

The Order of the White Moon Goddess Gallery Presents:

The Horned GODDESS



A Level 1 Final Project for the Rainbow Moon School by Initiate Francesca Lucia Kade

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Introduction

As a student of the Rainbow Moon School, I'm interested in the ways that modern practitioners are "queering" the Divine imagery we work with (*i.e., reclaiming & revising through an LGBTQ+ lens*), especially when it comes to unpacking binary mindsets within our work & study.

The history of modern witchcraft & magick has often relied heavily on a binary mode of thought that divides the world, our workings, and our deities along cisgender and heteronormative lines. Deities are often presented in cismale/cisfemale hetero pairings; for example, in Wicca, the Horned God with his consort, the Triple Goddess. The modern concept of the Horned God has become an extremely powerful archetype in recent decades, with his horns said to represent his masculine fertility, power, and close connection with nature - with the horns or antlers becoming known as a nearly exclusively masculine symbol.

I chose to research the various aspects of the Horned Goddess for this project because of the ways in which she counteracts and "queers" our understanding of this iconic archetype through her past & present existence and how we imagine her today. She reminds us that the Horned One need not be a single gender - and can exist outside of the binary.

Thank you for embarking on this exploration with me.

- Francesca Lucia "Luci" Kade

A photograph of an ancient Egyptian temple interior. The walls are covered in hieroglyphs. In the foreground, several large, seated statues of pharaohs are visible, each with a smaller statue of a child at their feet. The scene is brightly lit, with shadows cast across the floor and walls.

I. EGYPT

Hathor | Bat | Isis

While we often associate horned deities with deer or goats, much of the earliest horned goddess imagery is, in fact, related to cattle instead.

Hathor, the cow goddess of ancient Egypt, is depicted with long, magnificent horns on her head. Another Egyptian goddess, Bat, also had cow ears and horns. Their worship may have overlapped and become syncretized, with both goddesses being associated with fertility, rebirth, and the heavens.

Isis, the black mother goddess of the Nile, would also later be depicted with horns.

Cattle played a key role in early agricultural societies, so it's no surprise that their life-giving sustenance would become a symbol of the goddess across cultures and eras.

"Hathor was the golden goddess who helped women to give birth, the dead to be reborn, and the cosmos to be renewed. This complex deity could function as the mother, consort, and daughter of the creator god. Many lesser goddesses came to be regarded as "names" of Hathor in her contrasting benevolent and destructive aspects. She was most commonly shown as a beautiful woman wearing a red solar disk between a pair of cow's horns."

-Geraldine Pinch, *Egyptian Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Goddesses, and Traditions of Ancient Egypt*



- Hathor, from the collection of the Brooklyn Museum - ca. 664 BCE

A night landscape featuring a vibrant green aurora borealis in the sky, a starry night sky, and snow-covered mountains in the background. The foreground shows a dark, textured surface, possibly a frozen lake or a snowy field.

II. SIBERIA

Beaivi | Saule | Rohanitsa

Much farther north, the goddess was venerated as a reindeer! She was worshiped in Scandinavia, Russia, Siberia, and the surrounding areas of eastern Europe.

The indigenous Sami people called her Beaivi, a sun goddess associated with motherhood and spring - her flight on the winter solstice bringing fertility back to the harsh lands.

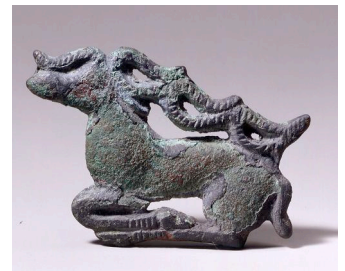
In nearby Lithuania and Latvia, the sun goddess Saule was also associated with reindeer, driving through the sky on her sleigh pulled by reindeer.

Similarly, the mother goddess Rohanitsa is depicted with antlers, giving birth to both fawns and human children. In Siberian shamanism, the female shamans adorn themselves with shed, embellished antlers and images of deer, which are associated with life and rebirth.

Some traces of her veneration are still present in modern iconography - having been thought to have influenced current depictions of Santa, with his team of female reindeer. Unlike woodland deer, female reindeer do grow antlers, and retain them throughout the winter months.

This antlered gift bringer represents resilience, nourishment, and the warmth of community.

-Garment plaque in the shape of deer, from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum - ca. 6th-4th century BCE



Feasting with Sunshine

Ritual Baking or Offerings for Beavi: Butter & Oat Cakes Recipe

Making homemade butter is extremely simple - but takes a bit of effort and dedication within the process, perfect for devoting to the goddess!

To make your butter, simply add your desired quantity of heavy cream to a sturdy glass jar, screw on the lid, and shake it hard. After about 5-10 minutes, you'll start to see the solids separate - creating butter! At this point, you may add a bit of salt to your butter if you wish, and shake a little more to mix. Once your butter has solidified, pour off the remaining liquid (buttermilk) and set it aside. Voila!

You can use your freshly made butter on your oatcakes, or simply enjoy as a spread.

To make your oatcakes, you'll need salt, cinnamon, clove, fennel seeds, one egg, honey, and 100g of oats. Measure out your oats into a bowl, then break and mix in your egg. Add a pinch of each of your spices to taste, and 2 tbsp of honey. The mixture should be wet enough to hold together, but not so wet that the dough is runny. Adjust as needed.

Line a baking sheet with foil or other nonstick surface protector, and shape your dough for baking. You can get creative with your shapes, or simply scoop up 1-inch balls and flatten them between your palms.

Bake at 350F until lightly browned, like a crunchy granola cracker.

Your resulting offerings may be eaten with butter and honey, left on your altar space, or sacramentally scattered/buried outside if appropriate.



III. Europe

Elen | Calleich Bheur | Sadv

In early European cultures, the horned goddess also makes an appearance.

A deer goddess cult existed in Scotland, whose worship was conducted only by women. While various deer goddess figures appeared by region, she was most commonly known as the *Calleich Bheur*. Occasionally, men would participate in rites to honor this goddess by performing deer dances while dressed as women, theorized to be an appropriation of prior priestesses and their rituals.

Across Albion (ancient Britain), Ireland, and Wales, people revered Elen of the Ways - an antlered goddess who is the keeper of pathways and migratory deer herds, guardian of both animals and plants alike. According to some legends, it was she who laid the roads travelers took across the lands.

The goddess Sadv also appears as a magical deer, with antlers and the ability to speak. Sometimes depicted in queenly fashion with a cornucopia in her hand, she may have represented abundance as well as spiritual guidance.

All of these goddess figures had in common a deep protector aspect, guarding nature and laying boundaries for how and when human beings interacted with it.



-Goddess statue, from the collection of the British Museum - ca. 1st-2nd century ACE

Praying the Ways

A simple chant for those on the roads.

For the path

For the boundaries

For the horizon

For the freedom

Within me

For the treads of those who have gone before

For the expanse above me

For the expanse in front of me

For feet and wheels and all that carries me

Moving forward in gratitude

For the path

For the boundaries

For the horizon

For the freedom

Within me

For where I have set my mind to be

For where I am in this moment

For the threads between the places

For the Divine unsettling that drives the journey

Moving forward with intention

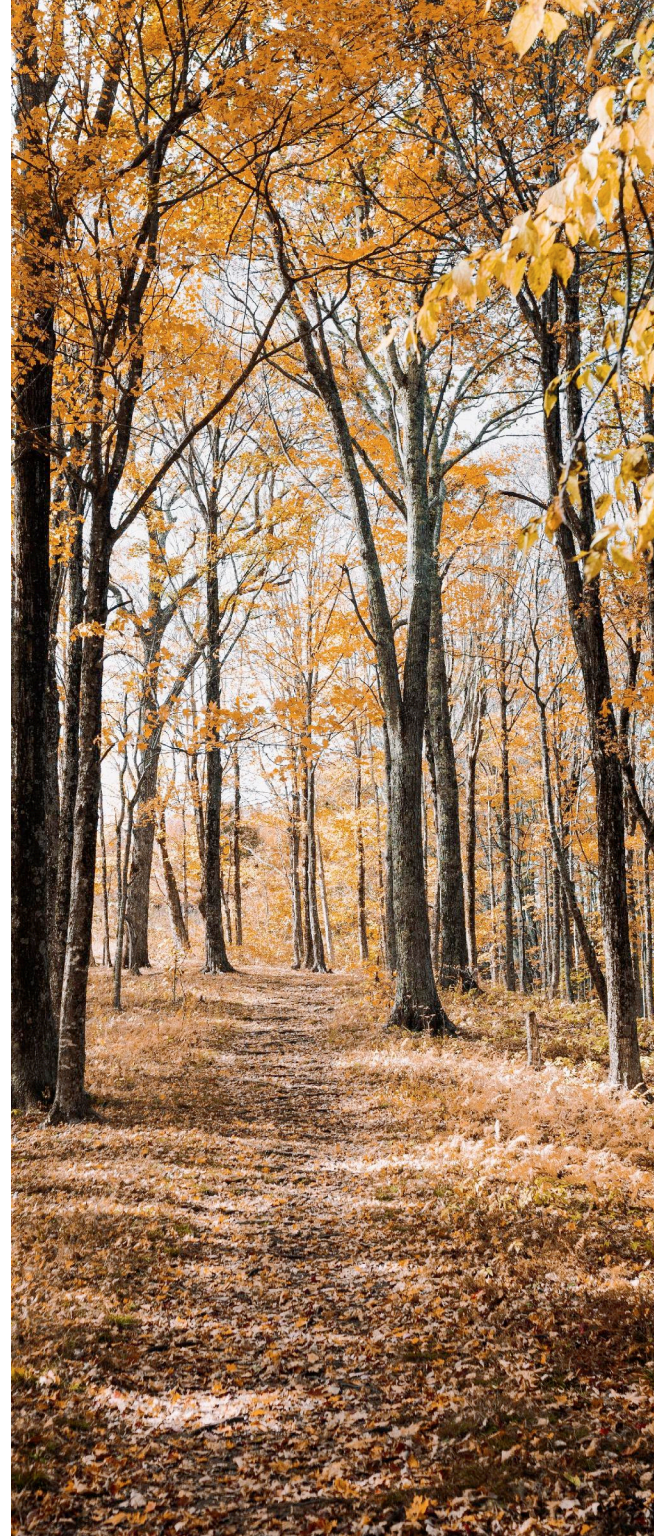
For the path


For the boundaries

For the horizon

For the freedom

Within me



A photograph of two elk in a field. In the foreground, a large male elk with impressive, multi-tined antlers stands facing left. In the background, a smaller female elk is visible, also facing left. The field is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses and some small yellow wildflowers. The background shows a line of evergreen trees and a hazy, mountainous landscape under a soft, overcast sky. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text 'IV. NORTH AMERICA' in a bold, black, serif font.

IV. NORTH AMERICA

Taxti Wau

In North America, Taxti Wau (in the Omaha language, meaning *Deer Woman*) is a mysterious, shape-shifting spirit who can appear as a deer or a woman, often described as appearing as a beautiful woman with her head covered, and deer hooves peeking out from the hem of her skirt. Sometimes seen as a negative omen similar to a mythological siren, she is said to lure lustful or greedy men to their deaths if they try to chase her.

In some versions of the myth, Deer Woman was originally a human woman who transformed into a deer after being raped - or murdered, in some variations. By transforming into her animal form, she is able to protect both herself and other victimized women, becoming a beacon of freedom and agency.

According to Native writer Carolyn Dunn: *"The Deer Woman spirit teaches us that marriage and family life within the community are important and these relationships cannot be entered into lightly. Her tales are morality narratives: she teaches us that the misuse of sexual power is a transgression that will end in madness and death."* Taxti Wau can be a symbol of female solidarity and protection, as well as a symbol of warning.

When seeking to honor Taxti Wau, consider the campaigns to raise awareness and resources for missing and murdered Indigenous women in our communities.

". . .but I imagined her like this, not a stained red dress with tape on her heels but the deer who entered our dream in white dawn, breathed mist into pine trees, her fawn a blessing of meat, the ancestors who never left." - Deer Dancer, Joy Harjo



V. TODAY

A Modern Emergence

As witchcraft reawakens in a new era, many of us have felt the call to re-wilding ourselves, our magical practice, and the world. I see the archetype of the Horned Goddess resonating deeply - especially with femmes or women who desire to shed society's restrictions and embrace freedom, raw authenticity, and nature's rhythms.

She calls us back to our roots, our foundations in the dust of our ancestors, deep beneath the soil. In contrast to the hyper-technological focus of our society, her voice is ancient, dark, and earthy. She is the tug we feel when we stand on the edge of a forest and peer through the trees in search of the doorway to our own Narnia. She is the impulse that cannot be silenced within us, when we have become lost in our own daily lives and strayed far from who we are meant to be.

When we honor the Horned Goddess, we honor the powers outside of the patriarchy and the gender binary. We smear mud on our faces. We stay up late to watch the moon. We become comfortable in the swamps and on the mountains and when faced with the gnarled stare of the old oak trees.

In artwork, song, and imagination, she lives on in us all.

Her footsteps echo in the forest by the light of the moon.

So mote it be.

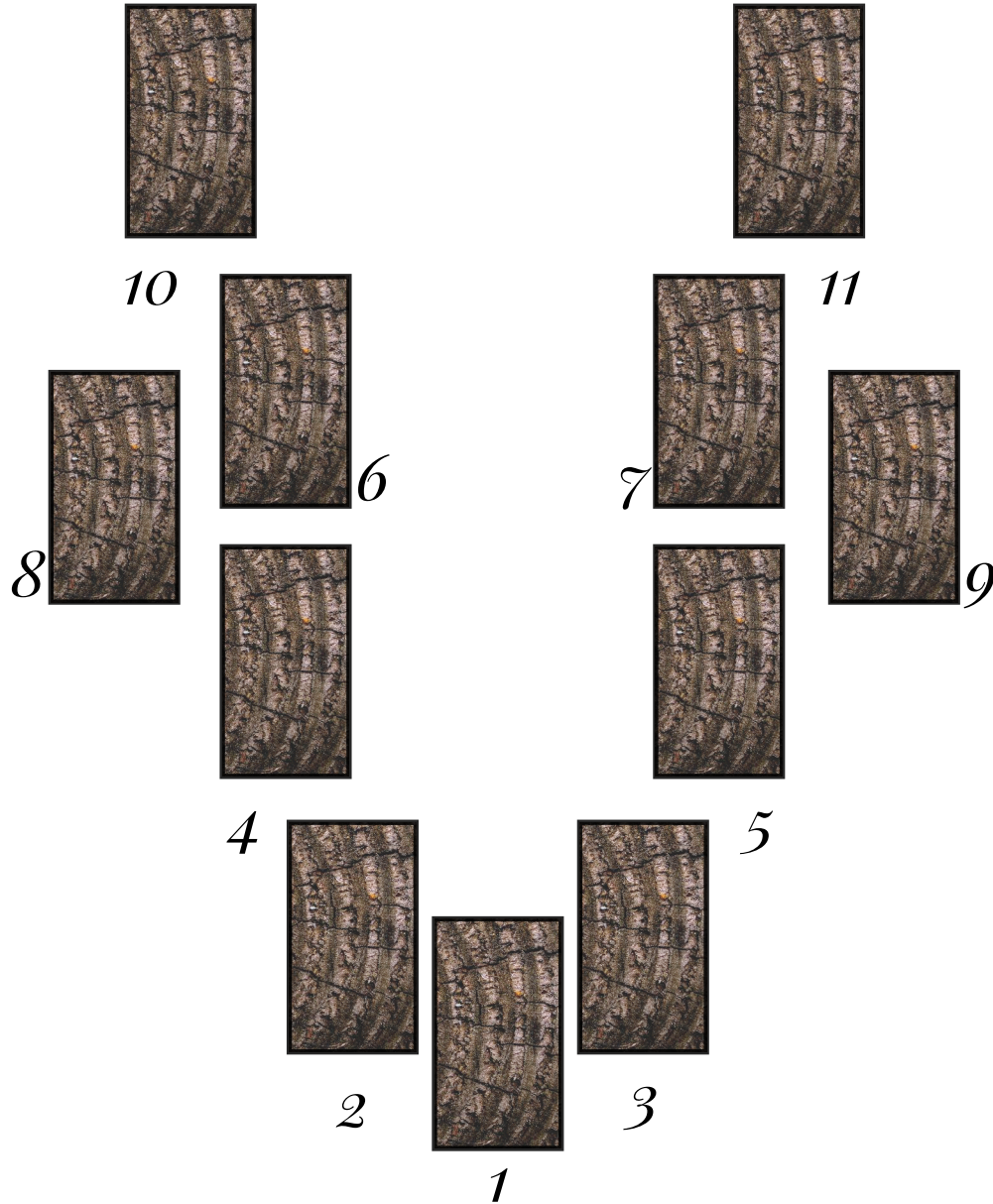


A close-up photograph of a rose with a semi-transparent white text box overlaid in the center. The rose is in the foreground, showing its petals in shades of pink and red. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and green, suggesting a garden setting. The text "TAROT SPREAD" is written in a bold, black, serif font within the white box.

**TAROT
SPREAD**

Prongs of Choice

A tarot spread for discernment between two paths, following the deer trods.



Interpretation

Preparation: Shuffle your deck according to your preferred method. From the top of the deck, deal cards face down into the layout pictured on the reverse page. Turn the cards over in order, considering each card individually as you progress, and then consider the picture as a whole.

- 1 - The signifier. This card represents your self, in this present moment.
- 2 - The external. Forces, factors, and circumstances externally that influence this moment of choice.
- 3 - The internal. Forces, factors, and circumstances internally that influence this moment of choice.
- 4 - Choice one. A snapshot of what the first path represents to you.
- 5 - Choice two. A snapshot of what the second path represents to you.
- 6 - The first destination. The potential outcome on the first path.
- 7 - The second destination. The potential outcome on the second path.
- 8 - The divergent. How the first path could curve away from your expectations.
- 9 - The divergent. How the second path could curve away from your expectations.
- 10 - The arc. The ways that taking the first path will influence your broader story into the future.
- 11 - The arc. The ways that taking the second path will influence your broader story into the future.

Notes on Your Reading:

A vertical wooden post stands on the left side of the frame. The background is a bright blue sky with a large, glowing sun in the upper right. The ground is a mix of green and brown, suggesting a field or landscape. A white rectangular box is centered in the middle of the image, containing the word "RITUAL" in a black serif font.

RITUAL

Mini-Ritual Suggestions

In honor of the wild goddesses of horns and antlers and woods...

- Find a quiet place where you can sit with your feet in a moving stream and allow your heart to be open. What feelings rise to the surface?
- Go for a jog through your favorite park with wild music loud in your headphones. Run until your body starts to tire, and then run a little longer to really feel your inner fire.
- Lay in the grass to stargaze on a dark moon or new moon night. What patterns do you see in the astral display?
- Start a compost pile, and commit to nurturing it for a year and a day.
- Spread wild clover seeds in your yard or a bare patch of dirt in an urban area. Take away and safely dispose of any litter you find while out.
- Go foraging. Try to find dandelion leaves, wood sorrel, clover flowers and leaves, violet flowers and leaves, and wild rose petals. (forage responsibly; only eat clearly identified plants from areas away from cars that have not been sprayed). Eat slowly, with intention - what flavors and sensations do you experience?
- Be barefoot. More. As much as you can. How does that practice change your connection to the earth beneath your feet and the world around you?
- Give a financial offering to a wildlife rehabilitation center. Remember that ecosystems rely on every species present to thrive; a gift to wolves helps deer to flourish.



A full moon is visible in a dark blue twilight sky. The moon is partially obscured by a white rectangular box that contains the word "SOURCES" in a black, serif font. The bottom of the image shows the dark silhouettes of trees against the twilight sky.

SOURCES

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Deer Woman original artwork collage by Francesca Lucia Kade.

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In addition to the direct citations above, I owe gratitude & lineage to those who have influenced me in ways that relate to this work: Kerritwyn Cennitaire & The Order of the White Moon, Sarah Faith Gottessinger, Lauren "Onca" O'Leary, Karyn Krol-Tiso, Laura Zakroff, and Mary K. Greer.

I also owe thanks to the deer who ran into my car one moonlit night in Georgia, prompting my study of deer archetypes related to the divine Feminine. Finally, forever gratitude to my wife - Megan Kade - whose way of seeing me opens up doors inside my soul for things like this.

Click here to return to the Goddess Gallery.