



OXFORD

THE COMING OF THE WELSH



I.

In olden times, in the land of Greece, before the coming of the Christ, during the era of the C ad G oddeu, the great philosopher Plato founded his Academy of Metaphysics. Within an ancient grove of olives, upon the verdant slopes of Athens he built, the City of the great goddess Athena.

And Athena herself, patron goddess of the city, gifted that Academy with the greatest minds of the Age, from near and far. Thus, for three hundred years, sublime thoughts were perfected by the best of men from all corners of the civilized world, and principal among them, from far across the Western Seas, were counted the representatives of the White Brotherhood. The Druids of Albion.

Now, the Goddess Athena had foretold that a time would come when the shadow of the eagle's wings would cover the world in darkness for an age. And so they came: the Romans, in the eighty-sixth year before the Christ, and their coming was as a storm of blood, as red covered green. The merciless dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla led the onslaught, with his legion of 20,000 blood warriors, and they pounded the white marble of the temples to dust with their bronze hammers, and Plato's Academy was reduced to rubble.

But the Oracle of the Olive Groves had spoken to the priests in advance, and a plan had been made. By the time the legions had crossed the city gates, all disciples of the Academy were safely hidden within the secret oracular tunnels and passages beneath the Parthenon. There, not even the sharp eyes of the Eagle could search them out; there, they waited for many days in darkness, as screams of destruction rained down upon them from above, and the sacred city of the gods was laid to ruin above their heads.

II.

After days and nights of misfortune, the Roman storm moved back out to sea. Slowly, painfully, the survivors crawled from their hiding places to behold their Golden City a ruin of rubble and smoke.

But the gods had not abandoned Athens; they looked down from Mount Olympus with anger and scorn, with lightning and thunder. Among them, the heart of Athena was heaviest, and she beseeched Zeus, king of the gods, for retribution. And thus it was ordained that a new nation be formed from the ashes of the old, a nation for mystics to thrive safely among green hills and valleys far to the North. In this way was born the Coming of the Welsh.

All told, there were twenty disciples of Plato's Academy who emerged from dark tunnels into bright sunlight. In truth, twenty plus one.

The one was called Fyrddin, a visiting Druid from Albion. In some way, he seemed to sense the weight of the moment beyond the others, and so assumed a natural and uncontested leadership role within the group. With his consul, it was decided that the first priority should be consulting an Oracle for guidance, but the Sacred Groves had been cut and burned. Only the immense Parthenon, grand temple of Athena, remained standing.

And so that first night, exhausted yet expectant, the remnants of Plato's Academy once again gathered wood for the Sacred Fire so that, at full moonrise, high upon the Acropolis, a golden blaze burned bright against the purple vastness of the heavens.

Within the Temple, the company had formed a tight circle around the altar stone, which bore the image of the Sun God riding his fiery chariot. Ciceron of Crete, eldest among the group, stepped forward and began the invocation.

Within moments, the inner walls were covered with a flurry of shadowy wings, flying like a dark storm across the massive stone columns, to settle on the head of the statue of Athena. The shadows vanished, but a bird remained; a large grey owl with keen eyes looking down upon us with wisdom and compassion from another world. Fyrddin spoke.

III.

Fyrddin Spoke: *“Great Goddess, we await your word. Hear us... help us...”* And a great mist gathered around the head of the statue, until a spectral imaged remained.

“Children of the New Nemeton,” came a soothing voice like music, *“...I have heard your cries and I have seen your plight. Receive now my consul.”*

A MIGRATION IS AT HAND.

FAR TO THE NORTH LIES THE LAND OF MY BROTHER, BRAN THE BLESSED, THAT MEN NOW CALL ALBION. GO TO THE WESTERN SHORES OF THAT ISLAND AND THERE YOU WILL FIND A MAGICAL REALM OF TALLEST MOUNTAINS, GREENEST VALLEYS AND ENCHANTED WATERS. THERE YOU ARE TO ESTABLISH YOUR CAPITAL UPON THE ISLE FACING IRE AND ITS NEIGHBORING LANDS, A MYSTICAL CAPITAL AND THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF A NEW NATION WHICH BEGINS THIS DAY.

ONCE THERE, GATHER THE WHITE PRIESTS OF THE LAND AND ALL THOSE OF ANY NATION WHO SHARE YOUR IDEALS. MAKE READY! MAKE IT SO!

And the eyes of Athena closed as if fatigued or deep in thought.

“But Great Goddess, how might this be accomplished?” asked Aeneas of Antipaxos. “We have been reduced to nothing... we *have* nothing.”

“Nothing?” echoed the goddess, “...nothing? Let me ask you, then: have you the strength of will to continue? Yes or no?”

Immediately, voices from the group began to call out WE HAVE and WE WILL... until the pillars of the Parthenon resounded the truth that hope was not dead.

“Then, so be it...” continued Athena, “the brotherhood has spoken. Labor towards your goal, all of you, each in his own way.” The goddess paused, and her eyes seemed to wander over the men below. “Abessa the mathematician, and Prince Fyrddin: stand forth!”

At the word, ‘prince,’ those assembled let out a murmur of astonishment as looks of disbelief blew like a wave over their faces.

Fyrddin stepped forth: "Great Athena, for sake of equality, I had hoped to keep my lineage in confidence until reaching the shores of my land. But I resign myself to your wisdom and accept whatever charge you see fit to lay upon me. And Abessa of Arcadia?"

At the mention of his name, a dark-haired, dark-skinned young man emerged from behind the pillar closest to the altar. He had come as a scholar to study Mathematics at the Academy, and had been many years perfecting his art.

"I am here, Lady of the Acropolis, and as do all present, pledge my skills and service to the New Nemeton. Command me freely."

A smile spread across the face of the goddess. "I see that I have chosen well. You, Abessa, shall be my time-keeper, and the instrument of organization which will enable our goal. Your responsibility will be twofold. Skilled in the craft of numbers, tithe the twenty until the tasks of Fyrddin are complete. At that time, the clock will decree the hour of departure is at hand. Carry the tithe to the land of the New Nemeton, and the gods will ensure that the sum will serve its purpose without fail."

Athena paused, and fixed her eyes upon the numerologist, as if waiting.

"But by what geometry must the tithe be fixed?" he asked.

The Goddess laughed, reached down and lifted a white daisy from among the altar flowers at her feet. "It is all here," she held the flower up for all to view. Twenty plus one pedals! Unknowing, the Romans themselves have fixed the numerology of their undoing! Twenty thousand soldiers destroyed our land, and twenty thousand will be the number of restoration. The tithe will be set by the moon, (and she lifted the white owl to her shoulder). Every deciem of lunar tide, twenty thousand Drachma per the twenty one chosen, each in his own land and in his own way. Then, when the hour strikes, the amassed sum will serve exactly. Have no doubt, for my lord Zeus has decreed it so."

Fyrddin, who had been listening carefully all this time, cleared his voice to speak. "Great Athena, you mentioned Time and my responsibility to task the boy."

"That I did," she replied, and the owl flew off into the darkness. "You were born a Prince of the Silures, and your people will expect the Time-keeper to be learned in their ways, as will the

Druids. Therefore, school him in the tasks of your teachings, as Hercules was once tasked. Twenty plus one is the number of our brotherhood, thus twenty one will be the number of lessons to be undertaken. Be the span short or long, the hour of departure will be at hand *only* when this deed is accomplished. We will be watching.”

Seeming to understand without further question, Fyrddin bowed his head and disappeared back into the crowd. With a look of grave concern written across his face, Abessa of Arcadia followed after him.

IV.

The sacred fire was reduced to coals, yet its light was enough to throw brilliant shafts of gold across the titan pillars of the Parthenon. Outside, a full moon illuminated the broken city rubble into a pale, ghostly graveyard.

Inside, slowly, the luminous image of Athena descended from her statue, and stood towering before the central altar. In a single motion, the men covered back several paces into the shadows.

“The moment of Ordination has come,” the goddess spoke. “Step forward Fyrddin, and accept the oaths of the men of the New Order.” And the Druid took his place in front of the assembly, calling out to the nine Geometers of Gwydion:

Markos of Mykonos, the might of Hercules, come forth...

Asahel of Antipaxos, fury of Poseidon...

Leto of Lemnos, fire of Hephaestus...

Irenaeus of Ithaca, light of Ulyses...

Niko of Tetrapyrgia, stronghold of Zeus...

Abessa of Arcadia, son of Pan...

Leonidas of Leros, gamekeeper of Artemis...

Lykourgos of Levitha, fall of Daedalus...

Icarus of Ikaria, temple of the Huntress.

“And the eleven guardians of the Land, come forth:”

Galen of Gnosos

Draco of Donoussa

Zeno of Zacynthus

Alexios of Amorgos

Darius of Delos

Ptolemaeus of Paxos

Ciceron of Crete

Nicolas of Nimos

Rastus of Rhodes

Solon of Skyros

Aeneas of Antipoxos

And so there, before Athena and the Druid Fyrddin, on the Acropolis in the Parthenon of Greece, the pact was forged once again. The twenty plus one made ready.

Silently, the goddess regained her place at the statue. “The deed is now done,” she declared with confidence. “The greater task awaits! Seed the New Nematon, forge the guardians to be thrice-born, ages and ages hence, in future years of greatest crisis. The Cipher of Bran will be your guide, as in the Legend of Váteft, in the Land of Sweet Death. Go forth now, make haste!” (Athena pointed an imposing finger down at the two figures standing side by side). “And you, Keeper of Time! Begin your count! The men of Fyrddin await you upon the shores of Albion even as we speak.

“And to you, brave companions, fear not, for I will always be with you in one form or another.” And the great white owl once again surfaced from the shadows to take a place upon her shoulder. “Look to see me no more.”

As the image faded from view, the companions filed solemnly out of the Temple, down the Acropolis and into the waiting night. It was agreed that, on the morn, each would return to his own land and occupation until the Time of Summoning.

Settling down to sleep, all felt the reality of the new age which was about to begin, felt the tired weight of their responsibility— all, that is, except the two souls who talked until dawn amongst the ruins of Plato’s Academy. They knew, above the others, that the Coming of the Welsh was surely at hand. The gods had spoken, Athena would be there. And the Druids of Albion.