

Reflective report - Dissertation "Druids of the Past and the Present"

This dissertation will focus on Druids throughout history, starting with the times of Julius Caesar and finishing with the Druids as they define themselves nowadays.

The subject of this thesis is quite interesting, as people tend to romanticise and mystify the past, whilst forgetting that 1000 years from now people may approach what we consider to be present, in the same way. How then would they define the Druids of today? Would they consider them an evolution of an ancient Tradition or on the contrary - an ideology that based its origin on an old tale without any direct correlation and somehow twisted it to suit their agenda? Whilst this thesis does not aim to criticise or dismiss, it seeks to highlight the similarities and differences between Druids and what could be called Neo-druids.

Just like the Druidic tradition itself, this thesis underwent an evolution. Initially, it was meant to be a comparison between the Celtic Druids and Slavic Wolochs, drawing similarities and explaining, from the perspective of someone raised in one of those traditions, how they related with one another whilst remaining academically objective. Unfortunately, this task requires much more resources due to physical limitations and the requirements of the thesis as well as the wish to complete it to the highest possible standard, which in turn would require mobility to gather all the anthropological data, as well as an in-depth analysis of things that are considered sacred and secretive, it would be best to leave this matter for another opportunity, as the line between academic curiosity and abuse can be fine in such a case and due to ethics can not be allowed. For this reason, after vast analysis, and discussion with my Dissertation tutor - Professor Cartwright and with her approval, I have decided to change my subject. Instead of drawing on two cultures and discussing in depth the correlations between the oral traditions of both of them, relying on limited sources for the Slavic culture, it was thought best to limit the scope of work, having in mind the word count limit and the level of work, to instead focus on singular culture with seemingly straightforward connection and varied sources to support the arguments posed.

The mentioned change should then, in theory, allow for a smoother and easier progression of the dissertation, as much as it would allow the focus to remain on a specific subject, limit distraction and streamline the workload.

One of the questions this thesis aims to answer is whether druids should be considered solely Celtic (insular?), or should be considered a name given to a specific tradition that exceeds the limitations of a singular culture? If so, what would be the necessary parameters to assess this? The world at large tends to treat the word druid as one that describes very precise, limited parameters and often the name itself is not translated, but what if, instead of treating the word druid as a specific, precisely described role, it would be treated as a name that changes depending on a language spoken in the area? This, of course, is a topic that requires a wider scope of research and given the subject of the dissertation, will not be the main focus of the work, but instead, it will be a side point that I will attempt to discuss over the course of the dissertation.

The reasoning behind this subject of dissertation is quite straightforward and it is directly related to the choice of University course, as Druids are inherently associated with the Celts the choice of Celtic Studies as a University Course can be an obvious choice for anyone who would like to enrich their knowledge about them. Unfortunately, it is not that simple, as the focus of Celtic Studies lies elsewhere and does not go in-depth about the Druids themselves over the course of study. This, in turn, creates a void that for someone passionate about the subject requires to be filled. As my focus, from the very moment I found this course, was on the Druids, it is only natural that this interest

affected the choice of dissertation subject. Even though it has evolved from the initial idea of a combined study of related cultures, the subject, at its core, has not changed.

Given the limited sources regarding the Druids within the academia, the dissertation, which would build on both the primary and secondary sources, broadens the subject. Although, given the level of work, it may end up not being innovative in any way, it will give a new perspective to the discussion occurring within the academic field. As the primary sources are quite limited, the dissertation will use the secondary sources available, build on them and their perspective and attempt to, if possible, draw new conclusions.

As neo-druidism seems different to the druidism described in the primary sources, this dissertation will also aim to point out the factors that may have influenced the difference in the perception, whether this is the change in the law, or the druids of the past were, as was often the case, vilified by the outsiders who serve as the primary sources, for the simple purpose of showcasing them as barbarians and elevating the 'civilised' societies above them.

Taking into account the above, as well as the project management plan included in *Appendix 2*, I believe this dissertation to be within my academic capabilities, to be very well rooted in sources, and the process itself to not collide with the rest of the course modules, taking into account the limitations imposed by my health, following this plan allows for ample time to complete the assignments and the dissertation itself.

Appendix 1. Bibliography

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Appendix 2. Project Management Plan

Timeframe	Task	Target	Stage
Block 1	Decision on topic	Meeting with Professor Cartwright	Complete
Block 2	Overview of literary sources and preparation for Reflective report	Discuss possible sources with the Tutor Gain answers to further questions regarding the assignment and the dissertation	Complete
Block 3	Structure the dissertation	Meeting with supervisor to check the progress, ask further questions about the direction of the Dissertation, enquire whether it is appropriately structured, propose the rough outline of the word count for each chapter.	To be completed
Block 4	Create a draft of a chapter	Discuss the idea and aims of the chapter as well as how it would fit with the concept, discuss whether the style is appropriate to the aim of the dissertation	To be completed
Beginning of March	Complete $\frac{3}{4}$ of the dissertation	Meeting with the tutor to provide an update regarding the progress.	To be completed
Easter break	Finalise the dissertation		To be completed
Block 6	Prepare the presentation, recheck the bibliography	Present the work on 9th of April 2025	To be completed
Block 6	Prepare the dissertation for submission (check once again for any inconsistencies, finalise bibliography if any new sources were used in meantime, ensure all the requirements were met)	Submit dissertation by 7th of May 2025	To be completed