

# The Search for

# The Holy Grail

An overview of  
fragments in time

by

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## Contents

Introduction.....	1
Joseph of Arimathea .....	1
The Celtic Grail Myth.....	2
General Grail Legend Pattern .....	2
King Arthur .....	3
Christianity.....	3
Lapsit Exillis .....	3
Major Characters in the Grail Saga.....	4
The Question(s) .....	4
The Healing of The Fisher King .....	5
The Calling To The Grail .....	5
The Hidden Pleiad.....	5
Three Norns .....	7
Three Fates .....	8
Nine Muses .....	8
Magical Egyptian Names .....	8

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## Introduction

What is the Holy Grail?

### Grail, Holy Grail, or Sangreal (Sangraal)

- The grail - a chalice, dish, stone (Lapsit Exillis), and cup.
- In earth tradition, the grail has also been identified with a cauldron.
- The Lance - a Lance that drips blood into the Grail (Lance of Longinus).
- The origin of the grail romance is unknown.

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### Joseph of Arimathea

Many of the Grail legends begin with Joseph of Arimathea. Once the Grail relics (the Grail, the Lance, etc) had been brought to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, their custody devolved upon a line of Grail-keepers known as the Fisher Kings. These Fisher Kings were the direct descendants of Joseph of

Arimathea.

The Lance was the Lance of Longinus. This was the legendary lance with which the side of Christ was pierced when he was on the cross.

The Grail was preserved in the Grail keeper's castle of Corbenic - a location enveloped in mystery, and hidden from the sight of such adventurous knights who went in search of it.

### **The Celtic Grail Myth**

The Celtic grail myths follow an interesting pattern:

- 1) A mortal hero visits an other-worldly place.
- 2) There is a maimed King. Usually wounded with his own sacred sword.
- 3) There is a belief that the fertility of the domain is related to the potency of the ruler.
- 4) The maimed King is typically wounded 'through the thighs'.
- 5) The mystery of the Grail is revealed to the mortal hero.
- 6) The King is healed by the mortal hero.
- 7) The mortal hero becomes the next King and Grail-keeper.

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### **General Grail Legend Pattern**

The Grail legends tend to follow the same general pattern:

- 1) The Grail is a physical reality (chalice, dish, stone, and cup).
- 2) There is a lance that drips blood into the Grail.
- 3) There is a Grail Castle.
- 4) There is the Fisher King, the Grail-keeper.
- 5) The King has a wound in the 'thighs'.
- 6) The King has been wounded with his own sacred sword or lance.
- 7) The King's domain is barren.
- 8) The Grail is sought by a seeker without guile.
- 9) The seeker arrives at the Grail castle.
- 10) The grail is revealed to the seeker (covered, and carried in by maidens).
- 11) The Grail contains a host which is the sole food of the wounded King.
- 12) The seeker is supposed to ask 'the question' that will:
  - a) Cause the mystery of the grail to be understood.
  - b) Heal the Wounded King.
  - c) Restore fertility to the King's land.
  - d) Cause the Fisher King to reveal secret words to the seeker.
- 13) Out of politeness, the seeker doesn't ask the question.
- 14) The next day, the seeker leaves.
- 15) The castle becomes hidden, and the seeker can no longer find it.
- 16) The seeker has adventures in his quest for the Grail.

- 17) Later, the seeker again finds the castle. This time it is in a state of ruin. The Wounded King is still there.
- 18) The Grail is again manifested.
- 19) The seeker now asks the question.
- 20) The Fisher King is healed.
- 21) The Fisher King gives the secret words to the seeker.
- 22) The Fisher King dies.
- 23) The seeker becomes the new King.
- 24) The seeker becomes the New Grail-keeper, and takes custody of the Grail.
- 25) The Grail is taken to a new location.
- 26) The Grail disappears.

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### **King Arthur**

The Grail is woven into the Arthurian legends, and the knights of the round table ride out in search of the grail.

### **Christianity**

The Grail is woven into Christianity:

- 1) The grail is the vessel from which Christ drank at the last supper.
- 2) The grail comes into the possession of Joseph of Arimathea.
- 3) Joseph catches, in the grail, some of the blood that flowed from the wounds of the crucified Christ (especially the wound by the lance).
- 4) Joseph carries the grail to Glastonbury, England.
- 5) The grail provides Joseph with food, drink, and spiritual sustenance for the rest of his life.
- 6) The Grail is handed down to Joseph's successor and thence from generation to generation.
- 7) Galahad is noted, in some legends, as Joseph's last descendant.
- 8) The Grail is quested and found by Galahad.
- 9) The Grail is taken to a new location by Galahad.
- 8) The grail disappears.

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### **Lapsit Exillis**

Many brave knights dwell with the Grail at Munsalvaesche. They live from a stone of the purest kind. It is called Lapsit Exillis.

By the power of this stone the phoenix burns to ashes, but the ashes give him life again. Thus does the phoenix moult and change its plumage, which afterwards is bright and shining and as lovely as before.

He who gazes on the stone will:

- 1) Will not/cannot die within the week.

- 2) His appearance will stay the same.
- 3) He will look as he did when the best years of his life began.
- 4) His flesh and bones are once made young again.

The stone is also called the Grail.

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### **Major Characters in the Grail Saga**

Some of the major characters in the Grail Saga include:

- Percival - Knight of the round table.
- In some of the grail legends, Percival is cited as nephew of Amfortas, the maimed Fisher King and Lord of the Grail Castle.
- In other legends, Percival is cited as the grandson of the Fisher King.
- Percival is also referred to as the 'son of the widow lady'.
- Galahad - Knight of the round table. Born to Lancelot and the daughter of the Fisher King.
- Bors - Knight of the round table.
- Mordrain - The Fisher King?
- The Fisher king - Amfortas.
- The Grail Castle - Corbenic.
- The Grail was finally taken to Sarras from Corbenic.

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### **The Question(s)**

In some of the legends, the question is not very clear:

'Whom does one serve with it (the Grail)?'

or

'Whom does one serve (in the chivalric sense) by virtue of serving the Grail?'

From the various legends, there are several questions that can be derived:

- 1) What is it that the Grail has served?
- 2) What is it that the Grail serves?
- 3) What is it that the Lance has served?
- 4) What is it that the Lance serves?
- 5) What is it that the Fisher King's wound has served?
- 6) What is it that the Fisher king's wound serves?
- 7) How did the Fisher King Receive his wound?
- 8) How is the Fisher King's wound healed?

In the final analysis the real question is:

'Whom does the Grail serve?'

The answer:

'The Fisher King.'

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### **The Healing of The Fisher King**

What is the wound?

'That which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

The legends indicate several ways in which the Fisher King may be healed:

- The Fisher king (Amfortas) has been told that only a guileless fool can heal his wound. This is symbolized by the tarot card #0 - "The Fool".
- Said to Galahad by Christ, '...However, since I would not have thee leave this place without the Maimed King's being healed, thou shalt take first some blood of this lance and anoint his legs with it: for this and this alone can bring him back to health.' (The Quest of The Holy Grail, Editor Betty Radice, Penguin, ISBN 0-14-044220-0).
- Blood drips from the lance into the Grail, and is then rubbed on the Fisher King's legs/thighs where the steel has pierced him.
- Amfortas is healed with a touch of the Lance.
- After the question has been asked, the Fisher King will be immediately healed.

Then will he (the Fisher King) tell him (the guileless fool) the secret words of our Lord, and the King will pass from life to death. Then the guileless fool will have the keeping of the blood of Jesus.

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### **The Calling To The Grail**

Hear now how those called to the grail are made known. On the stone, around the edge, appear letters inscribed, giving the name and lineage of each one, maid or boy, who is to take the blessed journey.

Maidens are appointed to care for the grail.

The men of the Grail family, God sends forth secretly.

The maidens leave openly.

Women of the Grail family, thus, when they intermarry with the outside world, may disclose their pedigree and identity.

The men, however, must keep this information scrupulously concealed. So much so, in fact, that they may not even allow questions about their origins.

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### **The Hidden Pleiad**

In o.e.v lore, the Pleiades star cluster, in the constellation of Orion, is the location of the 'Home World', and from whence the Atlanteans came. Very faint echoes of the alternative history can be found in the mythology surrounding the Pleiades, especially regarding Merope.

## The Pleiades

In mythology, the Pleiades were the seven daughters of the titan Atlas and the sea-nymph Pleione, and were born on Mount Cyllene.

They are the siblings of Calypso, Hyas, the Hyades, and the Hesperides.

The Pleiades were nymphs in the train of Artemis, and together with the seven Hyades were called the Atlantides, Dodonides, or Nysiades, nursemaids and teachers to the infant Bacchus.

## The Seven Sisters

- 1) **Maia**, eldest of the seven Pleiades, was mother of Hermes by Zeus and Iris by Thaumias.
- 2) **Electra** was mother of Dardanus and Iasion by Zeus.
- 3) **Taygete** was mother of Lacedaemon, also by Zeus.
- 4) **Alcyone** was mother of Hyrieus by Poseidon.
- 5) **Celaeno** was mother of Lycus and Eurypylus by Poseidon.
- 6) **Sterope** (also Asterope) was mother of Oenomaus by Ares.
- 7) **Merope**, youngest of the seven Pleiades, was wooed by Orion. In other mythic contexts she married Sisyphus and, becoming mortal, she faded away. She bore to Sisyphus several sons.

## How Did The Seven Sisters Become Stars?

The Seven Sisters received their "Catasterismi" (placement among the stars) when they all committed suicide because they were "so saddened" by either the fate of their father, Atlas, or the loss of their siblings, the Hyades (also daughters of Zeus). Atlas led the Titanes in a rebellion against Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods and consequently, he was condemned to bear the heavens upon his shoulders.

### Hyades Note:

The Hyades were daughters of Atlas and Pleione, and, were the sisters of the Pleiades and the Hesperides. The Hyades were very attached to their brother Hyas. Later, while Hyas was hunting, he was killed by a lion, and the Hyades were so overcome with grief they all committed suicide.

Zeus changed them into a cluster of stars and placed them in the constellation Taurus the Bull. Zeus had been grateful to them because they had nursed his son, Dionysus. Aldebaran, one of the Hyades, is the brightest star in the constellation and she represents the Bull's eye. The other Hyades are in a "V" shape, which forms the horns and the nose of the bull (Taurus).

Because the Hyades appear during rainy seasons, the Greeks believed them to be messengers of spring rain showers and autumn storms. In Greek, their name means "to rain", and the rain was believed to represent the tears of grief of the Hyades for their dead brother, Hyas.

Zeus immortalized the seven sisters (Pleiades) by placing them in the sky, and these seven stars form the constellation known as the Pleiades.

## The Lost Pleiad

In the Pleiades star cluster only six of the stars shine brightly, the seventh, Merope, shines dully because she is shamed for eternity for having a relationship with a mortal, becoming mortal herself, and then "fading" away.

This is the "Lost Pleiad" of o.e.v lore and symbolizes the great crossing, joining, and hidden departure.

Some myths also say that the star that doesn't shine is Electra; who is said to have left her place so that she will not have to look down upon the ruin of Troy,.

- 1) Some say the Lost Pleiad is Electra, daughter of Atlas, mother of Dardanus. She is known as the 'Lost Pleiad', for it is said that she disappeared a little before the Trojan war, that she might be spared the mortification of seeing the ruin of her beloved city, which was founded by her son Dardanus. She shows herself occasionally to mortals, however, always in the guise of a comet. However this does not link to o.e.v lore.
- 2) Others say the Lost Pleiad is Merope, who is ashamed to show herself because she married a mortal, Sisyphus. This is the legend that links to o.e.v lore.

## The Stars



The nine brightest stars of the Pleiades are named after the Seven Sisters of Greek mythology - **Sterope, Merope, Electra, Maia, Taygete, Celaeno** and **Alcyone**, along with their parents **Atlas** and Pleione.

The English name of the cluster itself is of Greek origin, though the etymology is uncertain.

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## Three Norns

The Norns are the Three Norns are comparable with the 'Three Fates of The Greeks' (Three old women who spin the thread of life, and control the destiny of men). The Three Norns spin at will the fates of men and women. Their task is to sprinkle Yggdrasil (the tree of life), with mead from the Fountain of Life, so that the tree stays ever green.

The Norns are three sisters:

- 1) Urd - Controls the now, that which is. Works with her maids to performing tasks, and acting as guardians of humanity through their lives. Counsel from Urd is passed into humanity through their dreams. Families are cared for as well as unborn babies. The unborn babies are found kindly mothers within the world of men.
- 2) Verdande - Spins the past, that which has been. She reveals, the past to the living, so they can understand their present, and plan their future.
- 3) Skuld - Spins the future, that which will be. She spins the lesson and tasks elected by the individual's guardians.

Alignment with the Norns opens the individual to great knowledge; magical symbols are the spinning-

wheel, the bumble bee, and the two mystic swans of Urd's pond (These are the ancestors of the Swan race of Midgard (Earth)); colours awakened depend upon the thread that the Norns choose to spin into the individual's life.

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### **Three Fates**

The Three Fates are comparable with the "Three Norns of The Norse" (the three old women who spin the thread of life, and control the destiny of men).

The three Fates are the daughters of Nyx (night) who spin the thread of life, and control the destiny of men.

Originally birth-goddesses, the Fates came to be represented as three old women who spin the thread of life. (Morgan, the half sister of Arthur the Briton has also been identified with the Fates).

The Fates were identified as:

- 1) Clotho - (Kloto) Who spun the Thread of Life.
- 2) Lachesis - Who measured out the Thread of Life.
- 3) Atropos - Who Cut the Thread of Life.

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### **Nine Muses**

The Muses are the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne; and are identified with each of the individual liberal arts and sciences:

- 1) Calliope - Muse of EPIC-POETRY. Her symbols are a tablet (sometimes a scroll), and stylus.
- 2) Clio - Muse of HISTORY. Her symbol is a scroll or an open chest of books.
- 3) Erato - Muse of LOVE-POETRY. Her symbol is a lyre.
- 4) Euterpe - Muse of LYRIC-POETRY. Her symbol is a flute.
- 5) Melpomene - Muse of TRAGEDY. Her symbols are a tragic mask, the club of Heracles, or a sword. She wears the cothurnus (the high boot or buskin worn by actors in Greek and Roman tragedies), and her head is wreathed with vine leaves.
- 6) Polyhymnia - Muse of SACRED-POETRY (hymn). She sits pensive, but has no attribute, because deity is not to be represented by any visible symbol.
- 7) Terpsichore - Muse of CHORAL-SONG and DANCE. She is usually represented by a lyre.
- 8) Thalia - Muse of COMEDY. Her symbols are a comic mask, a shepherd's crook, and a wreath of ivy.
- 9) Urania - Muse of ASTRONOMY. Her symbol is a staff pointing to a globe.

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### **Magical Egyptian Names**

There is great "magical" power linked to the God-names of Egypt:

- Anubis - The Son of Nephthys and Osiris. The Guardian and Guide - particularly through the Lower-Astral realm and the realms of Sleep. Stimulates the awakening of inner guidance; opens the ability to develop and to control dreams, and allows the individual to explore his

inner dimensions; the patron of lost things; magical symbols are the jackal, and sometimes the sarcophagus; colours activated are black and silver.

- Bast - The sister of Horus. The goddess of joy. Attunes the individual to the animal kingdom - particularly the cat family; awakens mental healing abilities; intuition; grace and experience of joy; patroness of marriages; magical symbols are the sistrum (A jingling metal instrument used by the ancient Egyptians - Especially in the worship of Isis), and the cat (including the lion); colours activated are yellow-gold, and turquoise.
- Hathor - The Nourisher of the Gods and Goddesses, and Humanity. Also known as the 'Crow of Heaven'. Comforts of life come through this energy; protective - especially of women; awakens a sense of beauty and strength; patroness of astrology - stimulates an understanding of the stars; stimulates the individual to be able to fight - especially in defence; magical symbols are the mirror, the sycamore tree, and the crow; colour activated is coral.
- Horus - The Saviour God. A Sun God whose energy awakens artistic ability; musical knowledge; general healing capacities; the patron of families; great strength; protection; stimulates prophetic tendencies; magical symbols are the hawk, and the all-seeing eye; colours activated are bright yellow, and gold.
- Isis - Goddess of Moon and Magic. Protects the young; invokes great compassion; opens the veil between the physical and the spiritual; awakens psychic energies; promotes magical work and ability; magical symbols are the throne, the buckle, the veil behind the throne, and wings; colour activated is sky blue.
- Maat - The Goddess of Truth. Sometimes considered as a feminine aspect of Thoth. Stimulates the ability to develop truth as a power within the individual; stimulates affairs of the heart; manifests discriminating justice; assists the individual in putting his life's causes and effects into perspective; opens the individual's awareness to the true intentions of others; magical symbols are the scales, and the feather by which she balances the scales; colours activated are violet, and lapis lazuli.
- Nephtys - The Goddess of Intuition and Tranquillity. The Revealer. Stimulates psychic sensitivity; guards that which is hidden; also reveals that which is hidden; reveals psychic gifts, and dream consciousness; associated with the dark aspects of the moon; magical symbols are the chalice, and the basket; colours activated are pale green, and silver grey.
- Osiris - The King Priest. Higher wisdom; justice; spiritual strength; awakens a realization of nature, and helps the individual attune to the nature energies; magical symbols are the crook, the flail, and a tet (tree); colours activated are white and green.
- Ptah - The God of Craftsmanship, and Science. Opens understanding and the ability to apply the laws of science; stimulates invention and ingenuity; the patron of builders; stimulates the manifestation of miracles within the lives of humanity; awakens a gentle masculinity; teaches the principle of labouring for joy and the sake of itself; stimulates building from a new solid foundation; magical symbols are the tools of the mason; colour activated is violet.
- Ra - The Major Sun God. Some authorities speak of Amun and Ra as the same. Energies of new life; opens the elements of the air and especially the wind; stirs the primal creative forces within the individual; magical symbols are the obelisk, the hawk, and the uraeus (The sacred serpent as an emblem of power represented on the head-dress of Egyptian divinities and sovereigns); colour activated is that of golden sunshine.
- Sekhmet - The Warrior Goddess. Often seen as the other side of Hathor. Some traditions place her as the wife of Ptah. Stimulates either healing and nourishment, or breaking down and destruction (depending upon the individuals alignment with her energy); stimulates great protection; stimulates the application of wisdom to force; manifests opportunities to right wrongs; magical symbols are the lioness, mirror, and the sun-disk; colours activated are copper, and deep yellows.
- Thoth - The Master of Medicine, Learning, and Magic. The Scribe of the Gods and Goddesses. The scribe of many of the ancient mysteries. Development of intellectual and mental forms of magic; stimulates an understanding of the laws of fate and time; opens new opportunities in education and communication; magical symbol is the caduceus; colours activated are violet and amethyst.

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