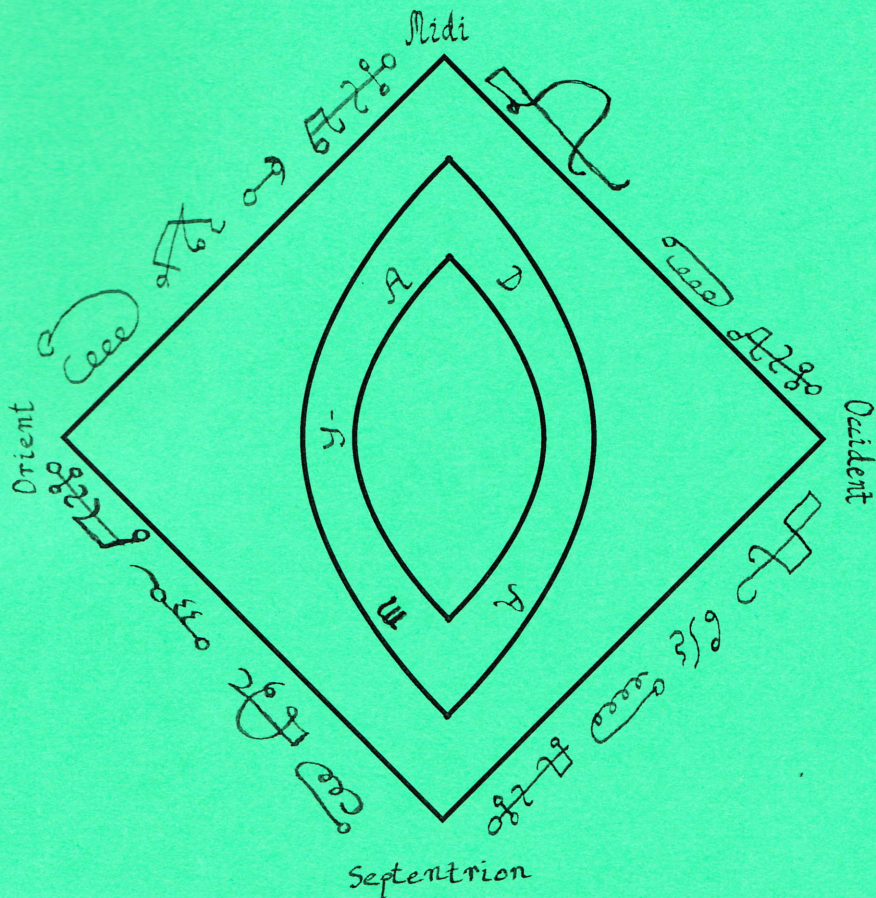


# Goetic Divination



Jake Stratton-Kent

# Goetic Divination

*'I invoke thee Typhon Set, I perform thy ceremonies of divination.'*

Goetic magic has had a bad press from the urban literati of the Classical world up to the present day. In reality it is derived from ancient methods of working with spirits which were part of 'popular' religion and magic and are deserving of reappraisal. The well informed reader will be aware that from the more primal and traditional perspectives all magic and divination involves the actions of gods or spirits. Additionally the term *goetia* is ancient Greek and applies to a great many varieties of magical work including divination, particularly - but not exclusively - necromantic divination. The purpose of this essay is to detail working with goetic methods of divination. The terms used assume that the operator is working with the *True Grimoire*; has the magical means to communicate with the spirit Scirlin, and a standing agreement with divining spirits from the grimoire, such as Nebiros, Klepoth and others. The instructions also involve the assumption that you have already formed the necessary relationships with spirits. The methods are readily adaptable to systems where an emphasis on spirit work is present or desired.

Many of these divination methods resemble 'vulgar fortune telling' and might be considered 'New Age'. To be honest I do walk past the Mind, Body and Spirit shelves in bookshops with a superior air myself on occasion, but some of what passes for New Age, like Spiritualism before it, provokes reactions from ritual magicians that can be a little short sighted. The original Theurgists employed something very like séances, and the *Chaldean Oracles* were very likely dictated by something not too different from 'channelling', or obtained via a divining technique. The protocols and procedures

of ritual magic make these methods absolutely valid and workable, rather than inferior to what modern magicians may imagine they're meant to be doing. Indeed when it comes to communicating with spirits they are invaluable, and much more dependable than hoping the spirit talks to you directly; a fairly rare occurrence for most of us.

The methods in this booklet are designed to work well together, as it is often difficult to know which divination method a spirit will prefer, and some questions require more than one for a full answer. It is therefore good practice on some occasions to be equipped for more than one method of divination.

## Pendulum divination

This is a very ancient method, being known in ancient Rome and probably long before. The following description is from an account of a Roman trial: 'We constructed from laurel rods a small table in the form of the Delphic tripod. We consecrated it with cryptic spells and many magical rites until it was ready for use. It worked in the following way: when we wished to consult it about hidden matters it was placed in the centre of a room previously perfumed with incenses from Arabia, and upon it was placed a circular bowl made from an alloy of the planetary metals. The rim was cunningly engraved with the twenty-four letters of the alphabet evenly divided at intervals. The diviner dressed in linen garments and wore linen sandals, with a wreath upon his head and bearing green twigs from a fortunate tree in his hand. After uttering a set prayer to invoke the divine power which presides over prophecy, he took his position above the tripod as his knowledge of the proper ritual had taught him, and set swinging a consecrated ring suspended by a very fine cotton thread.

The ring, moving in a series of jumps over the marked spaces, came to rest on particular letters, which made up hexameters appropriate to the questions put and in perfect scansion and rhythm, like the lines produced at Delphi or by the oracle of the Branchidae’.

This is a very interesting account, containing lots of illustrative detail. Constructing the tripod from laurel twigs is a classic example of Sympathia in action. The dish and letters is fascinating precedent for ‘Ouija boards’ etc., while the extensive use of ritual formulae to prepare the equipment obviously deals with the objections to such by ritual magicians. The ‘divine power’ is almost certainly Apollo, and it is interesting that the priest wears ‘linen sandals’ (Egyptian priests wore bark sandals). Also interesting is that the oracle was given in verse, contrary to the idea we get from Plutarch that poetic oracles had died out. This detail shows these diviners were not dilettantes but experts in a long established tradition. A famous hydromantic operation from antiquity also describes similar metrical responses.

Many years ago I came up with something very similar to the above (though oblivious of the precedent at the time). A long period of semi-stability in my life had ended, and I was unsure where I would be living next, as were those I lived with, so I constructed an oracle as follows. One large bowl with its rim marked with letters, one pendulum (a ‘ring on a string’ I believe - I certainly had magical rings at the time), one wax sigil of Astaroth in the bowl, to which was added a solution of live yeast (water to which blood was added is the ancient equivalent).

Making my incantation we proceeded to question the spirit. Among the details which emerged was a highly accurate description of the place we all ended up in a month or so later, in another part of the country at a place none of us had previously visited.

Nowadays most of my pendulum work takes one of two forms.

One is to simply ask questions of the spirit after conjuring, usually a written list with a semi-logical sequence worked out in advance, with branches leading off from the questions depending on Y/N answers received. The second – which also involves predetermined questions – is to use a circle of letters so the spirit can spell things out in more detail. The order of letters is ALWHSDOZKVGRCNYJUFQBMXITEP, as this is the order of the alphabet I use in qaballistic aspects of my work, which extends to ritual construction for work with the same spirits.

With the first method the procedure is simple enough: firstly I recite the conjuration of Scirlin seven times, counting on my fingers to avoid distraction.

HELOYTAU VARAF PANTHON HOMINORCUM, ELEMIATH,  
SERUGEATH, AGLA, ON, TETRAGRAMMATON KAS-ALHI.

This generally gets the pendulum revolving clockwise but just to be sure I stop it and ask ‘Scirlin, art thou present?’ This has never failed to get a clockwise rotation in response. Next I greet him with a statement of ‘belief’: ‘Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law’ (equally succinct statements exist for Christians, Muslims etc. but these spirits have made clear they want me to work within my own ‘religion’), again the clockwise rotation, assenting to the Law. I use this same method with any Verum spirit I do pendulum work with: even though it has become a formality with Scirlin he appreciates ritual as an offering so the effort is not wasted.

Scirlin has also added a feature to the technique: I often work in front of a large shrine made from a cupboard (or dresser) with shelves above carrying the images and spirit pots, and a two door storage space beneath. When I ask questions which could be answered with

a spirit name Scirlin occasionally saves me going through a list by swinging the pendulum towards the image or pot representing the spirit concerned.

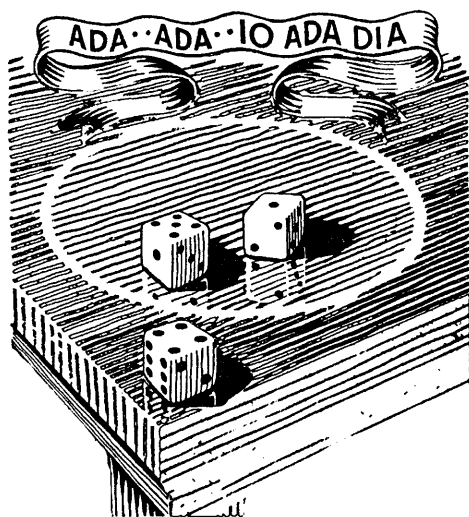
With the second method, using the circle of letters some questions can still be answered Y/N so as I don't like the idea of having 'Yes' and 'No' positions on the circle, I have a consecrated 1904 penny to resolve any questions requiring a Y/N answer during the conversation. The spirit's sigil is drawn in the middle of the circle. This is occasionally drawn in blood, although I haven't found the spirits particularly interested in this, they can 'get old school' from time to time. On such occasions the circle is drawn on paper, to be burned afterwards, other times the more permanent blackboard is used.

If a more permanent board is preferred it should be purified and consecrated in the usual fashion (this requires repetition periodically) and is best kept wrapped in a suitable cloth, be it silk or linen. The sigil can still be used, simply write it on a separate piece of paper or other material and place it centrally upon the board.

## Astragals

Divination by knuckle bones known as astragals - which in time were replaced by dice - is known to us from the Greeks, although there may be Egyptian connections. My guess is that in ancient times divinatory dice were obtained from the remains of sacrificial animals. The best throw was when all the dice showed different numbers (called Aphrodite or in Latin 'the throw of Venus'); the worst throw was when all were the same (called *kuon* or *canis*, the dog). This may involve syncretism; when Socrates swore by the dog - as he did when asserting something was true - he meant Anubis. This god has

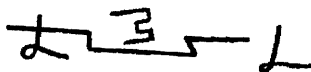
various connections with truth, for example his Judgement Hall role included truth telling. At the same time being in the Underworld isn't necessarily the most fortunate of states, hence the possible meaning here. Venus on the other hand is a fortunate planet, and the role of the goddess is/was life affirming. In the method described below, using three dice, not all triples are unfortunate, but those that are reinforce the general meaning.



The outlines of the method to be given here were published in the 1930s, taught the author by a Welsh magician whose likely identity I have been able to ascertain. It is interesting in that it includes an incantation with Greek-ish pronunciation, and resembles some incantations related to spirits of the *True Grimoire*. I've seen other astragals methods omitting the incantation that are plainly dependent on this one, as well as others that aren't.

In its simplest form the method described here requires: three dice, chalk, board or table on which to draw circles and other symbols, and a disk or bowl of seven inches diameter to assist you in drawing a seven inch circle (a Hydromantic bowl of the required size is an ideal tool for the purpose). These tools should either be kept consecrated and set apart or you may perform the standard consecration of the instruments before you begin.

Alternatively a permanent board may be made, with a circle of the required size; letters around the outside of the circle permit this to double up with pendulum work. With some slight adjustments to the technique described below, a flattish bowl of the required size may be used instead of a board. Such a bowl, if marked with letters around the inside rim, can be used for all three methods described in this booklet.



Sigil of Klepoth

Precede the operation with pendulum work with Scirlin with his incantation and offering, asking him to 'bring in' Klepoth. Add the sigil of Klepoth to the middle of the circle, recite her conjuration and make an offering of incense 'to the name and in honour of Klepoth' after the incantation. Ask her (or Scirlin) if she is present and happy to work with you giving true answers.

Then, shaking three dice in a dice-cup say slowly and distinctly:

ADA - ADA - IO ADA DIO.

(Ah-dar... Ah-dar... ee-o... ah-dar... dee-er)



Shake the dice out over a circle drawn on a table or consecrated 'blackboard' in white chalk; alternatively use a more permanent board as discussed.

Uppermost points are counted and totalled, then interpreted. The following summarises the meaning of the number range:

18 = the matter inquired of will be enormously successful, productive of good for all concerned, and will occur almost at once.

17 = changes may occur but the end of the matter will be to your advantage.

16 = a journey will be made in connection with the matter, and happiness will result.

15 = trouble will result and the thing should only be done with great caution. If three fives give this total the meaning is the same with added emphasis.

14 = the matter will be aided by a new friend.

13 = on no account proceed. There will be sorrow from this.

12 = the matter is resolved by a message soon to arrive.

The outcome indicated is usually poor if three fours give this total.

11 = the matter is affected by a parting from one you care for.

10 = a new departure or a birth affects the matter and you must await the evidences of this.

9 = marriage in your circle affects the matter; love, harmony, reconciliation.

8 = expect external criticism, interference and reproach if you proceed in this matter.

7 = difficulties and gossip will likely interfere with the matter.

6 = you will suffer a loss in this connection, worse if three twos.

5 = the question is affected by a presently unknown person's assistance.

4 = unpleasantness will result from any pursuit of the matter.

3 = unexpected but favourable developments almost at once.

Any dice rolling outside the circle indicate various results:

1 = whatever the number of points, the matter can only be carried out with difficulty.

2 = a great quarrel affects the matter.

3 = the wish will likely be granted the enquirer but it will prove an evil thing in the end.

Generally this will not form a part of divination where the dice are thrown into the flat bowl.

A more complex analysis can be obtained by a second throw after dividing the circle - complete with underlying sigil - into the 12 astrological houses.

A table of meanings follows that derives from Hellenistic Astrology; it will be noticed that these ancient meanings are more inclusive of magical processes than more modern Western astrology.

Since there is a lot in the House Schema that involves which House is opposite which in the Circular arrangement they are arranged here in two columns; so you can see the polar opposites at a glance. Ancient House titles indicating the general nature of the Houses are in bold type.

I. <b>Life</b> ; also body, spirit or breath. The next 12 months.	VII. <b>Marriage</b> ; relationships with others connected to the question.
II. <b>Livelihood</b> ; property; partnership, business. Also Gate of Hades through relation with the VIII.	VIII. <b>Death</b> ; trial, penalty, loss, weakness. But also sex and magic. Profit from inheritance (through relation with II.).
III. <b>Brothers</b> ; also Goddess (Moon); living abroad, prominent persons, wealth, friends, relatives.	IX. <b>Travel</b> ; also God (Sun). Friendship, travel, benefit from prominent persons, revelations, manifestations of gods, soothsaying. The state of mind of the inquirer.
IV. <b>Home</b> ; parents, spirits, spiritual life in relation to others, repute, children, etc.	X. <b>Career and Honours</b> ; accomplishment, reputation, But also status as concerns children and marriage partner (through relation with IV).
V. <b>Children</b> ; also good fortune. Friendship, matters in question. Venus.	XI. <b>Good Daimon</b> ; friends, hopes, gifts, children, freed persons; accomplishments.
VI. <b>Bad fortune</b> ; illness, enmity, infirmity. Service. Mars.	XII. <b>Bad Daimon</b> ; enmity, foreign country, loss of freedom, illness, dangers, court trials, infirmity, death.

**6 points** in a sector: show the matter concerned of and its outcome are good to the extent involving that sector.

**5 points** in a sector: the matter ends quite favourably and the outcome involves a friend.

**4 points** in a sector: the things indicated by the sector will suffer.

**3 points** in a sector: show some surprisingly good results.

**2 points** in a sector: favourable outcomes of matters indicated by the sector depend entirely on an absence of quarrels.

**1 point** in a sector: shows that communications concerning the matters of the sector will reveal the possibilities.

The meaning is then surmised from combining the meanings of the points total and their positions.

Additional rules: two dice in a sector may be resolved by taking the lower number from the higher; three dice in a sector are resolved by the middle one; two or three show the sector has great importance in the matter.

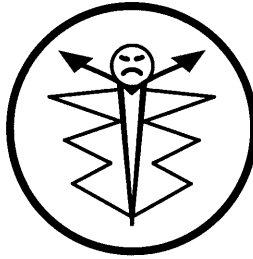
## Hydromancy

In the great source book of Renaissance magic, *The Three Books of Occult Philosophy* of Cornelius Agrippa, we are informed that Divination by Water is called Hydromancy, much as Divination by Earth is called Geomancy, and so on. Water divination or Hydromancy is divination which: ‘doth perform its presages by the impressions of water, their ebbing and flowing, their increases, and depressions, their tempests, and colours, and the like; to which also are added visions, which are made in the waters’. In the method of the *True Grimoire* the spirits of the Grimoire are employed to activate spells involving their area of expertise. Following this method, any and all forms of water divination involve the participation of, and can be activated by the spirit Elelogap. Two traditional methods of Hydromancy are in fact included in the Grimoire.

‘Vessel Divination’ - gazing into a bowl of water instead of a crystal ball to induce visions of spirits - is the classic form of divination from ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, continuing on into the medieval period. The modern operator should consider the use of differing types of water as traditionally employed: ‘Rainwater if you are calling upon heavenly gods, seawater if gods of the earth, river water if Osiris or Sarapis, spring water if the dead’. Seawater also has a relationship with Set. Extensive details are given on this technique in the *Art Armadel* chapter of my *True Grimoire*.

Hydromantic divination should be prepared in a similar way to conventional conjurations. The same is true to a degree of all divination methods described here; at very least a 'preliminary incantation eliciting aid from a spirit should be employed.

These preparations include prayers for success on rising and during the stages of the day (theoretically dawn, noon, sunset and midnight). Washing thoroughly with magically prepared water is also recommended, as is preparation of the place of working. If necessary these procedures can be found detailed in the *True Grimoire*; other forms, derived from the papyri, can be found in *A Sethian Ritual*, *The Equinox*:BJoT VII 7.



Sigil of Nebiros

Prepare your bowl and your water according to the processes of the grimoire prescribed for magical equipment. Proceed to make an incense offering and conjuration addressed to Scirlin, and then to the particular spirit you wish to consult – for example Nebiros or Klepoth. Sit comfortably – perhaps with the bowl on a low table or in your lap – and spend at least half an hour simply gazing. Do not stare rigidly at the surface, but let your eyes be lost in the depths of the water. You can repeat a conjuration or request to the spirit quietly during this time, as many times as you wish.

Many forms of hydromancy are known, and are frequently associated with standing water, such as holy wells and springs. Often associated with these sites are very similar methods to those employed with vessel divination, and in all likelihood these are the older forms. It is almost needless to say that these springs were often associated with a spirit (such as a nymph or undine) who was the source of the answers given.

While there are several methods of hydromancy the visionary form has high prestige and is a very ancient form of divination. When performed at a natural water source it is very likely the most ancient of all, and certainly the oldest form of hydromancy. The method of divination by water has been attributed to the ancient Greek sea god Nereus, and divination certainly was extensively associated with marine deities; but the method very likely precedes even Greek religion as we know it. From remote antiquity these methods are associated with moonlit nights. Catching the reflection of the Moon to brighten the water and endow it with power is a common element of the most ancient forms.

Cornelius Agrippa mentions a classical account of divination in use in Asia Minor: a child seer foretold all the events of the wars of Mithridates with the Romans. His source was a Roman account of the same event, which varies in some significant details: 'when the inhabitants of Tralles were making inquiries by a magical process in regard to the issue of the Mithridatic War, a boy, who was gazing upon the reflection of a statue of Mercury in the water, uttered a prophecy of the future in a hundred and sixty metrical lines'. The perceived image was a reflection of a cult image; understood as a magical linking with the god. When the Delphic Pythoness chewed laurel leaves the intention was also a sympathetic link with the god Apollo whose sacred tree is the bay laurel.

Agrippa also relates that Numa, a legendary King of Rome, practiced Hydromancy, and ‘in the water he called up the gods, and learned of them things to come’. Many references to gods invoked in a vessel of water, some of whom deliver predictions in verses, are also found in the Magical Papyri.

As Agrippa’s opening words suggest, the earliest form of Hydromancy consisted of watching water in nature, for instance by quietly watching a flowing river, or a still pool, be it bright or dark. This is a very powerful method, well worth pursuing if life permits recourse to nature, though persistence and time will also be required.

Although usually associated with crystal gazing, the often heard term ‘skrying’ refers to any method of inducing clairvoyance by gazing at a reflective surface. Gazing at a natural body of water is probably the distant ancestor of most, if not all, skrying methods humanity has ever employed. It is for this reason that other skrying methods will benefit from any effort made with the primeval origin of them all. In addition this will enhance your relationship with Elelogap before you settle down to using one or more of the more ‘convenient’ techniques, some of which are described below.

Since skrying is in essence watery even when using a crystal or mirror in place of a pool, it is equally appropriate to involve Elelogap in these operations. In such cases use of water to purify the skrying tool in advance, perhaps in the form of an infusion of mugwort, will be particularly appropriate.

When Agrippa mentions ‘obtaining visions’ he refers to divination in a cup or bowl, a widely used method of which many examples are to be found. These examples include a great many rituals and spells in the Magical Papyri, as well as later traditions in Europe and the New World. The reflection of the statue of Mercury

equates with gods and spirits of various cultures who are associated with divination, which may be seen in the water or simply invoked for assistance. Following on from this, Elelogap can be conjured for assistance in the preparation of the water. He is not himself directly concerned with divination, for which other spirits have responsibility; his expertise assists the work by charging the water with magical power, whereby a spirit of divination can reside in it. There are many such spirits in the hierarchy of the True Grimoire. For necromantic divination using spring water, as in the *Divination by the Word of Uriel*, there is no better spirit than Nebiros. In heavenly rain water, Klepoth gives visions, and among the others are many revealers of secrets.

## Other techniques

Many methods of divination in a cup or bowl require an additional substance besides water. In the classical methods this is generally olive or another natural oil, other substances include the yoke of an egg, wax, and molten lead. Oil forms patterns when cast in cold water, which may be examined and interpreted according to the diviners intuition. Wax and molten lead is interpreted according to shapes formed upon cooling, and also by the sounds produced. The yoke of an egg is interpreted according to its behaviour in the water, such as floating or sinking, and other indications, and is one of the forms of Hydromancy that appears in the True Grimoire.

An ancient variant on the above methods is pouring vinegar and oil into the same glass and watching their movements; this is a form of hydromancy that probably originated in Mesopotamia, and found its way into Greek magical practice. Divination where the forms made by melted wax in water are interpreted is known as Ceromancy. The basic procedure is very simple, though requiring some care. Let your



wax be first melted completely and the liquid carefully poured into a vessel of water, as cold as possible. On contact with the water the wax will harden into shapes. Leave time for the wax to harden fully before removing for closer examination. The shapes themselves, and perhaps the number of shapes formed, are the key to your augury. A flower shaped spray or 'fountain' assures a good outcome. In this case retain the hardened wax shape as a charm, for example wrapped in red cloth such as flannel and worn around the neck. A long string or 'river' shape is a bad omen, and in such cases water, wax and all should be ritually disposed of. Some suggest casting it into running water, or throwing them on the doorstep of an enemy. A very traditional disposal site is at a crossroads; however the best advice is to be obtained from a trusted spirit. Note how the two most basic shapes are named after water sources. Incidentally, like the casting of the stones, the sounds made by the wax contacting the water are also open to interpretation by the diviner.

Another method employs a ring hanging by a string; this is dipped into a vessel of water which is then shaken. The number of times which the ring strikes the sides of the vessel is then interpreted according to numerological associations. This method is not particularly compatible with the other procedures and equipment described here, but is worth knowing about just the same. Its combination of a pendulum and water divination is a helpful one; another such combination will be discussed in the chapter on pendulum divination.

With this, as with the other Hydromantic methods, precede your divination with a spell addressed to Elelogap and such other spirits as you wish to consult. Others might include spirits under whose jurisdiction other elements of the method are found. For example, if any herbs are involved, invoke the spirit Heramael for assistance.

## More on Vessel Divination

Divination with water and oil in a bowl is termed Lecanomancy, from the Greek, 'lecané', a bowl. Hydromancy with a bowl and the practice of Necromancy are closely related. When spring water is used it almost invariably indicates this connection is in force. Essentially the technique consists of evoking a spirit or spirits by means of incantations, and gazing into a bowl of water, generally after adding pure oil to its surface, in order to obtain visions. These visions traditionally are of two main kinds, either writing on the surface, often reversed as in a mirror, or a series of visions of gods or spirits. The second of these is the older, and the most interesting, one of the most enduring features of the magical arts throughout many different cultures and ages.

The ancient forms of the technique generally involve an intermediary spirit who brings in such spirits as are required. In Egypt this intermediary was usually Anubis, while In Asia Minor the same role was attributed to Mercury or Hermes, with whom in any case Anubis was associated in the relevant period. The most suitable intermediary spirit for goetic workings of this type would obviously be Scirlin from the *True Grimoire*.

Hydromantic operations were either undertaken by a solo magician or a seer and conjurer in tandem. The rites were often performed at the Full Moon. Incense was a very frequent adjunct, on occasion involving vegetable drugs, although the species of frankincense in use at the time was also psychotropic. Other uses of plants were as sympathetic links with various gods, both the narcissus and the hyacinth were prominent; these could actually be added to the water. Mugwort, which has a formidable reputation in the grimoires and allied traditions, would be a very appropriate and suitable plant

for modern uses.

In the *True Grimoire* the magician makes offerings to each spirit as it appears: 'I burn this incense in the name of, and to the honour of N'. This making of offerings would also account for the importance of the incense burner in these operations. Selection of appropriate incenses for other purposes within the rite could involve sympathetic magic, or the 'Doctrine of Signatures', as well as the association of particular plants and substances with particular gods or religious rites.

The addition of magical plants and all other adjuncts can also be employed. Indeed it is not inappropriate that alongside the visionary method, other hydromantic techniques play a supplementary role. Magical stones were also traditionally added to the water in the bowl, particularly bright stones which increased the brightness of the light reflected. On the subject of stones, another form of Hydromancy divines from the ripples, or even the sounds, made by casting three stones into a bowl or pool. If the casting of the stone produces a bubble, the omen is good, if accompanied by a gurgling noise this omen is strongly reinforced, but if neither results the indication is negative. Means of preparation and reinforcing this method have much in common with the visionary form. In particular both involve the conjuration of a spirit or spirits. Some versions suggest the three stones be round, triangular and square, to be cast in that sequence.

The use of appropriate precious stones, perhaps marked with sigils, and other lore regarding stones employed in the visionary form are all equally appropriate to this method. A method known as 'lithomancy' meaning divination by stones may also be added, although this is usually an adjunct of pyromancy, the stones being arranged around a candle or lamp, the use of stones in hydromancy is so traditional it may readily be transferred to this use. The signs are

supplied by a set of precious stones or suitable substitutes of several colours: whichever reflects the light the most or the first supplies the omen. If a blue stone is the brightest it is a fortunate sign, signifying good fortune arriving speedily, brightness in a black or gray stone indicates the reverse. If a yellow stone, then the omen is bad, signifying a betrayal of trust is imminent; green is fortunate, showing a wish is soon to be realized, while purple shows that unhappiness is soon to visit. Red indicates good fortune in love or marriage.

Regarding such arts it is perhaps little known that the description of Gaap in the *Goetia of Solomon the King* is far shorter than the corresponding entry in Weir and Scot. Among the information omitted by the former source is the following: 'There were certain necromancers that offered sacrifices and burnt offerings unto him; and to call him up, they exercised an art, saying that Solomon the wise made it'. This art is very likely to be, or at least include, the art of Hydromancy for necromantic purposes. This is all the more likely as Gaap is able to answer 'truly and perfectly of things present, past, & to come'; he is also able to deliver familiar spirits, even those currently serving some other sorcerer. This is particularly significant, as familiar spirits were frequently associated in this period with ceremonial skrying, whether in an illuminated phial of spring water or within a crystal. That Gaap, alias Elelogap, is credited with divinatory power should be interpreted along the lines suggested earlier; he enables the process through other spirits rather than directly participating.

On a practical level there are various adjuncts which may assist the operator. These include 'magical shopping': should there be no springs in your locality, bottled spring water of the best quality available can be obtained from stores. To accentuate the link with ancient practice you can also consider buying the ingredients for home made 'natron', in the form of 'Washing Soda' (Sodium Bicarbonate)

and Bicarbonate of Soda. Mix these evenly, consecrate and store in a pure vessel. This can subsequently be used in place of salt as a purifying agent for the skrying equipment, or to make a circle around the divining equipment and in other ways.

Other adjuncts include magical images, for example of Hermes or Anubis, positioned in such a way as to catch their reflection in the water of the vessel. As mentioned above, precious or sparkling stones may also be used; one of the traditional stones is the 'hyacinth', and the plant of the same name is also associated with vessel divination. Such stones may be placed in the vessel from the start to increase the brightness of the water, or added in sequence, watching the ripples for signs. These might include different sounds, such as whistling; the way the stone descends through the vessel; the number or form of the ripples. All these are found associated with standing water as well as with divination with a bowl or cup. Another such adjunct is watching for changes in the face of a reflected image (for example a smile or frown) and so forth. All these are as much a part of vessel divination as the more demanding process of skrying, and may be combined with it or employed separately.

Another method of reinforcing your endeavours in water divination is the use of talismans. These need not be copied straight from the *Key of Solomon*, but can be tailored to your ritual and the spirits or gods concerned. In the classical period the cup bearer of the gods, Ganymede, was associated with vessel divination for very obvious reasons. The fashion for comparing the nations of different cultures at the time led to him being linked with the Egyptian water god Hapi. Following such precedents in the Renaissance period, Catherine de Medici's talisman for inducing visionary abilities had the eagle of Zeus that carried off Ganymede and a picture of an Anubis headed spirit on one side, along with appropriate magical symbols and inscriptions.

Such eclecticism might not be everyone's taste, although traditional enough, but the Judaeo-Christian grimoires are not to be preferred for a 'consistency' they do not really possess. Careful consideration is often the best route, and consistency should arise from the direction of your work, not mere copying.

Various magical plants can be added to the water to endow it with magical power by 'Sympathy' with the spirit concerned. As already mentioned one of these plants was the hyacinth, and its associations are very relevant to the ideas involved. As well as being the name of a stone and a plant it was also the name of a youth beloved by Apollo, who was of course an oracular god. The goddess Persephone wears the hyacinth and was picking them when she was abducted by Hades. Curiously enough the same story is told of Europa when Zeus abducted her. It is frequently depicted on ancient tombstones and forms part of Greek and Egyptian funeral wreaths. Hades himself was also honoured with garlands of hyacinth, and it grows in the Isles of the Blessed; the home of heroes where it is always spring. Naturally enough such heroes were also commonly associated with oracles. Such garlands were also connected with the rites of Eleusis, in honour of Demeter as well as her daughter, and it is mentioned in the Homeric Hymn in her honour. It is also mentioned in the *Eighth Book of Moses* (see PGM XIII 23-29 and 355). Its lunar and chthonic associations are also found in 12th Century grimoires and astrological codices. In addition it is probably also the 'Anubis plant' mentioned in relation to vessel divination in the Demotic papyri.

The water should be as brightly lit as possible, typically with a candle or burning torch on either side. This is a very common adjunct to the process, and the lights are often specially prepared. It is also highly traditional to add blood to the surface of the water if the purpose is necromantic, on other occasions oil is frequently

employed, as is ink. Some spirits do not approve of the use of blood, or prefer it to be kept for special occasions, and this may be ascertained by means of pendulum divination if necessary.

Preceding the divination with invocations to Anubis is highly traditional, and his equivalent in the *True Grimoire*, Nebiros, is well suited to necromantic applications of the method. Klepoth is another spirit with whom this method is appropriate, and necromancy need not be involved when working with her. As always the appropriate conjurations and offerings should be employed, beginning with the conjuration of Scirlin.

Most importantly however the preparation for vision should include persistence, as few of us are likely to succeed at the first try. There are definite 'knacks' to success, and nothing succeeds like continued effort. I have found the ideal time to be a quiet point in the evening, with minimal distractions in advance; working on a waning moon can also be useful. Progress can appear to be slow, but do not let the anxiety disturb the process. The conscious mind may be unaware of developments for some time. In fact a likely side effect of persistent work is spirits attempting to contact you in sleep and in other ways. If you are alert to this you may find that skrying is simply a useful exercise to developing other skills. Remember always that no single method of divination works with all spirits, let alone all magicians. Often, in complex workings or when working with a spirit for the first time, it is a good idea to have three or more divination tools available; the magician can then ascertain the most suitable or move from one to another as required.

This examination of goetic divination should not be taken as exhaustive. Any and all methods of divination can be adapted to include the agency of spirits. Ancient Greek astrologers used to write a short invocatory formula to the Goddess Tyche at the top of their

charts, while Golden Dawn and Thelemic magicians often invoke the 'Great Angel Hru' to assist in Tarot readings, as well as invoking the appropriate elemental spirit for geomantic questions. Nevertheless, the methods described in this booklet are particularly well suited to work with goetic spirits; unlike geomancy and astrology they may be readily employed in rituals of evocation, as well as separately. With the possible exception of pendulum divination all three methods have been neglected for too long, they are highly traditional and very effective means of spirit communication.

## Further Reading

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## About the Spirit Work Series

This series of booklets is intended as an introduction to working with spirits, particularly those of the *True Grimoire*. This once famous Grimoire, until recently much neglected and undervalued, is one of the few surviving links in the West to an all but lost tradition. Under a thin veneer of terminology borrowed from its enemies, the Inquisition and their ilk, lurks a potent and pre-Christian system of evocation.

Unlike the Grimoires themselves, the type of magic encouraged here is thoroughly Spiritist, in common with modern African traditions and those of mixed African, Amerindian and European origin in the Americas. The view of the spirits is generally respectful, and the company



of some of them is distinctly encouraged and welcomed. The existence of difficult, 'hard' or even hostile spirits is recognised; but others have simply been unjustly demonised in Western cultural contexts. The Grimoire, while masking itself as a handbook for controlling the former, is in reality far broader in its scope and involves both, as did its ancient predecessors prior to the demonisation of magic and the entities with which it deals.

The supposed 'demons' of the *True Grimoire* consist in reality of a wide range of spirit types, principally Elementals and Nature spirits. Nor do these in fact accord with the stereotyped picture of later Western magic, particularly in relation to Elementals. Their nature is far more in accord with the view of the late pagan philosophers, and their interpretation of the gods and spirits of the traditions with which they were in contact. Accordingly many of these spirits will be found to possess considerable intelligence. Some among them will enhance the spiritual, moral, ethical and even physical development of those who approach them. This is almost the precise reverse of some modern views of spirits, which envisage the magician binding a 'demon' in order to liberate some potential previously inhibited by it. By contrast, some of these spirits will often encourage personal transformations the magician is resistant to and cannot achieve unaided.

In order to get the most out of this approach to magick the operator will need to be open to new ideas, though they are in fact extremely ancient in origin. In particular it must be realised that not all approaches to magick are compatible. Many modern Western systems have little in common with the approach involved here. While a Western Grimoire underlies the family of spirits described in this series, great care should be taken in adapting Grimoire materials for use with this approach.

On the other hand, this tradition has much common ground with many traditions outside the Western milieu. As well as the Living Traditions mentioned earlier, materials from ancient Greek and Egyptian sources will be found to be particularly compatible. The relationship of these materials with the later Grimoires provides useful indications on how to adapt the latter for use with these spirits. The empathy this magick has with the late period in ancient Egypt involves another significant advantage. This period was that of the emergence of Christianity in many forms, and of Gnosticism which in some of its forms was also Christian while including philosophical, magical and astrological ideas from various sources. This magick similarly can be embraced by modern Gnostics of whatever religion, so long as the Spiritist approach is embraced in return.



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Goetic Divination, part of the *Spirit Work Series*

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