



# The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth

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## **The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth** Robert Graves

*The White Goddess* is perhaps the finest of Robert Graves's works on the psychological and mythological sources of poetry. In this tapestry of poetic and religious scholarship, Graves explores the stories behind the earliest of European deities—the White Goddess of Birth, Love, and Death—who was worshipped under countless titles. He also uncovers the obscure and mysterious power of "pure poetry" and its peculiar and mythic language.

## **The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth Details**

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## From Reader Review The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth for online ebook

### Charles says

This book is absolutely fascinating and an all-time favorite of mine. It ties together ancient history, poetry and myth, drawing from traditions around the world.

What this book isn't: traditional history or scholarship. As wikipedia puts it, "Graves openly considered poetic inspiration, or "Analepsis" as he termed it, a valid historical methodology." It is easy to see why New Age, Wikka and other modern syncretic traditions have seized on this book as a touchstone.

On the other hand, I think this book makes a wonderful example of how fascinating and worthy a book can be, despite being completely unreliable. You raise some fascinating questions when inebriated, don't you? This book is drunk on poetry.

For example, his concept of Iconotropy is a fascinating and convincing insight into art history, and the relationship between myths and visual art.

If you like this book, you should check out Grave's introduction to his translation of the Greek Myths. They illustrate the same duality of erudition and blather: the translations are both beautiful and scholarly, but the introductions and footnotes to the myths include all kinds of wild speculations.

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### Leo says

Illogical, unscientific, ahistorical, and weirdly entertaining.

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### Erik says

I would call this Joe Campbell's Power of Myth for grownups. I've been thinking about this book recently, but I have to admit I never got more than halfway with it. Nobody else I know has either, but what I did take from it was worth the struggle. Hopelessly inadequate summary: Graves believes that literature and poetry are magic, real magic. These arts objectively conjure effects the same way a ritual is supposed to work, to make a deity present in the mundane world through a charm, a rhythm, even invoking a god's true name, as opposed to "Artemis" or "Hera." In short, a very unfashionable opinion even when it was written. And the hip, postmodern professors would laugh their heads off at this book if they had ever read it, that is.

Why do I think this is worth your time, especially given the absurd difficulty of the thing? Well, it may be that Graves has touched on a failure of modern literature *avant la lettre*, the language has lost its ancient ability to conjure. Nobody believes in it and nobody knows how to do it anymore, and the art is, as Graves says a discipline, like biology or genetics. Graves was one of the last to see therigor in literature and poetry this way. The other important feature Graves brings out is how few and very precise are the archetypes that excite and thrill us, again through invokation, not clever-clever plot devices and intellectual tile patterns. I

often wondered why that experience of being moved deeply through words is so rare in contemporary literature. Now I think I know why. I'm only giving it four stars because of the unnecessary difficulty.

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### **Jessica says**

this is a massive endeavor and will take an eternity to read. while i love cross-referencing the divine feminine through the mystical traditions, i can only take this book in small doses. imagine the densest, darkest fudge. this is not for the faint of heart, but a great resource. i don't want to have to give it back to ira unread, so wish me luck!

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### **Beverly says**

Francesca Lia Block made me read this. I have no idea if this man is insane or not but I was young enough when I read it that it blew my mind anyway.

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### **Rodney says**

O.K., so Graves was dead wrong about the Celts. Still, the "White Goddess" thesis--that patriarchal invaders suppressed the mother-goddess religions of the Aegean and Ancient Near East, traces of which managed to survive in Europe, especially in the minstrel lore of Ireland and Wales--is thanks to Graves now part and parcel of the modern. The real fun of the book isn't so much in its truth as the getting there: a waterslide ride of educated guessing, crossword logic, and speculative buccaneering that reads more like a postmodern novel than straight up scholarship. Graves's is the grandmammy of all conspiracy theories, setting the stage for Pynchon & Eco and us.

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### **E Hamilton says**

I reread this book perhaps every other year. Every year, being more widely read, I find more facts that are now outdated. But every year, the ideas, themes and conclusions I feel to be more true.

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### **Chris says**

A controversial classic and certainly not for all tastes. Graves' erudition in ancient literature and mythopoetics is well known (e.g. his classic reference works on Greek mythology) but his thesis in this book has been contested in many quarters (and proved incorrect in some anthropological aspects) and struck me as largely speculative, although I really can't make a judgment since I'm not well read in this area. I can say that reading this book did spur me to read up on Irish and Welsh myth. If you do choose to give it a go, prepare for prose which is often discursive and occasionally dense. Content-wise, um, make sure you enjoy quasi-scholarly perambulations on poetics, etymology, psychology, and Western and Semitic mythological traditions, that er, sometimes don't seem to lead anywhere. :-)

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## Old-Barbarossa says

Rambling nonsense when he steps beyond what he knows.

Most of his ideas on the "tree alphabet" are his own and sourceless. Unfortunately a lot of the celtic magic industry owes too much to this as a gospel of sorts. Better and more scholarly book are out there if you can be bothered looking. But they are without the glamour of Graves which I suppose is part of the attraction to the sidhe huggers.

Edit:

This is a dreadful book...yet I've read it twice, the 1st time in the early '80s and again in '13. It hasn't gotten any better. On the re-read I read more critically and cross ref'd him. After the 1st read I had a bee in my bunnet about his made up tree alphabet nonsense (see above review), on the 2nd read I now realise he just made up pretty much everything else too.

Graves (and I am a fanboy for most of his other work) comes across as an arrogant arse.

He seems to use the No True Scotsman attitude when discussing poetry

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_true\\_...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_true_...)). He discounts any poetry as not being real or true poetry if it doesn't conform to his standards. He seems to be saying you have to be of celtic stock (whatever that means) and a heterosexual male to be a poet...and only if you write on certain themes and have muse like inspiration at that...'cause that's all women are good for...well that and the orgies and temple prostitution obviously.

And he makes no mention of Burns or Yeats who pretty much fit his definition (sour grapes on his part?).

I like his fiction but I have the feeling he was a bit of a dick.

But this book isn't really about poetry or history....yet it claims to be. The historical evidence is hammered and moulded to fit his hypothesis with contradictory ideas ignored or glossed over. Graves bases a chunk of his arguments on a re-ordering of the old Welsh poem Cad Goddeu, yet he has no Welsh and uses, in his own words, "D.W. Nash's mid-Victorian translation, said to be unreliable but the best at present available."

Then he goes ahead and juggles the order.

See what's going on here?

He's making it up based on a poor translation, hammering the facts to fit his hypothesis.

If someone had no understanding of any other text's original language and then used a poor translation prior to re-ordering the entire text to fit an idea would we be as tolerant?

I hope not.

And this technique isn't limited to this one poem, it is his default method.

He says, amongst other things, "this must be a mistake" and "a stanza has been suppressed" when he isn't getting the confirmation of his hypothesis he wants. He has re-arranged entire poems.

There's a lot of "perhaps", "likely", "seemed", "suggests", "obviously", "evidently", in this book...they miraculously transform into what Graves sees as solid fact, at the end of ch.7 "conclusive proof".

Yet he has claimed "fact is not truth, but a poet who willfully defies fact cannot achieve truth."

Sniff, sniff...what's that smell?

Also, he seems to show little demarcation between deities (x appears to be y, who is actually z, but on closer inspection is really the same as a, who was worshipped as b etc etc etc). This syncretism is all well and good, but when the Venn diagram of deities ignores everything but the bits that fit his hypothesis and the focus is purely on the overlap I start to smell shite in the argument.

I'm with Francis Bacon when he says:

“The root of all superstition is that men observe when a thing hits, but not when it misses.”

Rambling, hawing keech...data ignored or manipulated, poems re-ordered, poets sneered at, women paradoxically praised and dismissed in equal measure...had he just been chucked by his wench/bird/muse prior to this or something?

I got the impression Graves was a bit xenophobic, homophobic and sexist (OK, I don't know if he actually was homophobic etc...but he occasionally makes comments that are a bit off). Now there may be a part of this due to him being a man of his time...but considering the hypothesis in TWG it jars a bit. But there's an irony here though isn't there? That a foundation text for modern wicca and neo-paganism, both fairly female friendly, is this way. How do folk square it in their heads? I think there's some cognitive dissonance going on...

As a foundation text for modern paganism it often appears in bibliographies and notes to bolster neo-pagan ideas...yet it has little substance itself. Many of them unquestioningly use TWG as a source and assume an authenticity and robustness to Graves' arguments that just isn't there...like building in a bog without making sure the pilings are solid.

He has become an authority figure and this text is used again and again when discussing ideas around goddessy and sacred king type ideas, yet on examination many areas he explores in TWG are his own with little basis in ancient tradition. I wonder if many folk that have read this have actually paid attention, I mean critically read it? Or if most just assume Graves is correct and then use him as ref?

He seems as enthusiastic about ritual killings and orgies as he is about the whole tree/calendar/alphabet thing...yet I've never known anyone that has read this book wax as lyrically on those subjects.

And the drivel he spouts on lame kings is interesting but still drivel...

But I can get Graves' text as a personal mythology and as something to give insight into his other work...and I get the fact that he had no intention of starting a pagan revival (see his disdain for wicca and neo-paganism in general in some of his work). But, for me, it is pretty much all supposition based on guesswork based on reworking of bad translations.

Now I shall put this away and never touch it again...after I have driven a stake through the text...the stake obviously of a wood that has suitably mythopoetic resonances for true poets.

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## Ange says

It's almost impossible to read the Plath study without this book; apparently, it was a huge influence on Plath while she was at Cambridge (in the flat where she died, there was a poster of the White Goddess tacked to the pantry door). The book is more interesting for the mythological and folkloric tidbits than the unifying thesis, at this point.

I think the mythological connections are sound, but I have some trouble believing that each and every "true poet" since the advent of Christianity has been engaged in a covert effort to conceal the heretical evidence and practice of true poetry from the masses. If you don't attach any meaning to the words Dog, Roebuck, and Lapwing, thank me.

The accounts of superstitions, though, and the tracking of certain myths across cultures, are fascinating, and I can definitely see Graves' influence on Plath's sensibility and (especially) diction. Also, he has a number of theories referencing Shakespeare that could blow some texts wide open.

## H says

Astonishing. By Graves' claim, the measure of a poet is by his accuracy/faithfulness in depicting the (actual) White Goddess, thus proving the truth and source of his mystical inspiration. All the Welsh stuff goes far above my head but he cites some instances from pre-modern English poetry (pp. 426-36):

- Shakespeare's Venus & Adonis, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and more seriously in the Tempest
- Donne's "A Fever"
- Keats' "Belle Dame Sans Merci"
- Nimory (enchantress of Merlin) in Malory's Morte D'Arthur IV, i
- Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner" (the woman dancing with death)

"What is the use or function of poetry nowadays?' is a question not the less poignant for being defiantly asked by so many stupid people or apologetically answered by so many silly people. The function of poetry is religious invocation of the Muse; its use is the experience of mixed exaltation and horror that her presence excites. But 'nowadays'? Function and use remain the same; only the application has changed. This was once a warning to man that he must keep in harmony with the family of living creatures among which he was born, by obedience to the wishes of the lady of the house; it is now a reminder that he has disregarded the meaning, turned the house upside down by capricious experiments in philosophy, science and industry, and brought ruin upon himself and his family. 'Nowadays' is a civilization in which the prime emblems of poetry are dishonoured." (14)

"Mount Helicon was not the earliest seat of the Muse Goddesses, as their title 'The Pierians' shows; the word Muse is now generally derived from the root *mont*, meaning a mountain. Their worship had been brought there in the Heroic Age during a migration of the Boeotian people from Mount Pieria in Northern Thessaly. But to make the transplanted Muses feel at home on Helicon, and so to preserve the old magic, the Boeotians named the geographical features of the mountain--the springs, the peaks and grottoes--after the corresponding features of Pieria. The Muses were at this time three in number, an indivisible Trinity, as the mediaeval Catholics recognized when they built the church of their own Holy Trinity on the site of the deserted shrine of the Heliconian Muses. The appropriate names of the three Persons were Meditation, Memory, and Song." (385-6)

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## Jason Hare says

Graves' essay on the downfall of a matriarchal, goddess worship, societal structure in stone age Europe is the premise of this book long essay. Several themes in this book have been written about by anthropologists and other writers before and since Graves but The White Goddess is certainly the best known.

Graves own words:

"language of poetic myth anciently current in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe was a magical language bound up with popular religious ceremonies in honor of the Moon-goddess, or Muse, some of them dating from the Old Stone Age, and that this remains the language of true poetry..."

Graves posited that the downfall of the Goddess worship in old Europe was due to the rise of patriarchal religions stemming from the Judeo-Christian mythos.

It is a wonderfully structured essay which is why I gave it five stars. It does not match up with archaeological evidence. Matriarchies started declining in Europe at the end of the Neolithic. This coincided with the rise of agriculture in Europe and with it the rise in patrilineal kinship systems. That we live in a patriarchal society has a lot to do with how land was distributed after the rise in agriculture.

This evidence does not take away from the power of Graves book and it is certainly a classic.

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### **Michael says**

If you drew a Venn diagram of unreadable books and unputdownable books, this would be in the small area of intersection. It reads like the death-eva-cuation of a brilliant and eccentric mind.

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### **Terence says**

I first read *The White Goddess* during a road trip with my ex at the turn of the century. I can remember several days when we were staying at a bed-and-breakfast in pre-Katrina New Orleans. It was neither overly warm nor overly humid, and my erstwhile spouse was recovering from serving as a mosquito smorgasbord, so I had some down time to sit out on the patio and read. I have to say that the first time through this book left me confused and lost; the second time through I'm on firmer ground in understanding what Graves is trying to do with his "historical grammar of poetic myth" and I'm glad I have spent the last few months reading it again.

Truly, you can read only the Forward and Chapter XXVI, "The Return of the Goddess," and get the gist of Graves' argument. What comes between is the convoluted path of erudition and intuition (and a certain amount of wish fulfillment on Graves' part) where he explains the original purpose of poetry (myth) and its perversion.

As Graves explains, poetic myth (the first poems) "are all grave records of ancient religious customs or events, and reliable enough as history once their language is understood and allowance has been made for errors in transcription, misunderstandings of obsolete ritual, and deliberate changes introduced for moral or political reasons." (p. 13) Poetry originates as the invocation of the Triple Goddess (Aphrodite-Hera-Hekate are just one of her many iterations, she's also the Muse who Homer calls upon in the *Iliad*) and the expression of the exaltation, horror and awe one feels in her presence. For millennia it was the religion of the Eastern Mediterranean and put out feelers throughout West Asia until it was perverted and eventually subsumed by invading patriarchal Sun worshippers (aka, Indo-Europeans and Semitic tribes) whose gods (Zeus, Apollo, Yahweh, etc.) usurped her attributes and – in the extreme case of Judaism and its descendants – denied the feminine principle entirely. This ur-religion persisted in a severely attenuated form in mystery cults (e.g., Eleusinian or Orphian), the bardic colleges of Ireland and Wales, and in witches' covens before nearly vanishing utterly except in the intuitive inspirations of modern poets who don't understand what it is they're invoking.

Graves' purpose in writing *The White Goddess* is nothing less than to restore the Goddess to her rightful position as the source of all acts of creation – physical, spiritual and intellectual – and depose the unholy trinity of Pluto, god of wealth; Apollo, god of science; and Mercury, god of thieves, who have ruled the world for the last three thousand+ years. (A sentiment shared by a growing number of people today, if not expressed quite so mystically.)

The book is a rather scathing indictment of Western civilization. Here's the author's description of the collapse of Western religion: "As a result, all but a very few have discarded their religious idealism, Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, and come to the private conclusion that money, though the root of all evil, is the sole practical means of expressing value or of determining social precedence; that science is the only accurate means of describing phenomena; and that a morality of common honesty is not relevant either to love, war, business or politics." (p. 476) And he anticipates Stephen Prothero's arguments in *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World--and Why Their Differences Matter*: "[N]o good can come from publicizing either the contradictions between the main revealed religions and their mutually hostile sects, or the factual mis-statements contained in their doctrines, or the shameful actions which they have all...been used to cloak. What is really being urged is an improvement in national and international ethics, not everyone's sudden return to the beliefs of his childhood – which, if undertaken with true religious enthusiasm, would obviously lead to a renewal of religious wars; only since belief weakened all around have the priests of rival religions consented to adopt a good-neighbourly policy." (p. 477)

Graves' solution to our woes is...idiosyncratic. It's certainly utopian and it's disturbingly nondemocratic:

If...it is wished to avoid disharmony, dullness and oppression in all social...contexts, each problem must be regarded as unique, to be settled by right choice based on instinctive good principle, not by reference to a code or summary of precedents; and, granted that the only way out of our political troubles is a return to religion, this must somehow be freed of its theological accretions. Positive right choosing based on moral principles must supersede negative respect for the Law which, though backed by force, has grown so hopelessly inflated and complex that not even a trained lawyer can hope to be conversant with more than a single branch of it. Willingness to do right can be inculcated in most people if they are caught early enough, but so few have the capacity to make a proper moral choice between circumstances or actions which at first sight are equally valid, that the main religious problem of the Western world, is...how to exchange demagoguery, disguised as democracy, for a non-hereditary aristocracy whose leaders will be inspired to choose rightly on every occasion, instead of blindly following authoritarian procedure. (p. 479)

And I think many people – while acknowledging many of the problems he points out – would balk at this answer. (view spoiler)

I can't recommend *The White Goddess*. If this brief review has sparked any interest or you're a fan of Graves, then you may want to try this book. If you're interested in authors such as Riane Eisler or Merlin Stone, there's interesting information here. As I wrote, you can skip or skim Chapters I through XXV, without losing the author's central message, which takes up all of 20 pages (in this edition).

*À propos* recommendations, three related texts readers might be interested in are the Prothero book referenced above, Derrick Jensen's *Endgame, Vol. 1: The Problem of Civilization* (and vol. 2) and Thomas Mann's *The Tables of the Law* (which has a decidedly different take on the worth of the Law), and then there's Graves' own works: *King Jesus: A Novel* and *The Greek Myths: Combined Edition*.

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## Welwyn Wilton Katz says

This is a great book. Graves is best known for his novels *I Claudius* or his poetry (which was his favorite form of writing), but this work about the grammar and connectedness of myth is a scholarly epic, profoundly

interesting and peppered with references to support his "alphabet of the trees" and their use as at least an Iron Age "code" which Druids and perhaps others used to teach and remember their oral knowledge from generation to generation. There has been debate regarding the accuracy of Graves' leaps, but in some ways the book is so fluent and creative that one is simply swept along, and, in some cases, profoundly influenced by it, as in *The Fionavar Tapestry* and *The Third Magic*. It is not a book to imagine reading at one sitting, but more like a very rich dessert. One can digest only so much at once. I think of it as a fantasist's source book, if only one has the patience to swallow all the detail and the many references. Basically, it's difficult to read. But if I had to cull my bookshelves of all my books of myth but one, this would be the one I would keep.

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## David says

All right, let me be honest and start by saying this was totally my favorite book in the entire universe when I was, like, 11. Hands down. It gave me my first sense of what scholarship might be - if it were actually fun.

Now I did end up becoming a professional scholar, and one who probably does have too much fun for his own good, so perhaps a word here is in order.

Those people who say the book provides zero evidence for its points - all I can say is, "yeah, that's right. It's kind of a joke. Or... well, Graves does insist that poetic truth is not a totally different truth, not to be judged by prose criteria of truth, but that it should always be at least true on the prose level and also something more (that something more being magical, profound, etc etc). But the question is always: is that very assertion part of the joke as well. Because what is magic? It's something that's both true, and a fraud, a trick, but it's true because you can carry it off. And what makes Graves so much fun is that he can always carry it off. When he says that he's solved some ancient mystery - why are fish used as a symbol for Christ - by time-traveling in a poetic trance and overhearing a conversation between two Roman literari c100 AD, he's obviously not asking to be judged by normal scholarly standards. He's having fun, and saying, "well, tell me it isn't true!"

What I love about Graves is that he writes about religious devotion, of utter subordination to a terrifying entrancing but ultimately destructive goddess-muse, in such a way as to imply absolute subordination, but in fact, turns it into a license to do absolutely anything he pleases. His biographers always seem to miss this, presenting him as a sort of pathetic wimp in the sway of all these headstrong domineering women. In fact, you read books like this, or even more perhaps his essays on poetry, and you meet someone utterly different: someone who is having more fun than any professional scholar would ever be allowed to, sounding off on any topic in a way that's simultaneously outrageous, ground-breaking, profound, world-shattering, and probably, on some level, also, ridiculously untrue. What's the real game and what's his aim in playing it? That's half the fun. You can never be completely sure. But like any great theorist (and to be honest, I sometimes think Deleuze and Derrida, etc, are really doing exactly the same thing) the point is not to spend the rest of our lives deciding whether we adore him like a god or revile him, but to take it as a demonstration that it's possible to have just as much fun ourselves. That's what I did, without ever realizing that's what I was doing. And in retrospect, I'm not sure my career was better for it, but my writing was, and probably, arguably, the world is - if only slightly.

## Josh says

Graves's phrase for what he does is "poetic scholarship," and I'm tempted to be generous and believe that what he means here really is thought that is associative and fleet, as opposed to simply lazy. The scholarship borders on parody: Graves's assertions are made on what is essentially zero evidence. But he follows his hind without faltering once, and by the time 500 pages is up, you do feel a sort of Palace of Wisdom effect has been achieved.

Where does that leave us? For me, reading this book is like walking through the preserved home of a reclusive genius: Look, there's his astrolabe, his roomful of scrolls, his private "exercise room" full of bright orange pogo sticks. You can distance yourself from his conclusions, but the actual motion of thought is undeniable. The book's a feat, a thing, but above all (I think Graves would probably agree with me here) a solution. Like many great solutions, it sounds as much like a riddle as the thing it solved.

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## Michael says

I got kicked in the face by this book. For real, it walked up to me, said "i will kick you in the face." I ignored it's warning, and woke up 2 months later with a shattered jaw and lots and lots of information about poetry and bards. Wonderful read if you've ever had a sneaking suspicion all of your favorite "myths" had a certain aura to them.

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## Czarny Pies says

Faute de pouvoir donner cinq etrons, je luie donne une etoile.

The White Goddess is a book that belongs on the same shelf as the Erich von Daniken's Chariots of the Gods or Thor Heyerdahl's Voyage of the Kontiki. It simply does not deserve to be read.

Robert Graves was acknowledged in this lifetime to have been one the greatest Latin scholars of his generation. His brilliant translations (e.g. The Golden Ass) and wonderful historical novels (e.g. I Claudius) did a great service to the reading public by maintaining an interest in the remarkable literary heritage we all have received from the authors of classical Rome.

Having working so hard to develop his competence in Latin, Graves should have understand that rules of professionalism apply to all areas of scholarship. Graves, the master Latin scholar, decides in The White Goddess to enter the field of Celtic mythology an area in which he is utterly lacking in professional competence. This book contains numerous small conjectures that are all wierder than Daniken's contention that the extraterrestrials built the Pyramids into one huge theory of stunning absurdity.

Graves has no excuse. Unlike Daniken and Heyerdahl who did not possess a professional competence in any area, Graves was a great scholar in Latin culture. He owed it to his status in one area not to attempt this ludicrous foray into Celtic mythology.

At least Graves his honest. He notes in this introduction to the second edition, that in twenty years of trying he had failed to convince a single expert in the field of Celtic culture to review his book.

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## Titus L says

Whilst some have disputed Graves historical inaccuracies, im not reading this for its historical account, but rather for its mytho-poetical inventiveness and inspiration, of which I would say that it delivers handsomely.

The attempt to reconcile the Ancient Hebrew, Greek and Celtic civilizations with an Aegean/Tuath De Danaan Diaspora is fascinating and demands that the reader have a fairly wide background in cultural and mythological studies.

Speculating on the Cad Goddeu, The Battle of the Trees, a medieval Welsh poem from the Book of Taliesin, that the trees that fought in the battle in which each tree had a meaning and significance of its own. Graves argues that the original poet had concealed Druidic secrets about an older matriarchal Celtic religion for fear of censure from Christian authorities and that the 'battle' was probably not physical but rather a struggle of wits and scholarship. They did this he claims by employing the secret sign language called Ogham, in this case the Tree Ogham in which each tree holds a representative symbol, sound, meaning, set of mythologies and etc..

The particular poem and its meanings is he claims further concealed by the device of being 'pied' or mixed up with a further four poems, only those in the know would be able to correctly untangle and decipher their original order.

However and due to the excessive overloading of references and origins, at times it seems that Graves has almost become one of his ancient Cambrian Awenyddion' the magical minstrel poets who disguised their wisdom under the pretence of being possessed by spirits, as they did not deliver the answer to what is required in any connected manner..."but the person who skillfully observes them will find after many preambles...and incoherent though ornamented speeches, the desired explanation conveyed in some turn of word"

He could not have described his own method more perfectly, persist and you will find his meanings become clearer.

Nevertheless, despite the erratic, over-rich and often obscure prose, his reconciliation of the Tree Ogham Alphabet with the calender of the Year, the stations of both sun and moon, is an inspiring and potentially convincing demonstration of how the ancient mythographers (may have)created meaning and managed the seasonal and social rituals of their times.

Reaching further, his exposition and extrapolation of Biblical and earlier mythologies and their themes is remarkable.

I value and recommend this work to any more serious and patient reader (who is preferably well read, mytho-historically)for its hidden gems, its tremendous scope and its imaginative-inspirational qualities.

Bright Blessings By Stone and Star,  
Celestial Elf ~

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