 - 5) The wind carried it in its womb, the earth breast fed it.
 - 6) It is the father of all 'works of wonder' (Telesmi) in the world.
 - 6a) Its power is complete (integra).
 - 7) If cast to (turned towards- versa fuerit) earth,
 - 7a) it will separate earth from fire, the subtile from the gross.
 - 8) With great capacity it ascends from earth to heaven. Again it descends to earth, and takes back the power of the above and the below.
 - 9) Thus you will receive the glory of the distinctiveness of the world. All obscurity will flee from you.
 - 10) This is the whole most strong strength of all strength, for it overcomes all subtle things, and penetrates all solid things.
 - 11a) Thus was the world created.
 - 12) From this comes marvelous adaptations of which this is the procedure.
 - 13) Therefore I am called Hermes, because I have three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.
 - 14) And complete is what I had to say about the work of the Sun, from the book of Galieni Alfachimi.

Appendix 2 – Excerpt from Mathers translation of the Key of Solomon

The Key of Solomon the King
Mathers translation
Sacred Source Archive

CHAPTER III

CONCERNING THE ARTS

IF thou wishest to succeed, it is necessary to make the following Experiments and Arts in the appropriate Days and Hours, with the requisite solemnities and ceremonies contained and laid down in the following Chapters.

Experiments, then, are of two kinds; the first is to make trial of what, as I have said, can be easily performed without a Circle, and in this case it is not necessary to observe anything but what thou wilt find in the proper Chapters. The second can in no way be brought to perfection without the Circle; and in order to accomplish this perfectly it is necessary to take note of all the preparations which the Master of the Art and his Disciples must undertake before constructing [1](#) the Circle.

Before commencing operations both the Master and his Disciples must abstain with great and thorough continence during the space of nine days from sensual pleasures and from vain and foolish conversation; as plainly appeareth in the Second Book, Chapter 4. Six of these nine days having expired, he must recite frequently the Prayer and Confession as will be told him; and on the Seventh Day, the Master being alone, let him enter into a secret place, let him take off his clothes, and bathe himself from head to foot in consecrated and exorcised Water, saying devoutly and humbly the prayer, 'O Lord Adonai,' etc., as it is written in the Second Book, Chapter 2.

The Prayer being finished, let the Master quit the water, and put upon his flesh raiment of white linen clean and unsoiled; and then let him go with his Disciples unto a secret place and command them to strip themselves naked; and they having taken off their clothes, let him take exorcised water and pour it upon their heads so that it flows down to their feet and bathes them completely; and while pouring this water upon them let the Master say:-- 'Be ye regenerate, renewed, washed, and pure,' etc., as in Book II., Chapter 3.

Which [2](#) being done, the Disciples must clothe themselves, putting upon their flesh, like their Master, raiment of white linen clean and unsoiled; and the three last days the Master and his Disciples should fast, observing the solemnities and prayers marked in Book II., Chapter 2.

Note that the three last days should be calm weather, without wind, and without clouds rushing hither and thither over the face of the sky. On the last day let the Master go with

his Disciples unto a secret fountain of running water, or unto a flowing stream, and there let each of them, taking off his clothes, wash himself with due solemnity, as is rehearsed in Book II. And when they are clean and pure, let each put upon him garments of white linen, pure, and clean, using the prayers and ceremonies described in Book II. After which let the Master alone say the confession. The which being finished, the Master in sign of penitence will Kiss 1 the Disciples on the forehead, and each of them will Kiss the other. Afterwards let the Master extend his hands over the Disciples, and in sign of absolution absolve and bless them; which being done he will distribute to each of his Disciples the Instruments necessary for Magical Art, which he is to carry into the Circle.

The First Disciple will bear the Censer, the Perfumes and the Spices the Second Disciple will bear the Book, Papers, Pens, Ink, and any stinking or impure materials; the Third will carry the Knife and the Sickle of Magical Art, the Lantern, and the Candles; the Fourth, the Psalms, and the rest of the Instruments; the Fifth, the Crucible or Chafing-dish, and the Charcoal or Fuel; but it is necessary for the Master himself to carry in his hand the Staff, and the Wand or Rod. The things necessary being thus disposed, the Master will go with his Disciples unto the assigned place, where they have proposed to construct the Circle for the Magical Arts and experiments; repeating on the way the prayers and orations which thou wilt find in Book II.

When the Master shall have arrived at the place appointed, together with his Disciples, he having lighted the flame of the fire, and having exorcised it afresh as is laid down in the Second Book, shall light the Candle and place it in the Lantern, which one of the Disciples is to hold ever in his hand to light the Master at his work. Now the Master of the Art, every time that he shall have occasion for some particular purpose to speak with the Spirits, must endeavour to form certain Circles which shall differ somewhat, and shall have some particular reference to the particular experiment under consideration. Now, in order to succeed in forming such a Circle concerning Magical Art, for the greater assurance and efficacy thou shalt construct it in the following manner:--

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CIRCLE.

Take thou the Knife, the Sickle, or the Sword of Magical Art consecrated after the manner and order which we shall deliver unto thee in the Second Book. With this Knife or with the Sickle of Art thou shalt describe, beyond the inner Circle which thou shalt have already formed, a Second Circle, encompassing the other at the distance of one foot therefrom and having the same centre. Within this space of a foot in breadth between the first and the second circumferential line, thou shalt trace towards the Four Quarters of the Earth, the Sacred and Venerable Symbols of the holy Letter Tau. And between the first and the second Circle, which thou shalt thyself have drawn with the Instrument of Magical Art, thou shalt make four hexagonal pentacles, and between these thou shalt write four terrible and tremendous Names of God, viz.:--

Between the East and the South the Supreme Name IHVH, Tetragrammaton;--

Between the South and the West the Essential Tetragrammatic Name AHIH, Eheieh;--

Between the West and the North the Name of Power ALIVN, Elion;--

And between the North and the East the Great Name ALH, Eloah;--

Which Names are of supreme importance in the list of the Sephiroth, 7 and their Sovereign Equivalentents.

Furthermore, thou shalt circumscribe about these Circles two Squares, the Angles of which shall be turned towards the Four Quarters of the Earth; and the space between the Lines of the Outer and Inner Square shall be half-a-foot. The extreme Angles of the Outer Square shall be made the Centres of four Circles, the measure or diameter of which shall be one foot. All these are to be drawn with the Knife or consecrated Instrument of Art. And within these Four Circles

thou must write these four Names of God the Most Holy One, in this order:--

At 1 the East, AL, El;

At the West, IH, Yah;

At the South, AGLA, Agla;

And at the North ADNI, Adonai.

Between the two Squares the Name Tetragrammaton is to be written in the same way as is shown in the plate.

While constructing the Circle, the Master should recite the following Psalms:--Psalm ii.; Psalm liv.; Psalm cxiii.; Psalm lxxvii.; Psalm xlvi.; Psalm lxxviii.

Or he may as well recite them before tracing the Circle.

The which being finished, and the fumigations being performed, as is described in the chapter on Fumigations in the Second Book, the Master should reassemble his Disciples, encourage them, reassure them, fortify them, and conduct them into the parts of the Circle of Art, where he must place them in the four quarters of the earth, encourage them, and exhort them to fear nothing, and to keep in the places assigned to them. Also, the Disciple who is placed towards the East should have a pen, ink, paper, silk, and white cotton, all clean and suitable for the work. Furthermore, each of the Companions should have a new Sword drawn in his hand (besides the consecrated Magical Sword of Art), and he should keep his hand resting upon the hilt thereof, and he should on no pretext quit the place assigned to him, nor move therefrom.

After this the Master should quit the Circle, light the fuel in the earthen pots, and place upon them the Censers, in the Four Quarters of the Earth; and he should have in his hand

the consecrated taper of wax, and he should light it and place it in a hidden and secret place prepared for it. Let him after this re-enter and close the Circle.

The Master should afresh exhort his Disciples, and explain to them all that they have to do and to observe; the which commands they should promise and vow to execute.

Let the Master then repeat this Prayer:--

PRAYER.

When we enter herein with all humility, let God the Almighty One enter into this Circle, by the entrance of an eternal happiness, of a Divine prosperity, of a perfect joy, of an abundant charity, and of an eternal salutation. Let all the demons fly from this place, especially those who are opposed unto this work, and let the Angels of Peace assist and protect this Circle, from which let discord and strife fly and depart. Magnify and extend upon us, O Lord, Thy most Holy Name, and bless our conversation and our assembly. Sanctify, O Lord our God, our humble entry herein, Thou the Blessed and Holy One of the Eternal Ages! Amen.

After this, let the Master say upon his knees, as follows:--

PRAYER.

O Lord God, All Powerful and All Merciful, Thou Who desirest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live; give and grant unto us Thy grace, by blessing and consecrating this earth and this circle, which is here marked out with the most powerful and holy names of God. And thee, I conjure, O Earth, by the Most Holy Name of ASHER EHEIEH entering within this Circle, composed and made with mine hand. And may God, even ADONAI, bless this place with all the virtues of Heaven, so that no obscene or unclean spirit may have the power to enter into this Circle, or to annoy any person who is therein; through the Lord God ADONAI, Who liveth eternally unto the Ages of the Ages. Amen.

I beseech Thee, O Lord God, the All Powerful and the All Merciful, that Thou wilt deign to bless this Circle, and all this place, and all those who are therein, and that Thou wilt grant unto us, who serve Thee, and rehearse nothing but the wonders of Thy law, a good Angel for our Guardian; remove from us every adverse power; preserve us from evil and from trouble; grant, O Lord, that we may rest in this place in all safety, through Thee, O Lord, Who livest and reignest unto the Ages of the Ages. Amen.

Let the Master now arise and place upon his head a Crown made of paper (or any other appropriate substance), on the which there must be written (with the Colours and other necessary things which we shall describe hereafter), these four Names AGLA, AGLAI, AGLATA, AGLATAI. The which Names are to be placed in the front, behind, and on either side of the head.

Furthermore, the Master ought to have with him in the Circle those Pentacles or Medals which are necessary to his purpose, which are described hereinafter, and which should be constructed according to the rules given in the Chapter on Pentacles. They should be described on virgin paper with a pen; and ink, blood, or colours, prepared according to the manner which we shall hereafter show in the Chapters on these subjects. It will be sufficient to take only those Pentacles which are actually required, they should be sewed to the front of the linen robe, on the chest, with the consecrated needle of the Art, and with a thread which has been woven by a young girl.

After this, let the Master turn himself towards the Eastern Quarter (unless directed to the contrary, or unless he should be wishing to call Spirits which belong to another quarter of the Universe), and pronounce with a loud voice the Conjunction contained in this Chapter. And if the Spirits be disobedient and do not then make their appearance, he must arise and take the exorcised Knife of Art wherewith he hath constructed the Circle, and raise it towards the sky as if he wished to beat or strike the Air, and conjure the Spirits. Let him then lay his right hand and the Knife upon the Pentacles or Medals, constructed of, and described upon virgin paper, which are fastened to or sewn upon his breast, and let him repeat the following Conjunction upon his knees:--

CONJURATION.

O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee. O Lord God Almighty, Who has reigned before the beginning of the Ages, and Who by Thine Infinite Wisdom hast created the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that in them is, all that is visible, and all that is invisible by a single word; I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I adore Thee, I glorify Thee, and I pray Thee now at the present time to be merciful unto me, a miserable sinner, for I am the work of Thine hands. Save me, and direct me by Thy Holy Name, Thou to Whom nothing is difficult, nothing is impossible; and deliver me from the night of mine ignorance, and enable me to go forth therefrom. Enlighten me with a spark of Thine Infinite Wisdom. Take away from my senses the desire of covetousness, and the iniquity of mine idle words. Give unto me, Thy servant, a wise understanding) penetrating and subtle heart, to acquire and comprehend all Sciences and Arts; give unto me capacity to hear, and strength of memory to retain them, so that I may be able to accomplish my desires, and understand and learn all difficult and desirable Sciences; and also that I may be able to comprehend the hidden secrets of the Holy Writings. Give me the virtue to conceive them, so that I may be able to bring forth and pronounce my words with patience and humility, for the instruction of others, as Thou hast ordered me.

O God, the Father, All Powerful and All Merciful, Who hast created all things, Who knowest and conceivest them universally, and to Whom nothing is hidden, nothing is impossible; I entreat Thy Grace for me and for Thy servants, because Thou seest and knowest well that we perform not this work to tempt Thy Strength and Thy Power as if in doubt thereof, but rather that we may know and understand the truth of all hidden things. I beseech Thee to have the kindness to be favourable unto us; by Thy Splendour, Thy Magnificence, and Thy Holiness, and by Thy Holy, Terrible, and Ineffable Name IAH, at which the whole world doth tremble, and by the Fear with which all creatures obey Thee.

Grant, O Lord, that we may become responsive unto Thy Grace, so that through it we may have a full confidence in and knowledge of Thee, and that the Spirits may discover themselves here in our presence, and that those which are gentle and peaceable may come unto us, so that they may be obedient unto Thy commands, through Thee, O Most Holy ADONAI, Whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and Whose Empire endureth unto the Ages of the Ages. Amen.

After having said all these words devoutly, let the Master arise, and place his hands upon the Pentacles, and let one of the Companions hold the Book open before the Master, who, raising his eyes to heaven, and turning unto the Four Quarters of the Universe, shall say:-

O Lord, be Thou unto me a Tower of Strength against the appearance and assaults of the Evil Spirits.

After this, turning towards the Four Quarters of the Universe, he shall say the following words:--

These be the Symbols and the Names of the Creator, which can bring Terror and Fear unto you. Obey me then, by the power of these Holy Names, and by these Mysterious Symbols of the Secret of Secrets.

The which being said and done, thou shalt see them draw near and approach from all parts. But if they be hindered, detained, or occupied in some way, and so that they cannot come, or if they are unwilling to come, then, the Suffumigations and Censings being performed anew, and (the Disciples) having anew, by especial order, touched their Swords, and the Master having encouraged his Disciples, he shall reform the Circle with the Knife of Art, and, raising the said Knife towards the Sky, he shall as it were strike the air therewith. After this he shall lay his hand upon the Pentacles, and having bent his knees before the Most High, he shall repeat with humility the following Confession; the which his Disciples shall also do, and they shall recite it in a low and humble voice, so that they can scarcely be heard.