

## **Review: Pagan Portals--Lugh, by Morgan Daimler**

by Lyri Ahnam \* July 2023 Ev0ke Magazine

The Irish Lughnasadh holiday, marking the beginning of harvest in early August, is associated with the god Lugh. Morgan Daimler's *Pagan Portals--Lugh*, is an excellent introduction to this complex deity. Lugh was "a god of kings and skilled artisans, of poets and magicians, of warriors and healers."

The book covers Lugh's many aspects in six chapters, with a helpful pronunciation guide and extensive bibliography in the aftermatter. Chapter One describes Lugh's divine lineage and gives an overview of the Irish god's attributes, including:

- Master of many skills including weaponry, harping, and sorcery
- A virtuoso strategist and fidchell (chess) player
- Associated with divine sovereignty
- Habitually fierce and beautiful

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Myths associated with Lugh from original sources are described and analyzed in the second chapter. Here we see Lugh defeat his grandfather Balor, avenge his father's murder, heal the Irish hero Cu Chulainn, and initiate harvest games for his foster mother's funeral.

Parallels and distinctions are explored between the Irish Lugh, the Gaulish Lugus, and the Welsh Lleu in Chapter Three. Lugus is likely the oldest of the three gods and possibly the progenitor of the Irish and Welsh deities. Like the other two, Lugus had a harvest festival in early August, but was probably a triplet deity (his two brothers became seals). Lleu was "long-armed" like Lugh (meaning skillful with long-range weapons such as spear and sling), but his strange, miraculous birth and his "flower-bride" are distinct to Welsh mythology. The author also explores fascinating connections between Lugh and the Irish hero Fionn MacCumhall.

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The remaining chapters explore Lugh's divine associations and the names of his horses, chariots, and charioteers; place names associated with Lugh; the ancient Lunasa holiday; and modern portrayals of Lugh in literature and other media (pointing out when they deviate from the source material).

The author provides suggestions for connecting with the god in the final chapter, through dreams, omens, and mediation. She has ideas for altars (depending on which aspects of Lugh the practitioner hopes to address), model prayers, and a guided meditation.

The depth of scholarship lends this book authority, yet the author's prose is highly readable, and she is careful to encourage readers to interpret the material for themselves. I wasn't unfamiliar with Lugh, yet I learned more than I anticipated. *Pagan Portals--Lugh* is a great resource for anyone interested in Celtic mythology and the Irish god Lugh in particular.