

A TRANSSEXUAL FEMINIST EXPLORATION OF PAGAN SPIRITUALITY

My Auntie Attis

a transsexual feminist exploration of pagan spirituality

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1. To Those That Came Before

I am indebted to my queer aunties.

Every day I exist is one day enlightened by their radiance and sheltered by their shadows. I am indebted to the Queens of Christopher Street, the Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries who threw bricks and homed queers and refused to be silenced. I am indebted to the inverts and the Uranians, those bizzare, beautiful aliens who chose to be themselves in a world of ordinary humans. I am indebted to sex workers, to witches, mollies and magicians who lived outside of the boundaries of what was acceptable then so that I may live slightly further within the boundaries of what is acceptable now.

As much as this comfort chafes, it privileges me also. That is my debt, and it is one that will not go unpaid.

But one cannot pay back the dead. They are gone, and increasingly forgotten (as sad as that may be). All I can do, therefore, is pay my debt *forward*, to the living.

For my aunties and great-aunties and great-greataunties to have meant something, I must be auntie myself, helping others along so that their path runs smoother than my own. The path of every generation must be smoother than their parents'.

I must share wisdom. I must share food. I must share tea, and I must share hormones; all of these things shared as freely as the air I breathe. I must protect the young sisters from the cruelties of their elders. In time, I must make myself irrelevant, making space for the next, and the next, and the next. That is my payment, an incalculable tribute.

Please understand: I do not view "auntie" as identity, but as aspiration. Any sister who declares herself your auntie is not your auntie at all. This is not a title one can bestow upon herself, but one that must be earned through sweat and hard graft and selflessness.

I may never know if my aspirations are successful. That's kind of the point. The only sign of my success will be when others see me as I have seen my own aunties, and start to work at being aunties themselves. That, and only that, is victory.

2. The Story of Attis

Long ago, in central Anatolia (the asian part of modern-day Turkey), there lived a woman named Nana. Nana was an ordinary woman, living alone by a river in the shade of an almond tree. She bathed in the river and ate from the tree, and she was happy, and one day, she became pregnant, eventually giving birth to a beautiful boy she named "Attis".

Clearly, this was no ordinary pregnancy – no pregnancy of only one instigator is – and Attis, of course, was no ordinary child. The Great Mother of the World, Cybele, was deeply fascinated with him, and She wished to give him a gift. So one night, when Attis was nearing manhood, She showed Herself to him and gave him Her blessing.

From that day on, the feminine blessing of the Great Mother grew, like a grain of sand into a pearl, within Attis' mind. No longer, when she looked into the water of the river, could she see the handsome boy she had been. Instead, she saw the woman she was not, the hateful lines of her jaw and chest like splinters in her eye, driving her madder and madder until one day, she could take no more.

Taking a river rock into her hand, she struck at her own most hated part, again, and again, and again, pulverising the flesh of her manhood until it was little more than wound. And in doing so, she died.

The Great Mother, Cybele, watched in horror at what tragedy Her gift had brought the poor youth. She had never expected Her femaleness, which had given such joy to the women of the world, could hurt someone so deeply. So She wept for the poor child Attis, and Her tears melted into Attis' form, transforming her body into the one she had so yearned for.

And thus, Attis became your auntie and mine, the first trans woman to walk this Earth.

The 24th of March is *Dies Sanguinis*, the day we mourn for Attis' demise. Mark this day with anguish and pain and blood (within reason) and light a candle in vigil.

The 25th of March is *Hilaria*, the day we celebrate our auntie's rebirth. Celebrate with jokes and laughter and care for your newborn sisters.



3. Where is the Temple?

Where is the temple?

It is not in any building. No churches were built to honour our beloved Goddess or Her blessed servant; at least, not for over a millenium. We have no hallowed ground on which to stand, no pulpit from which to preach, no *Songs of Praise* on a Sunday afternoon.

Where is the temple? It is *nowhere*.

Where is the temple?

It is in your living room. It is huddled outside a nightclub where cigarettes and hormone tips are traded. It is in your teapot, in your oven, in your own tender embrace. It is upon your bed, between the sheets. Anywhere you show love for your sister is a temple. Anywhere you show love to the women and girls like us, you show love to the Great Mother.

Where is the temple? It is everywhere.

So carry yourself everywhere with love.

4. Cybele, the Mother of All

Cybele (koo-BEH-leh), known as Rhea to the Greeks and Magna Mater to the Romans, is the all-mother, She who birthed all other gods, goddesses and goddexxes.

The divine feminine – in the sense of womanhood, rather than the modern notion of girliness – is the source of all woman's beauty and love.

She is the matron of all of us who have abandoned manhood, the queen of the natural world and the creatrix of the universe.

She is the beating heart of queer femme love, and she will love you too, regardless of whether you are one of your daughters, if you let her. <3 <3 <3



5. The Prayer

LOVE AND PRAISE to the Great Mother, Cybele: for She created this world, and everything in it, with LOVE and with PRAISE.

LOVE AND PRAISE to my Auntie Attis: for she was the first of us, that forged the path with LOVE and with PRAISE.

LOVE AND PRAISE to all of my sisters: for we live together, and struggle together, with LOVE and with PRAISE.

6. This is not the true faith!

This is not the "true faith". I write this document not to convert, but to explain. This is my personal belief system, the Church of Me, built out of what matters to me.

Of course, I do hope that other people find these things meaningful, but if this doesn't speak to you, that's fine.

This is a cult. Not a cult in the modern sense: I have no intention to manipulate others for my own enrichment or gratification, and if you catch me doing so I hope you call me the fuck out. Rather, this is a cult in the classical sense of "a faith that is not for general consumption".

I am a *gallus*, a woman (or close enough) of my own construction, having abandoned manhood for the sake of myself. If this does not describe you, then this faith is not yours, and if you wish to pledge yourself to Cybele you must find your own path. This one is for my sisters, mapped out with our transwomanhood in mind.

This is not the true faith. But it's true to me, and maybe there is some truth here for you, too. Truth is so very relative, isn't it? We are large, we can contain many truths: I am Cybele's daughter; I have a brain abnormality; I have adopted a social role; I am breaking down gender. Doesn't the Great Mother's blessing make for as good an aetiology as any other?

Does it even matter?

This is not the true faith.

FUCK that Constantinian bullshit.

LOVE PRAISE XXX