

QVAREIA - THE APPRENTICE

Module 5 - The Magical Tools

Lesson 5: Working with the Shield and the Cord

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QVAREIA

WELCOME

Welcome to this lesson of the Quareia curriculum.

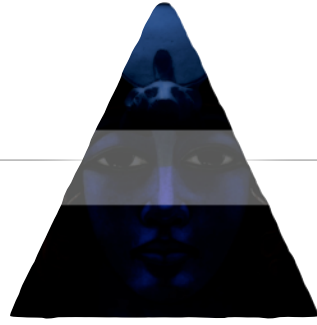
The Quareia takes a magical apprentice from the beginning of magic to the level of adeptship and beyond. The course has no superfluous text; there is no dressing, no padding – everything is in its place and everything within the course has a good reason to be there.

*For more information and all course modules please visit
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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



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Module 5 - The Magical Tools

Lesson 5: Working with the Shield and the Cord

The cloth shield, stone, and cord are what are known as passive tools. Whereas the sword and vessel are very much hands-on, active tools for humans to wield in magical patterns, the shield, stone, and cord are tools that tick away in the background: they do their job so that you can get on with yours safely.

This is part of the balancing act of magic: some tools are actively used, and others work simply by their presence. The sword and vessel are tools that have a wide-ranging application in magic, whereas the passive tools have a narrow but powerful focus to their action. Of the three passive tools, the stone is the most profound and powerful, as it is a direct connection with the female Divinity, of the land beneath your feet. The cloth shield holds your frequency of power and protects you, and the cord is the measure of your lifespan.

The best way to understand these tools and how to apply them is to look at how they work, why they work, and when you would use them. We will also look at some misconceptions that occur in magic about these tools, so that you can spot an unbalanced or uninformed magical system or pattern should you come across it in your explorations. We will also explore the powers of these tools in ritual work, so that you can engage directly with them: this will give you far more understanding than pages of text would.

The Cord

Cords and knots feature heavily in folk and ritual magic, and in such settings they are often used to bind, trap, or hold power, energy, a situation, or a person in place. Such uses are much lesser (and messier) applications of the cord, and instead of taking you down the same messy road, we will work and learn about the cord from its highest application first. From there, as an initiate and adept, you will learn how to apply cord magic in a powerful but balanced, non-manipulative way.

The specific cord you have is one that was measured in vision by Decima, She Who Measures A Lifespan. The cord power was triggered in that vision, and also by the touch of the Noble One/Sandalphon as he passed over the threshold in the south. Once the cord has been triggered in vision, it slowly builds its energy through resonance with your work, and as you begin to work more actively with it, its power becomes 'fixed.' So what does it do?

Although you will learn lots of different ways of working with various cords and knots in the future, this particular cord is the measure of your life. It should be protected in a box which is kept in the south (future), and only used in two ways: either to circle the central flame, or to be wrapped about your right arm or a tool.

The cord (the Silver Thread of Life) magically externalizes your life's measure as decreed by the Fates, which in turn makes it much harder for other magicians to use magic against you to shorten your life. When a magician uses cord magic (or any other type of magic) to limit your lifespan, they externalise your lifespan through a cord and then limit it using that cord. When the cord of your fate has already been externalised, and this externalization is powerfully infused by the Fates, it obviates any such magic cast against you: there can only be one externalised measure of your lifespan in existence at any one time.

The cord also acts as a passive limiter: if you are working at an adept level and are working powerfully in service, there are times when such work can shorten your lifespan if you are not careful. Remember the hotspots in your fate pattern? If you happen to do a powerful dangerous working and it

times in with one of those fate hotspots, it can take you out. However, if you have a strong working cord of life on your right arm (your harvest arm), it will act as a limiter: any magic that seriously threatens your lifespan will be short-circuited. The magic will cease to flow, and you will be safe.

There may come a time for some magicians when they know something is likely to lessen their lifespan, but they understand that it must be done anyway, and so they will work without their cord on—the ultimate sacrifice.

The power of the cord is built slowly throughout the training of the apprentice and the initiate: when the magician works magically, they wear the cord around their right arm or they encircle the central flame with it (the alignment of the central flame and your inner flame). This passive action works through resonance: once the cord is tuned (by Decima) it is worn repeatedly in magical work, and over time its link to your fate grows in strength.

For this reason, the cord must be protected and carefully stored so that it does not become lost, damaged, or stolen. It does not matter what it looks like, how simple it is, or what colour it is: its power comes from the inner work and magical work done upon it and around it. Like all real magical tools, the cord is not symbolic: it is a strong working power tool that an everyday person would probably never give a second glance to.

Most likely there will come a time when the cord becomes damaged, lost, or broken. In such a situation, do not panic. Like all tools, the power can transfer or be renewed by the deities and powers you work with, but it is up to you to protect them as best you possibly can. Your tools can only be replaced so many times, and if you are careless or thoughtless with them, the deities will stop helping you. Deities are not your mother, and they will not wipe your butt for you. We will look at what to do in such a situation in a moment, but first here are some practical ways the cord can be worked with as an apprentice.

From now on, wrap the cord around your right arm every time you do magical ritual or visionary work. This is to connect you, your magic and the cord together deeply, while also protecting your fate. If you are going into a dangerous situation in your daily life, and it is a danger you cannot back away from, wear the cord wrapped around your right arm or wrist, or your

right leg/ankle. Do not use it lightly or flippantly in this way; only use it when you know you are going into a dangerous situation.

If you are becoming very ill, wrap the cord around your right foot (the foot that takes you into death). A few years back, I had a bout of viral meningitis and kept my cord wrapped around my right ankle until I started to win the battle. From an inner perspective, this reiterates your full potential lifespan and gives your measure to the beings that work around death and destruction.

The cord is very specific to you. It is of no use to others, and lest you think it would help a loved one if they wore it, know that by doing this you would simply swap life measures with them. While that may be tempting if, for example, your children are under threat, you have to remember that everyone has their own fate and you cannot fiddle with it in such a way. There are other more efficient ways to protect those who depend on you.

Remaking the Cord

Should your cord become lost or damaged then you need to make a new one. Make sure the fabric your cord is made out of is robust enough to do the job and will not fray. Stop all magical work except meditation and simple tuning rituals, and do not do anything else until your cord is renewed. If the cord is just damaged and not lost, place it with the new cord, wrapping them around each other for the resonance to pass from one to the other until you are ready to remake the new cord.

Revisit the ritual you did earlier on your web of fate, where Decima appeared out of the south. Go through the whole process again with your cord, and after that keep it on the south altar when you are not wearing it—preferably in a box to protect it. Burn the old cord, and place its ashes out on the ground outside.

It will take a bit of time for the new cord to build its powers back up, but it will not take as long as the first time. And try to learn the lesson from the old cord: whatever went wrong to make you damage it or lose it, try not to repeat the same mistake. If it simply fell apart, then for the new one, get a more robust cord. Always try to learn lessons from things that go wrong.

Hopefully now you will see why some types of cord magic can be so vicious—often unintentionally. In modern magic and witchcraft it is popular to employ cords and knots to force someone into a union, to tie them up, or to bind them; or to stack up power and release it though untying a knot. When you aim this sort of magic at a living being, you are directly interfering with their fate and their lifespan, even if you think it is just a simple spell. Once you have worked with the cord magically with fate, that level of power will trigger in your actions every time you work with a cord, and that can get dangerous for others, even if that is not your intention.

Cords and knots can be worked with in conjunction with nature (storms, etc.), and if you have worked for some time with the cord of fate, such cord use with nature can be powerful indeed. But that is something that comes later in your training; first you must learn the lessons of the cord's power through working with it on your own fate and life.

The Cloth

The cloth has a variety of uses. It is used to impress the fate pattern of the specific magician on their work and workspace; it is used as a cloak to protect you (it works as a shield) when you are doing more dangerous work, it can work as an altar cloth, a mobile work space, and it can also work in passive protection mode. By using the cloth as a scabbard for the sword, it becomes heavily interlinked with the power of the sword; and as it is specific to your fate, it becomes a proxy for you. The most powerful scabbard is the stone or the body of the magician, and the cloth takes your body's place as the scabbard: you and the sword become heavily tied in together, and subsequently the cloth and the sword become tightly linked. The sword's power leeches into the cloth, which holds your fate pattern: the sword guards your pattern.

As such, the cloth can be used passively in times of danger. If you are ill, spread the cloth over your bed as you sleep. If later as an adept you are working on something dangerous in service, having the cloth around your shoulders will be one of the layers of protection that will keep you safe.

The cloth can also act as a portable altar if you need to travel and work while you are away from home. Using the cloth in your magical work connects it deeply with your magical pattern, and the pattern of the workspace. When you travel, take the cloth with you and use it either as an altar cloth or as a cloth to stand on as you work. It will carry with it the tuning of the workspace, and this will make it easier for you to do your work. Check the directions of your temporary workspace and make sure the cloth lines up to the directions properly (sword image/left hand in the east, for example).

This magical use of the cloth is also the root of the myths and legends of magical cloaks and coats. At the bottom of the lesson you will find links to various articles and information on these passive tools hidden in mystical/magical myths, and one of them is about a sacred cloak. Read these articles carefully, and you will see how such myths and legends have their roots in magical use.

In the practical work below, you will work with all of these passive tools and put them into action so that you can see how they integrate into magical work.

The Stone

You should know a fair bit about the sacred, mythic, and legendary use of sacred/magical stones by now. Finding images that reflect this use of the stone are few and far between, but they are there if you hunt carefully enough. In ancient times and in many different cultures, the depiction of the stone beneath the feet symbolized the relationship between the king/queen or priest/priestess and the sacred land/mother.

The monarch or priest/priestess took on the mantle of service, and in return the sacred land supported them. This was often depicted as that person standing upon a stone, or seated with their feet upon a stone. The understanding of this degenerated down into the belief that the priest king/queen should not have their feet touch the ground, and they would therefore be depicted with a cushion beneath their feet.

This is a misunderstanding and a total reversal of the wisdom. It is only by that direct connection between the sacred king/queen and the land/

mother that the monarch ruled in balance. We also see aspects of the dynamic between mortality, the stone, and the land in Irish faery lore (Tir Na Nog), where a person is carried on a white horse into the faery realm, where they can live forever. If they return to the human world, their feet must not touch the floor (they must not get off the horse), or they will lose their immortality. (It is probably a remnant of this that plays out in the tradition of monarchs not touching the floor with their feet when ritually sitting on the throne.)

To have one's foot connected to the mother through the stone is to reiterate your mortality and offer that term of life in service/learning/governing. In return, the mother upholds your mortal life. There is a lot in ancient cultures about stones and sacredness. You have already looked at the stones directly connected to the mother, and below, at the end of the lesson, are some links to articles, a few of which are about sacred stones. If you read carefully, and with what you know of magic in mind, you will see what it was that these ancient people were doing/working with. There is one link which tells you about a stone with a footprint carved into it. The person would become king by ritually placing his foot within the footprint. This is a common Celtic theme in Britain, and you will find more instances of this king/feet/stone dynamic if you wish to research it.

Practical Work

In this practical work, you will do a ritual that is in service to the land around you. It is better for you to learn the skills of the tools by working in such a way, rather than working magically to benefit yourself (too many things can go wrong at this stage of your training). You will learn how the passive tools work in conjunction with the active tools.

Prepare your working space with the cloth on the floor and the central altar directly over the centre of the cloth. Place the tools on the relevant altars, and have a bottle of water on the west altar.

This ritual works like a tiny catalyst in a gentle but powerful way. In our modern world, we have been taught that the use of great force is best for triggering change. In magic, often the reverse is true. It is the subtle but

well-aimed and focussed action that can trigger a cascade of response, particularly when working with nature. A delicate nudge does not trigger a defensive response, but instead begins a movement that slowly grows, like ripples in a pond.

In this work, you will be used the stone, shield and cord as passive tools that enable you to transfer/mediate levels of power into an element. The use of passive tools allows you to work with greater power levels than normal and guard/protect you as you work.

THE RITUAL OF BALANCING THE WATER

Spread your cloth shield on the floor and place the central altar over the centre of the cloth. From now on, always place your shield cloth on the floor of your work space when you work. Start in the east, light the flame, and see the gates open. Bow, and move on to the next direction. Light all the lights, finishing with the central flame. Go around the directions again to tune them by spending a minute or two in each direction in stillness. Now do The Anchor ritual.

When you have finished, go around to the south altar, pick up your cord, and wrap it around your right arm. Go to the north, pick up the stone, and place it on the floor in front of the central altar on the west side. Now walk a full circle around the directions clockwise back to the west altar, fill the vessel with the water, and place the bottle beyond the threshold of the workspace.

Now go to the east altar, bow, and recite:

“I am to serve the land; I request your guidance in my words.”

Step back, bow once more, and go around the directions to the west altar. Bow, and recite:

“Through the power of the west, through the power of water, through the power of the scales, I wish to assist in the balance of the land.”

Stand in silence before the west altar. Be aware of the sword behind you in the east, of the stone in the centre, and the cloth beneath you.

Pick up the vessel. Hold it out, and recite:

“Through this vessel, may the water contain and dispense whatever is appropriate for the land, and for the water that flows upon and beneath the land, and for the water that falls from the sky. Humans have taken from this water—I give back.”

Now place the cup on the west side of the central altar. Standing with your back to the west, place your left foot upon the stone, and hold your right hand over the water. Be aware of the west gate behind you, and the contacts that stand upon the west threshold. Be aware of the east gate before you, and the contacts that stand upon the east threshold. Be aware of the stone under your left foot, and the cord around your right arm. Now still yourself. Recite:

“As a magician in service, I allow my body to be used as a bridge: I span the outer and inner worlds; through me flows whatever is necessary for the land. Powers of the west, flow through me and place whatever is necessary for the health of the waters of the land into the water contained within the vessel.”

Hold your hand firm over the water, and be aware of power flowing through you from behind you, down your right arm, and into the water in the vessel. Stand for however long is necessary until the flow has stopped (you may feel it in your right hand as heat and tingling—when that stops, drop your hand).

When the flow has finished or you think it has finished, put the vessel down on the central altar, pick up the stone, and walk a full circle around the directions. Finish in the north, turn, bow to the central flame, and sit down, holding the stone.

Clear your mind and be still. In your mind, ask the stone for guidance. You are looking for the best place to dispense the water. Think about what rivers, springs, streams, even storm drains are around you. Think of each one in turn. Do not think in terms of which is nearest or best. Make no assessment or decision; just think about each one in turn, giving equal thought to each one. Ask in your mind where this charged water is most needed, where it will work to its fullest potential. (The water needs to go into water, not onto the land.)

As you sit quietly, one location will stand out more than the others. When this happens, ask the stone in your hands, “Mother, is this the place in this area where you need the water the most?”

Be still in listening for the answer. The answer will come through your own inner senses, your emotions, or your mind. If the feeling is blank, then it is somewhere else that needs the water. If the feeling is uncomfortable, then it is not the right place. If the feeling is like a smile, then it is the right place. Take as long as you need to in order to find the right place for the water. It is not an intellectual decision—it is instinctive.

Once you know where the water needs to go, what you do next depends on where that place is. If it is on your property, or very near where you live, then leave the lights going and immediately take the vessel/water to that place.

If it is some distance from your house, you need to close the space down first. Leave the vessel on the central altar. Go around the directions starting in the east, close the gates, put out the candle, and bow. Take off your cord and place it in its box in the south, and return the stone to the north. Once everything is closed down, pour the water back into the bottle (so that you can transport it), and then wrap the cloth back around the sword.

POURING THE WATER

If the water is to be poured near your house, go out with the vessel and stand before the water that will receive it. Be aware of the air around you, the power that guides you and limits you. Be aware of the ground beneath you that upholds you, and be still. Hold the water in the vessel close to your mouth so that you can utter over the water. Recite: “I release you.” Pour the contents of the vessel into the water. Take a step back, bow to the water source, and then return to your workspace and close the directions down.

If the contents of the vessel need to be poured into water some distance from your house, then when it is time to go there (don’t wait too long to do this), take the bottle of charged water, the vessel, and your cloth scabbard with you. If possible, do this just before the height of the full moon (the day before the night of the full moon).

When you get to the water source, place the cloth around your shoulders with its markings facing into you. If there are people around, place it around you under a jacket, and if you cannot do that, have it in a backpack on your back. Pour the water into the vessel, utter the declaration of release (using the same method as above), and pour the vessel's contents out into the water. Bow to the water source, and leave.

Task

The subtle catalyst action of this ritual can work in a wide variety of ways depending on what the land and water need. Keep a record for the next six to eight weeks of any major shifts in weather, rain, flooding, etc. Sometimes the effects are almost immediate; sometimes they come a couple of months later. When they do come it can sometimes be quite dramatic, and it is always unexpected (i.e. it is not something that would normally happen, for example heavy rain in the desert), and it will be directly connected to the water source where you dispensed the charged water. Continue to keep an eye on that water source and what happens to it over the rest of the year.

If you can, go back to the water source a few times just to visit and hang out with the water. If it is a river, lake, dam, or stream, then sing or recite poetry to the spirit of the water: your voice becomes the sword that guards and limits to bring balance, and water always loves the human voice directed at it.

Also write up a summary of your experience with this ritual, and do this in your computer log. If you did return to the water and sang/talked to it, then keep a note in your journal (not your computer log) of the song, poem, or story that you uttered to the water. Use your physical hand to record your utterance to the spirit of the water.

Summary of action

To learn the technical aspects of how that ritual worked and how the tools specifically worked, let's just take a moment to look closely at how and why the ritual was put together in that way.

First you used The Anchor to tune yourself and your space in preparation for work. The more you use the Anchor before a ritual or visionary action, the stronger it will become, as each time it is used it focuses the power and the space more and more.

Then you placed the tools in their directions. This energetically reaffirms their working pattern, which will also build over time. The cloth shield on the floor soaks up the magical pattern which in turn tunes and charges it. The introduction of the water is specific to the action: you need an elemental substance that will act as a carrier for the magic, and because you were working on water courses across the land, you use water to carry the magic: you match element to element for the carrier.

Why work with water? Land is static, but water flows across the land and dispenses itself throughout the land. It sinks into the land and into the water table, and it is also evaporated into the air as a part of the weather system. It eventually flows to the sea. With these various actions, it spreads the magic far into the environment.

The placing of the water bottle outside of the work area is also important. The bottle is just a bottle: it is not being used magically, and therefore should not be in the space. Because you use it, but in a non-magical way, you must keep it non-magical and not have it within the energy pattern of the work. Other non-magical things around your working space are unaffected if you do not use them during a magical act (though they will become subtly altered by the energy). But the simple action of having it on the altar and used as a vessel for the water can potentially activate it as a magical vessel. This would just make your work untidy and confusing, so you get it out of the space when it is not being used. This is akin to proper punctuation: keep it tidy and to the point.

You will notice that the sword was kept in its directional position out of the scabbard. This is a passive action: it is there to guard and guide, but it

is your use of voice that the active principle of the sword flows through. Your voice becomes an extension of the sword, and standing upon the cloth scabbard reinforces that extension. The cloth also contains the magical space and exteriorises your own fate pattern so that the whole space becomes an extension of you.

The stone, as you will have noticed, can move around the directions: the land is everywhere beneath us. Whatever direction you are working in, if you need the action of the stone, you work with it in the main direction you are working in, which in this case was west/water/dispensing. By placing your left foot on the stone, you trigger the power of the Grindstone, which is about work and service/outputting power. If the ritual work was about weighing, harvesting, or upon your own scales, then your right foot would be placed upon the stone.

Placing your foot upon the stone grounds you in the land, connects you to the stone floor deep within the underworld, acts as a strengthener and protector, and connects you to the land as you work in service.

The cord around your arm ensures that you work within the limitations of your mortality, and at this stage of your work it bonds you to the cord and the cord to you. Together, you and the tools, altars, flames, and gates work in harmony as one team, and the constant repetition of this pattern builds it strongly until it becomes second nature to you: it becomes a strong working imprint that you can operate within.

Eventually you will get so used to the pattern and the feel of the energy that, as an adept, you will simply be able to think of that pattern, that energy, and switch it on in your head wherever you are. You will learn to work in any space, without the tools, altars, etc., and you will be able instantly to open the gates and pull the power together. This is important for an adept if they are suddenly confronted by a large tide of power or an incoming magical pattern. You could be in an airport, a shopping mall, the office, or a supermarket, and you will be able to tune instantly into the working pattern in your mind and operate from within that safe structure.

Links

To finish, here are some links for you to look at. Disregard the religious or cultural elements involved in the information: learn to look simply at the energetic or magical action (passive or otherwise) involved. Often what started as something magical became dogmatised into religious patterns, so you just need to look beyond that into the aspects of what is actually going on.

STONES FOR DIVINE CONNECTION

- Kingship Stone of Dunadd

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/scottishhistory/darkages/trails_darkages_gaels.shtml

- Sacred Stones in the Desert - Masebah

<http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=27&Issue=3&ArticleID=2>

- Cloak of protection

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrine_of_the_Cloak

- Subtle outline of the imprint of the magician into the cloak—Kings 2

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Kings+2>

WATER FOR LAND HEALING

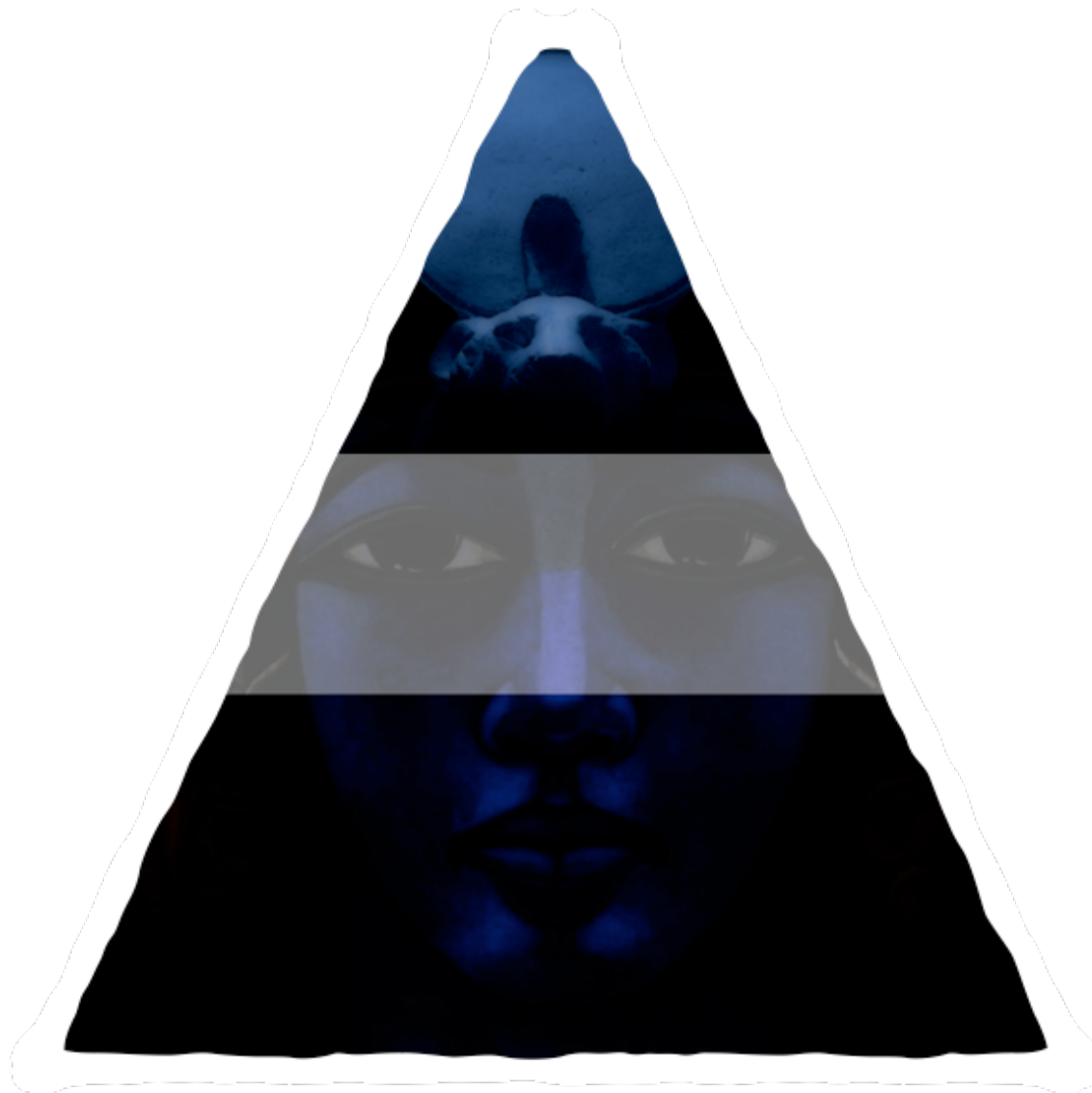
And here is a blog post by Frater Acher on magical work he did a few years ago with water to heal the land/restore balance: *‘On the use of water to heal the land, by Adept Frater Acher’*

This blog post gives you an idea of how the simple technique you just learned eventually can be transformed into deep and powerful work in service to the land. You will also notice that the work is quite natural and the magician is just a part of the process, not the conductor of the orchestra. The adept works instinctively within the patterns of magic that are trained into them; yet they are not confined by those patterns.

<http://www.theomagica.com/blog/healing-the-land-part-2.html>

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