

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 5 - The Magical Tools
Lesson 2: The Sword and the Vessel

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QVAREIA

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

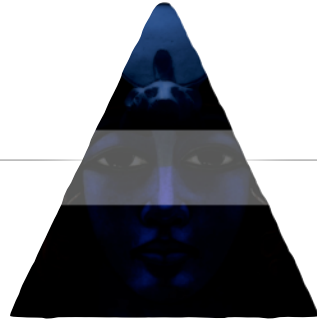
The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding – everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

*For more information and all course modules please visit
www.quareia.com*

So remember - in order for this course to work, it is wise to work with the lessons in sequence. If you don't, it won't work.

Yours,

Josephine McCarthy



QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 5 - The Magical Tools

Lesson 2: The Sword and the Vessel

This lesson teaches you how to bring your sword and vessel to life. It moves away from the dogmatic representational rituals that call upon the elements and named beings to work and enliven the tools, and takes the magic back to its roots. For those of you who have already had ritual magical training, it could be a bit of shift in thinking, but this method takes the control out of the magician's hands and puts the job back where it belongs: working directly with the land, the spirits, and the deities inherent within a land area.

This also means that the magician has to get out of the way of the magic and surrender control: you do your job, they do theirs, and together you make a powerful working magical tool. Because of this surrender of control, more power is allowed to flow into the tools, and with this comes the necessity to be respectful of the beings that you will work with. This method links the tools into the land and the beings and powers that flow through it, and connects you directly to the deity powers that flow through the land. There is no grand posturing, there are no great speeches: outwardly it all looks a bit boring, but under the surface the power rises to meet the tools and fills them with consciousness.

From there, the tools do their job and you do yours. However, if you misuse the tools you will most certainly know about it. The powers that flow

into them are what you need in order to make your next steps into magic, but instead of just having a power tool in your hand, you hold a living being that will work in harmony with you if you work in balance. If you go off the rails and misuse the tools, they will either abandon you or they will fight you.

Because you are working with other beings and are allowing them to join in the alchemical process of bringing the tools to life, there has to be a two-way exchange. You need to take gifts for the land spirits and deity that you are going to be working with. The land itself prefers simple gifts, like honey, a song, picking up litter, a gift of fruit: things that nourish. The water, however, is a different ballgame. This is not a spirit you will work with, but a deity. Bodies of fresh water such as rivers, springs and lakes all have inherent goddesses that flow within them, and if you wish them to work with you then they must have a suitable gift.

You do not need to know the name of the goddess (names are for us, not for them); all you need to know is that wherever there is a natural flow of fresh water, there is a goddess—and they are not sweet, gentle, flowing females with silken robes and loving smiles. The female power that flows through water is powerful and can heal or destroy. She is the power that tempers a sword, a power that records the contents of a vessel, a power that can hold blessings or curses, a power that can send men mad and strengthen a woman for battle: in short, she is not a power to be messed with.

The Celts knew this, as did the Romans and the Greeks. Rivers were treated with the greatest of respect, and were given the finest gifts. We see aspects of this today in Britain, where we still have sacred springs and wells that are respected, loved and cared for by the local villagers. We also see remnants of this in the tradition of throwing coins into wells and fountains for good luck.

The gift that you take to the river for your magical work must be a special gift indeed. The river goddesses like jewels, jewellery, or precious metal things that are precious to you. It is not the worth of the precious metal that is the issue; it is what it is worth to you that is important. You have to be willing to give something of great worth to you in order to receive something of great value. That way, there is no debt on your part, *something that is very important with these goddesses*. So do not shirk at this.

I have lost count of the gifts I have given rivers: diamond rings, 24carat gold rings of exquisite design, gold and diamond necklaces, rubies, garnets: over the years all jewellery I had of value has gone into the rivers. Some of them were heirlooms; some were valuable antique pieces. But that is of no matter—letting go was important, as was giving the river goddess her due. And what I received in return has far outweighed the value of any bauble.

So find something of great value to you that is precious metal, i.e. gold, silver, platinum; something that would be hard to let go of. If you have nothing like that, then you must buy something. This must cost enough that you have to forgo decent food for a couple of weeks or a month (however your pay check comes to you). Its cost must bite into your daily life so that, for the period your pay packet normally lasts you and after you have paid your bills, you cannot afford your usual recreations, nice or good quality food or drinks, meals out, movies—whatever you usually do to make life pleasant or at least liveable. It does not matter if that means you have to spend \$50 or \$500 on this gift, only that it is a cost that is great to you personally. And if you try to dodge around that one and get a cheap bauble so that you can continue to live as you usually do, it will insult and enrage the river goddess—which is not a good idea. Remember the connection to the vessel/west/water and the scales/harvest? This gift is connected to your harvest: you give the best as a gift of your harvest.

As well as your gift for the river, you will need some honey, and also either fruit, good quality bread, or nuts: look to what is harvested in that area, and if you can, take some of that harvest back. If it is a wheat growing area, take bread. If it is a fruit growing area, take the fruit (chop it up for birds). If it is not an agricultural area, take honey, organic wine, bread, a bit of salt, berries or grapes chopped up, and some olive oil. If it is on American land, also take organic tobacco. And take a pin to prick your finger with.

Practical Work

Get your sword, your vessel/cup, and your gifts. Go to the area that you have chosen that is out in nature and by water. This can be a spring, river, stream, or lake—just ensure that it is fresh water (not seawater) and that there is earth nearby with which you can cover over your tools for a brief time. Take a book with you, turn off your phone, and give yourself time to spend a few hours doing this job. Take a hand spade or gardening tool so that you can dig into the earth.

When you get near the water, unwrap your sword and get your vessel out. If there is a lot of ground to choose from, wander around and talk to the earth, trees and rocks. Tell them you are looking for the best place for your sword, and see where that takes you. If you do not have much choice, go with what is there; and again, quietly use your voice to tell the earth that you are going to put your sword and vessel into it for a short while.

Once you have identified where you can work, and before you start digging, pour honey on the ground, scatter the fruit/food around the area, pour oil upon the earth, and find a small stone a little way away from where you are about to dig and put the salt on it.

If you are also working with tobacco, take a pinch and face east, thank the sun for rising and the wind for all that it brings, and release some tobacco to the wind/air. Then turn south and thank the future for all that it brings and release some tobacco to the air; turn west and thank the rain and water for gracing the world and all that it brings; turn north and thank the powers of the land for everything that they do; release some tobacco to all four directions. And once you dig the earth for the sword, add some tobacco onto the earth before you put the sword in.

Dig into the earth so that you can lay the sword on the earth or in a shallow trench. Before you cover over the sword, place your right hand over the sword and recite:

“You came from the earth, I return you to the earth, and from the earth you will be reborn.”

Cover over the sword with the earth. Now do the same with the vessel/cup.

This is where you wait. It is preferable to leave the tools in the earth for a few days, but that is not always practical or safe in the modern world. If it is a place where you can leave them, cover over the ‘graves’ of the tools with brush and leaves so that they will not be found by anyone else. When you should return depends on the land, and it can be twenty-four hours or a few days: you will know/feel when they are ‘cooked,’ as you will feel a strong pull to go get them.

If this is not practical, don’t panic. This is a first step of learning with the tools, and you will most likely repeat this in many different ways over your lifetime of being a magician. If you have to stay and guard them while they sleep and clean, take a book (have no electronic distractions around you—the subtle shifts in the power around you need to be clear) and read, lie down and snooze, or just watch nature. In our fast modern world, being silent and still can be very hard, as our brains have become wired for constant fast input. As a magician, it is important to be able to slow down, observe, keep vigil, listen, and experience the more subtle powers around you.

Reading stories or poetry to the land always goes down well with local land spirits, as does singing. If you are alone, use your voice to learn how to communicate with the land. It is not so much what you say or sing as the frequency, melody, thoughts and emotions that flow with the words that are important: these alert the powers of nature to you. A beautiful poem, prayer or song uttered to the wind, the trees and the birds will have far more effect than any magical incantation. If you do this, just make sure that whatever you say or sing is neutral: there must not be any appeal or ‘asking,’ nor any mention of God or deities: just stories or songs that evoke a love of the land, of nature, of the elements... you get the idea.

This might all sound very romantic, but it is not. It is the pure dynamic of utterance, emotion and intent from a human voice that awakens and alerts the powers around you. This is how the ancient priests/magicians worked, and the use of magical incantation with its entreating, flattery, control and threats is a sad degeneration of this power.

It may take a few hours until the tools are ‘ready.’ If you are not sure whether they are, place your hand on the earth where they are buried or covered over, be still, and see how you feel. If any resistance to digging them up

comes into your mind, back off and wait a bit longer. However, there are also modern practicalities. If it gets to a time when you have to dig them up, tell the earth that you have to dig the tools up soon, that you have little choice, and then wait a few more minutes for the message to get through. Don't use this as an excuse if you are bored. Get over it. If you can wait, then wait.

Once it is time to dig the tools up, get them out of the ground and then prick your finger and drop blood into the land before replacing the earth. Now it is time to work with the river/water. Take the tools to the water and lay them down. Take out your gift for the river, and think about what it is worth to you. When you are ready, hold the gift out of the water and say:

“Goddess of the waters, I give you this gift which is precious to me. It is the best that I can give you. Thank you for flowing across the land, thank you for all that you bring to all living beings, and thank you for your power that is in our world.”

Bow to the river to honour her, and drop your gift into the water.

Now take the sword. Bathe it in the water. If it is a spring that you cannot fully immerse the sword in, put the sword into the spring and wash it all over. Make sure that every part of the sword is washed, and that it remains stood or laid in the water for a short period of time. As you wash the sword, be aware of the guardian of the sword standing nearby.

Take the sword out of the water and hold it up to the air in front of you, not pointing it up, but pointing it away from you, held by the handle in your left hand, with your right hand under the blade to support it. You are going to breathe down the blade. Be aware of your inner flame, be still, and feel your feet in the underworld. Keep your mind silent and still. Take a deep breath, and slowly breathe out, aiming your breath down the blade of the sword. As you breathe, let nothing pop into your head. Have no thoughts other than your breath. Say no words or sounds: it must just be a clear air. Now place the sword on the ground, and pick up the vessel.

Take the vessel to the water, wash it in the river, and then fill it with water. Prick a finger and drop a drop of blood into the water-filled vessel. Once more, still yourself and take a deep breath. Close your eyes, keep a still mind, and breathe out over the surface of the vessel and the water contained in it. Hold it up, and then pour the contents into the river. This is your first

harvest of the vessel: the gift of the water goddess held within the water, and the gift of your blood.

Now get your sword and the vessel, and wrap them up. Bow to the river, bow to the land, say thank you, pick up your tools, and leave. Go straight home. Do not divert or go visit anyone: go straight home, and put the tools in their directions. As soon as possible, light the directions, open the gates, have the central altar and flame burning, place the sword on the east altar (blade pointing to the centre altar) and the vessel on the west altar. Then leave the room with everything working. (This is why it is good to use tea lights, as candles can fall over: make sure you use something that is safe.)

Leave the room to itself for an hour or so. While you wait, get your engraving tool ready, and if the vessel you are working can be engraved, you will do the vessel as well as the sword. If it cannot, you will need some acrylic paint or something similar to mark your vessel.

When you are ready, return to the room and while the directions are still open, engrave the sigil (the one that has been waiting, that you wrote down) on the sword and then engrave or paint the sigil on the vessel.

Once you are finished, close everything down in the proper way, and put the sword back in its resting place in the east and the vessel in the west near your scales. You will also notice, as you close things down, that the guardians of the sword and vessel are no longer around.

Notice how throughout this, your job is essentially to get out of the way in terms of magic. You provide the physical work only: digging, giving gifts, putting things in and out of water: there is no ritual, no incantations or invocations, no visionary aspect other than silence and stillness. This is what is missing from modern magic: letting the elements and land beings, spirits and deities do their job, while you are simply the person who does the physical lifting. This can be a bit of a shock for those people who have already trained in a system that puts control firmly in the hands of the hapless magician. Learning to let go, to trust, to let power do its thing, and to trust in the alchemical process of nature and power, is a tough lesson indeed. We have grown a mentality over the millennia that 'we' are the controllers of magic: we are not. We are the catalysts. Often intent and then physical action alone

is enough; sometimes we have to do more. The trick is to know what to do, and when.

Throughout this course you will be put in situations where sometimes you are the weaver of power, other times the ‘pointer’ that points the way. Other times you will simply be a catalyst—and this is one of those times. Everything you have been doing in your ritual work has been building up to this point: the magic has already been done. All you need to do with the tools now is to seal that magic with the outer actions of the elements. Something that you will slowly come to understand is that sometimes ‘very simple’ is the most powerful, and that is because we have gotten out of the way of ourselves and the process, allowing things to form properly and naturally.

Care of the Tools

Caring for the tools is very much about respect. Each of those two tools is now a being in its own right, like a newborn baby. It will take time for the sword, the cup and you to learn the language of mutual work. They will grow as you grow. Treat them as you would any living being: with respect, and with attention to their needs. The scabbard for the sword is something that you will learn about in the next lesson. For now, even if the sword came with a scabbard, keep it out of any scabbard until you have properly prepared one (see next lesson).

Here are a few rules about keeping the balance with these tools. These may be obvious to some of you, and not so obvious to others.

1. Make sure they are never casually picked up or mishandled by anyone.
2. Never ever physically strike anything or anyone with the sword, for any reason, ever.
3. Never draw blood with the sword.
4. Never use the magic of the sword to attack a mortal in vision.
5. Never place poison in the vessel.
6. If for any reason you want to get rid of them, bury them deeply or cast them into deep water. An unbalanced and destructive sword should first be cleansed with fire, and then buried deeply.

Now you have the two foundation tools, it is time to move on to the fulcrum tool: the shield... which is your next lesson.

Task

Just as an aside, and for your own background understanding of a bit about how magical swords work, including dealing with them outside of the Western dogmatic magical orthodoxy, here are some links to sites about various magical swords around the world and in history. Just read them, absorb, and if you want to, do more research for yourself. It can be a fascinating journey, and the more you know from your own magical work, the more you will spot in different situations around the world.

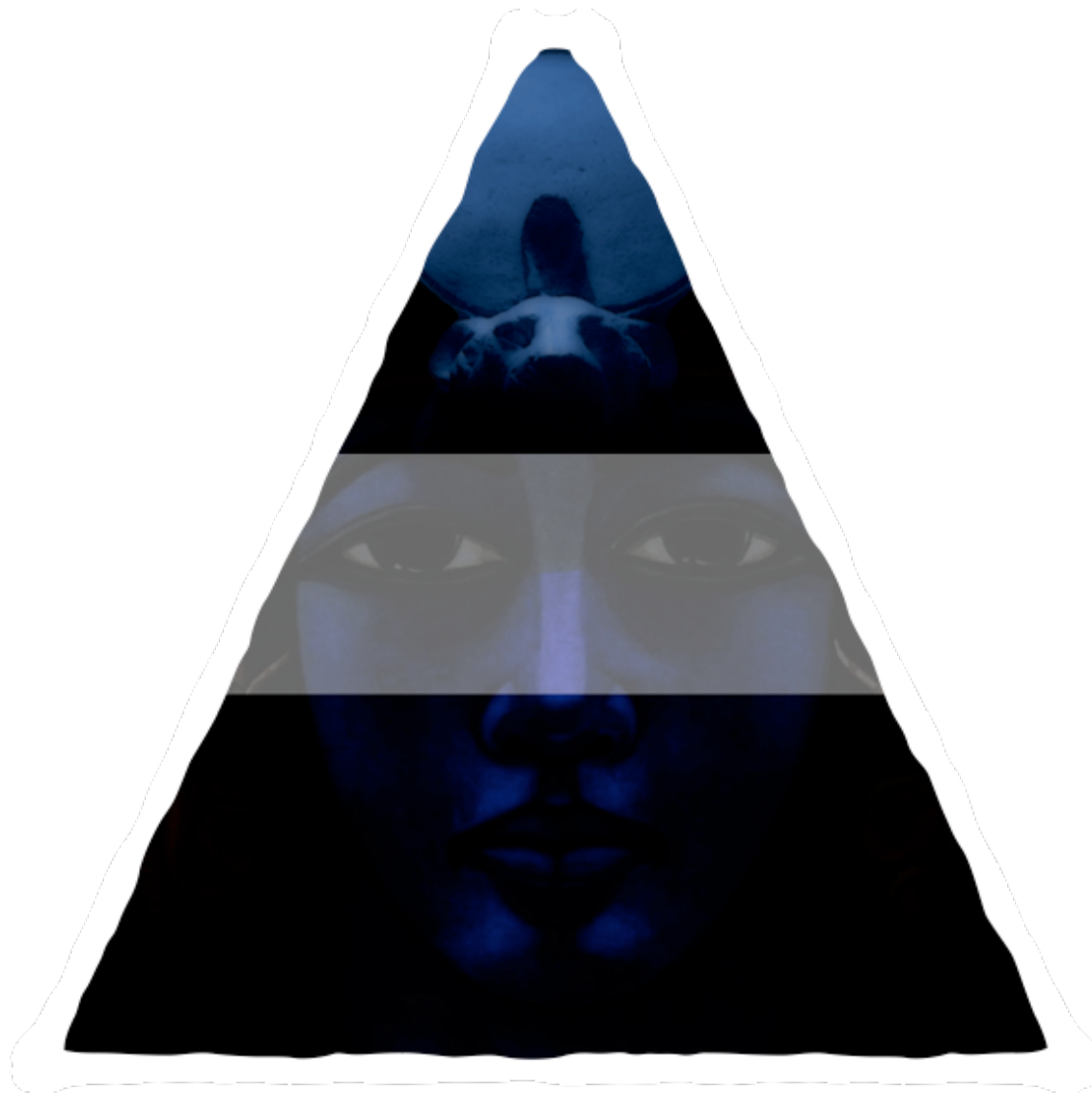
- <http://journalism.nyu.edu/publishing/africadispatch/2012/06/25/the-sword-that-cant-be-moved/>
- http://www.jeanne-darc.info/p_jeanne/sword.html
- <http://en.hainan.gov.cn/englishgov/map/wuzhishan/>

And this link, read right down to the bottom... interesting bits...

- http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/archaeolog/2008/02/celtic_swords_and_arthurs_lady.html

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