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Visions Of The Cailleach: Exploring The Myths, Folklore And Legends Of The Pre-eminent Celtic Hag Goddess



Synopsis

Standing astride the British landscape, looms the giant blue form of the Cailleach. Whether she is seen as a benevolent earth-shaping giantess, harsh winter hag goddess, shape-shifting crone, guardian of sacred wells and animals, or ancient bestower of sovereignty; the Cailleach appears in many roles and manifestations in myths and legends across the British Isles. Tracking the Cailleach across thousands of years through folklore, literature and place names, the authors have uncovered startling references which hint at a hidden priestess cult worshipping the Cailleach from ancient times through into the twentieth century. By exploring her myths and legends, they demonstrate the hugely significant role of the Cailleach in the early history of the British Isles. The demonization of the Cailleach through the Middle Ages by the Christian Church paralleled that of women and witches, and is reflected in various other supernatural hag figures possibly derived from her and discussed in detail, such as Black Annis, Gyre Carling, Mia Lia, Nicneven and the Old Woman of the Mountain. Looking beyond the veil of the sacred landscape, the vision of the Cailleach confronts the seeker, in hills and rocks, lakes and wells, burial chambers and stormy skies. Now finally the primal elemental power of the Cailleach is revealed in her full glory, in the tales and places of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man; as well as in traces of her presence in England, Wales, Jersey, Brittany, Spain and Norway. This unique and ground-breaking work brings together for the first time the wealth of folklore, stories and legends regarding this most significant of British supernatural figures, whose myths and wisdom are as relevant today as they have ever been. "The Cailleach is the British Celtic hag goddess who shaped the land by moving the rocks and rivers. She is also a weather goddess who rules the months of Winter and shape-shifts into animal form. This crone goddess features heavily in the folklore of Scotland and Ireland, and the authors bring together tales from these countries and many others to form a unique and definitive study."

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Customer Reviews

ns of the CailleachThroughout the British Isles there is a figure or motif that is commonly know as the Cailleach. She is depicted as an old hag , she is referred to many times as the old crone. Her depiction reflects her great age. She is reputed to be well over 2,000 years old. Cailleach is thought to be the old earth mother who gave birth to all life. Just what are the origins of the Cailleach and where did her worship originate? Author's Sorita d'este and David Rankine explore the roots of this ancient goddess, her many role and what exactly she represented. Her origins are believed to be derived from Iberian Celts who made their way from Spain to Ireland. Various linguistic etymologies speak of a people called the kalliechi or some similiar word in Greek. This linguistic etymology could be referring to a group of people or a cult of priestesses dedicated to the Calliech. These would actually be deer priestesses who decked themselves out in deer skins and deer horns. The deer are sacred to the Caileach. The origins of the Cailleach may extend even further back than Spain. She may have originated from the Maltese Goddess, Sansura. Sansura was the Earth mother who bore all creation yet like the Cailleach she has darker aspects and is connected to winter and the forces that take away life. No one can make this connection for certain. The exact identity of the Cailleach is open to interpretation as well. Is she just one giant hag or was there a race of hags. Is the term maybe a reference to a group of people or a deer cult comprised of priestesses said to roam about the British Isles. That intetpretation is ultimately left up to you. The authors of this work examine the many stories involving the Cailleach and give an examination of the over all picture.

The Cailleach: who, or what, is this mythical figure? Even in the the foggy mists of most ancient history she was already old, old as the hills, a wise crone with magical powers and preternatural wisdom. Was she a faerie being? Was she a goddess? Is the myth of her that reaches down

through the annals of time into this epoch merely the recollection of an ancient goddess priesthood? Authors Sorita d'Este and David Rankine present in this small but superbly researched tome a wealth of lore concerning the Cailleach. Tracing her myths back beyond the time of the Romans, they note how the land of Portugal acquired its name through the Cailleach myth, and they relate folktales of her from Iberia to Scotland. The Cailleach is a crone, perhaps the crone manifestation of the triple goddess. She is as old as the hills and a bit of a trickster, though she works her tricks for good and for the defense of those decent folk she favors. She is fair and always takes a payment for her deeds, in the manner of the faerie folk. She operates through nature. Her wealth is in the form of wool and grain, and her treasured red deer. She is undoubtedly a primal being who exists with the green world in a very profound and integrated sense. As I read this tome, I could not help but think of the Cailleach as the natural counterpart to the Green Man. Visions of the Cailleach does not state what the authors believe the Cailleach to be. Rather, it expertly presents surviving myth and notes the interpretations those myths give rise to. But one thing is certain, the myths point to an ancient being that has probably been known since the Bronze Age, and I would not doubt her saga traces much further back. The Cailleach, the Green Woman, ancient being who has outlasted the ages.

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