

Section 8 – The Proliferation of Deity

The Gauls and their Legacy

The Gauls were the Celtic people who lived in what is now France. Like other Celts they did not write down their beliefs. However, they left thousands of artefacts, many representing the Mother. Miranda Green has shown that there were even factories dedicated to the production of figurines of the deity just as similar ones produce countless figurines of Madonna and Child today.¹ The Gauls' allegiance to the Goddess was profound.

Until Vatican II, which began in 1962, the Roman Catholic Mass was always celebrated in Latin, and not in the local language of the congregation.² The tradition of celebrating Mass in Latin reaches back to the earliest days of Roman Christianity. The survival of both p-Celtic (Welsh, Breton, Manx etc.) and the older q-Celtic (Irish and Scottish Gaelic) tongues makes it quite clear that the populations did not generally become Latin-speaking, and so would not have been able to understand the liturgy.³ To whom would they have turned for explanation of the new rituals? The Druids. The ordinary people of Romano-Celtic Europe would have been advised that their beloved Goddess was the Mother of this new Roman god, and that the Druids themselves would be there to protect and nurture their faith in her. How easy it must have been to slip into Christianity, especially for a people of whom Caesar noted, 'All the Gauls are very superstitious.'⁴ Amongst the most devout of Christian lands would be Celtic ones like France, Ireland, Scotland, Spain and Portugal. The pre-existing Goddess worship in these areas greatly contributed to the phenomenon known as 'Marianist Catholicism', in which Mother Mary is the hub around which the pantheon revolves.

Medieval artists and masons, and the trade and craft guilds they belonged to, inherited the artisanal traditions that existed amongst the Gauls. These derived from the druidic system of learning and persisted after their Romanisation, and drew together the pre-existing Goddess belief with the new order, Christianity. Alongside the priestly successors to the Druids, these masons and artists ensured that the Goddess would remain at the heart of European Christianity.

¹ Green, Miranda. *Celtic Goddesses*. British Museum. 1997.

² On-line resource: <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txs/secondvc.htm>

³ The Celtic tongues are classified into two groups, Goidelic and Brythonic: 'The Goidelic languages are often referred to as "Q-Celtic" because they use a "Q" sound, usually represented by a C or K, where the Brythonic or "P-Celtic" languages use P. For instance, Irish and Scottish Gaelic for "head" is ceann, or sometimes kin. Brythonic languages, P-Celtic Welsh and Cornish, use pen.' (<http://www.digitalmedievalist.com/opinionated-celtic-faqs/celtic-languages/> Retrieved 10/07/2014)

⁴ Caesar, Gaius Julius. *De Bello Gallico*.