

WHO IS
HEKATE?

*GODDESS OF WITCHES
KEEPER OF THE KEYS
DARK MOTHER
MOON MISTRESS*

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Who is Hekate?

To some she is Hecate, others Hekate. For many, she comes without a name revealing herself during times of great personal pain and loss. She is the bringer of power and healing. She spins the wheel of time, weaving her magick and mystery throughout. The fiery spark that lives in all the universe. The spark that fuels her chosen, the witches, as they weave their spells and rituals. She is the Witch Mother.

Hekate is as ancient as the spark that ignited the universe. She has been given many names and roles as humans have tried to understand her.

Witch Mother, Keeper of Keys, Crossroads Guardian and She Who Lights The Way

Hekate's many roles can seem overwhelming for newcomers to her, as can her presence. Hekate is the Anima Mundi, the fiery spark that fuels of all the universe. She is the river beneath the river. From her cave deep within the earth, she stirs her cauldron of stars that pour out to become the river which creates the ocean and then evaporates to become the stars that fall back to earth as rain. For centuries, long before the Greeks learned of her, she was known as Mother of All.

To the ancients what we now call witchcraft was medicine, thus Hekate who was Mother of All was the giver of healing. It can be challenging for our minds that are so programmed by society to see witchcraft as medicine and to understand Hekate as the bestower of this power. We also have been forced to understand medicine as only curative and disconnected from the natural world. Hekate restores the true

knowledge that medicine is all that is good for the mind, body and soul. The source is the natural world, which we are part of.

Over the thousands of years that humans have tried to comprehend Hekate, she has been assigned many roles and abilities as attempts to understand her power through our limited abilities.



HEKATE

*GODDESS OF WITCHES
KEEPER OF THE KEYS
DARK MOTHER
MOON MISTRESS
QUEEN OF THE HORDE
PROTECTOR
SACRED FIRE SOURCE*

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Some of Hekate's many roles and epithets.

Hekate: Goddess of Witches

To her chosen, Hekate is the Witch Mother, our spiritual leader from whom we came. She lights our path, protecting us even when we are unaware. Hekate abides.

If you are newly awakened to her presence, [read these tips for answering Hekate's call.](#)

She is the hidden power within her witches that is now awakening. Her powers are beyond compare. She is the Dark Mother who rules over all the universe. Her mother was the stars and her father the darkness.

Go Deeper: [Hekate's Origin Story](#)

Keeper of the Keys

Her archetypal keys represent the opening to the mysterious and her guidance along our earth-bound journeys. She is Anima Mundi, the very soul of all creation. She is the essence, the vibration and the magick. Unknowable, yet as close as our breath. To her witches, she is The Mother. Liberator. The One.

Hekate holds the keys to the unseen worlds. She stands at the juncture of the mundane and mysterious.

Go Deeper: [Hekate's Symbols: Keys - History, Meaning and Uses](#)

Triformis, Trimorphis: Hekate as The Triple Goddess

Hekate's role as Keeper of the Keys is vital to understanding her essence as Anima Mundi, the Soul of the World. Other ancient writers used this metaphor to describe her power as the Mediator between humans and the deeper world. Within the Persephone myth cycle, she replicates this archetype. She is the guardian to Persephone when she is deeply troubled, she guides her back and forth, ensuring the seasons change, and she is the keeper of the keys of wisdom and transformation.

Hekate, [Persephone](#) and [Demeter](#) form one version of the Triple Goddess. The Triple Goddess to the ancient writers represented the power of transformation, the ability to shapeshift and the seasonal progression. In this way, the Triple Goddess is Triformis (Three Formed) and Trimorphis (Three Morphed). The Triple Goddess also represented the three visible phases of the moon. Thus, Hekate as part of the Triple Goddess was often associated with Selene (Luna in Latin) and [Artemis](#) (Diana).

Go deeper: [Hekate as the Triple Goddess](#)

Hekate's Name

The Dark Mother from whose womb we are born, and to whom we must return. Goddess of Witches. Necromancer. Healer. Terrifying Queen of the Underworld. This is Hekate or Hecate. She cares not how you spell or pronounce her name. She is beyond such things.

Go Deeper: [Hekate's Name: Origins, Meanings, Pronunciations And More](#)

Hekate's Horde of Animals and Spirits

Her witches are part of her horde. This is our spiritual family of goddesses, gods and other etheric beings. Ancestors of flesh and spirit, the wrongful dead. She is the devourer of flesh, eater of filth and the unconquerable one. Her animal companions are included in the horde.



HEKATE'S ANIMALS

*DOG WOLF
SNAKE
CROW, HAWK,
GULL, OWL
DEER, BAT
SPIDER
MOTH
BEE
CAT, LION
HORSE, GOAT, BULL,
BOAR*

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Hekate's animals. Look for them appearing in your dreams and waking life. [/caption]

[Go Deeper: Hekate's Horde: Spirits, The Restless Dead And Witchcraft](#)

Hekate's Witchcraft

Associated with ancient medicine, from healing of the mind to inducing madness in those who attempt to abuse her, Hekate herself and her witches have always practiced witchcraft that seeks to bless her chosen and banish those who harm. She is the fearless guide who resides in the spaces between the world of humans and the world of spirits, offering us a way for spiritual transformation. She resides at the crossroads where we transcend the material to dive into the unseen river that is her realm. For all her otherworldly roles, she is also Enodia, which translates as "The Way," but symbolically refers to her powers over the civilized world, including roads and perhaps even waste management. Thus, her medicine is that of both the world of spirits and the mundane.

Go Deeper: [Hekate: Enter The Cauldron of Rebirth](#)



HEKATE'S SPELLS

ABUNDANCE
BANISHING
BINDING
BLESSING
CHILDREN
CREATIVITY
HEALING
MAGICK
POWER
RECOVERY
SOVEREIGNTY
STRENGTH
WOMEN

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A basic spell is to light a candle with a sigil of Hekate and then envision your intention being blessed by her.

Hekate's Garden: The Poison That Heals And The Witch

What is for certain is that Hekate's Witches have always been associated with magick, medicine and mystery. We are the dangerous sorceresses whose herbals bring healing or poisoning, depending on our needs.

Hekate's eternal daughters, Medea and Circe, brought forward the practice of pharmakeia, plant spirit medicine. In the early myths, these stories are of healing, while the later ones twist their tales into spiteful vengeance of out-of-control wild women..

Go Deeper: [Hekate's Garden, Botanical Magic and Pharmakeia](#)



HEKATE'S GARDEN

*ACONITE
BAY
BASIL
DITTANY
FOXGLOVE
GARLIC, LAVENDER
MANDRAKE,
MUGWORT
OAK, PENNYROYAL
WILLOW
YARROW*

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Some of the plant spirits in Hekate's Garden.

Hekate, Women, The Marginalized and Children

The history of Hekate is the history of women, especially those of us who are deemed witches. For some of us, we truly are, but many of the women persecuted were not. They were simply independent, unruly [outlaws](#) of their times. Because of the entwinement between how Hekate is portrayed in historical records and the patriarchal disempowerment of women, there is a necessity to step beyond the history to learn from our ancestors and to listen to our souls. However, the history provides rich detail while reminding us that we must always be wary of the powerful.

Go deeper: [The Rise of Hekate and Her Witches](#)

Hekate's strong benevolence towards women extends to their children in her role as Kourotrophos, Guardian of Children. Ancient mothers would adorn their offspring with sacred cords that protected them from harm. In our modern times, Hekate's power as a protector of the vulnerable extends to all those marginalized by the powerful.

Go deeper: [Hekate, Guardian of the Children: Ritual of Blessing, Protection and Rescue](#)

and [Hekate: Guardian of the Marginalized](#)

Hekate's Companions

Women were suspect, and still are. The system sought to rob us of our power. Hekate as an archetype of the powerful woman/witch has

endured a great deal at the hands of men, whether through their words or actions. Her eternal witches, such as [Circe](#) and [Medea](#), have also been defiled throughout history. They, too, are emerging as mighty forces today. For me, they are my closest spirit guides. They speak to me of the truth about our Witch Mother, which is often in stark contrast to the history. Hekate is deeply connected to several other goddesses such as Artemis (Diana), Persephone, Demeter, and Cybele. She is also linked through modern witches to goddesses such as The Morrigan, Freya and Lilith.



HEKATE'S COMPANIONS

*PERSEPHONE
ARTEMIS (DIANA)
DEMETER (CERES)
CIRCE (KIRKE)
MEDEA
OTHER DARK
GODDESSES LIKE THE
MORRIGAN AND LILITH
GHOSTS, SHADOWS*

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Some of the goddesses closely connected to Hekate

Hekate and the Darkness

She is The Star Walker, reigning over the night from above, yet she is also the one who wanders the night to rescue lost souls, while bringing vengeance to those who defile her beloveds. She is the Dark Mother who offers respite to the weary and the banisher of evil.

Go Deeper: [Deeper Into The Darkness: Hekate and Soul Retrieval](#)

Hekate and the Dark Moon

The dark moon, the night of the astrological new moon, has been sacred to Hekate's Witches since ancient times. On this night, sacred rites are performed in her honor.

Go Deeper: [Honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon: Suggestions for Rituals, Correspondences and Offerings for The Deipnon](#)

Hekate and the Moon

Indeed to the ancients the moon was under Hekate's domain. In addition to her association with the dark moon, she was revered as a Moon Goddess. The moon's deep association with women and witchcraft and the goddesses of both, further illustrates the complexities of Hekate's vast powers.

Go Deeper: [Hekate and the Moon.](#)

Hekate's Wheel: She Is The Weaver of Time On Which We Tread

Hekate's Wheel, associated with her since ancient days, has also been referred to as the strophalos and is associated with the iynx. This spinning wheel is the symbolic representation of her as the Anima Mundi who creates all, including time and our fates. She has governance over The Fates, who are part of her horde.

[Go Deeper: Hekate's Symbols: Wheel - History, Meaning and Uses](#)

Hekate and the Moon

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Go Deeper: [Hekate and the Moon.](#)



HEKATE'S CORRESPONDENCES

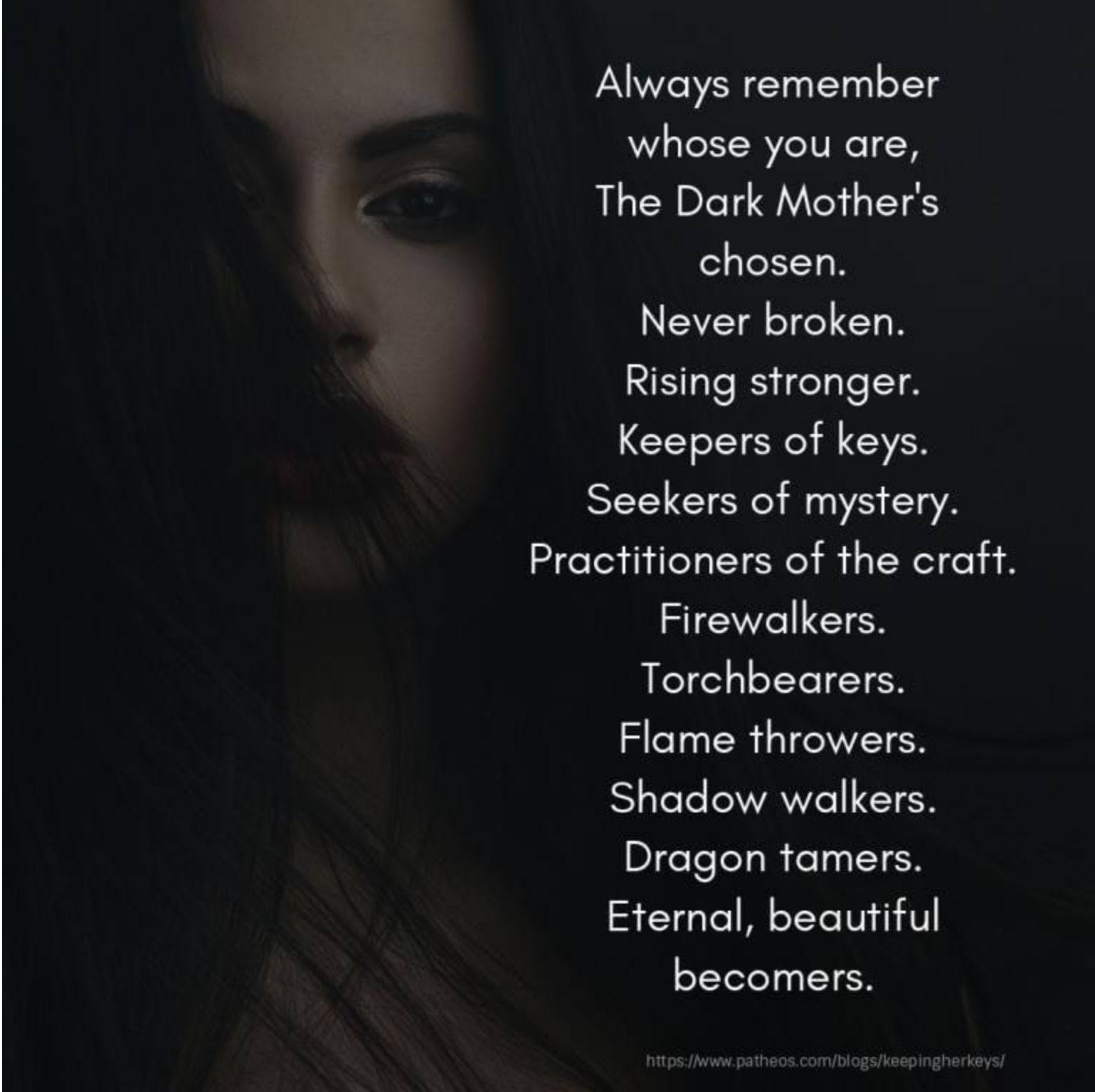
*BLACK, WHITE, RED
BLUE, YELLOW.
SILVER, GOLD.
NUMBERS: 3, 7, 13.
MONTH: NOVEMBER.
PEARL, SAFFIRE, RUBY.
OBSIDIAN,
MOONSTONE, JASPER.
DARK MOON.
CROSSROADS.
FIRE. KEYS.*

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Use these correspondences to summon Hekate

Her Witches Are Her Chosen

We return to Hekate for she is the immovable yet always evolving soul of the witch. There is no separation between her and her kin. Certainly not a goddess for everyone. Her witches know whose they are. We know our time has come.



Always remember
whose you are,
The Dark Mother's
chosen.
Never broken.
Rising stronger.
Keepers of keys.
Seekers of mystery.
Practitioners of the craft.
Firewalkers.
Torchbearers.
Flame throwers.
Shadow walkers.
Dragon tamers.
Eternal, beautiful
becomers.

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/keepingherkeys/>

Our awakening is now. Remember whose you are.

Go Deeper: [Together We Rise](#)

Historical Hekate

The origins of Hekate lie in the mists of the distant past. The most likely beginning of Hekate was in Asia Minor and parts of Eastern Europe. From these regions, her cult spread to Ancient Greece where she was viewed as a Titan. Unlike the rest of her Titanic pantheon, she wasn't killed by the upstart Olympians. Instead Zeus gave her dominion over land, sea and sky, according to Hesiod's Theogony (approximately 8th century BCE).

The Ancient Greeks worshiped Hekate in various ways, notably she was seen as a matron watching over households. It is from this role that the common contemporary practice of giving her offerings on the [dark moon](#) grew. In ancient Greece, a Hekate's Supper was left out, usually at a three-way crossroads, to seek her favor over a household for the coming month. Her association with the number three extended to her being viewed as a triple goddess.

Go deeper: [Hekate's Library: 13 Essential Titles](#)

Ancient Hekate's Many Roles

From the ancient sources, we know that Hekate was seen as a [liminal goddess](#), standing between worlds, particularly at the threshold of life and death. She was given many (over 200) [epithets](#) including Mother of All, Queen, Liberator, Mistress of Corpses, and [World Soul](#). The variety of the titles bestowed upon her by the ancients often appears contradictory. We need to keep in mind two things. One is that the ancient writers held vastly divergent views of Hekate. The other is that Hekate has always been a complex goddess with multiple roles and abilities.

As the patriarchy grew in power, and as Christianity spread, Hekate was redacted, defiled and minimized by those in command. Where she was once Hesiod's all powerful goddess, to whom Zeus succumbed, she became an evil crone.

Go deeper: [Hekate: Goddess of Our Time](#)

Torch Bearing Goddess of the Underworld

During this time, her image as a goddess of the underworld was also born. In the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Hekate answers Persephone's cries when no one else does. She becomes Persephone's guide between the Underworld and the human one, using her [torches](#) to light the way along the journey. Hekate as a torch-bearer or lamp-carrier became one of the dominant themes of her depictions during ancient times.



Lamp in the form of a bust of Hekate. Greek Hellenistic Period. 2nd–1st century B.C. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston[/caption]

The Importance of Ancient Hekate

While we will never know for certain the extent of her adoration among the ancient Greeks, there is evidence suggesting that she was an important goddess, particularly with common people. In addition, there

are many ancient coins, statues, and other works of art depicting Hekate during this period.

Go deeper: [Hekate's Library: 13 Essential Titles](#)

Writings About Ancient Hekate

The Greek Magical Papyri (PGM), an ancient text combining Greek, Roman and Egyptian deities, portrays Hekate as an all-purpose goddess. In many spells, she is addressed as everything from the bringer of beginnings to the mistress of corpses. In the *PGM* she is clearly seen as a goddess of the moon. There are other sources of evidence indicating that she was seen by some as a triple-moon goddess.

The Hekate of *The Chaldean Oracles*, written after the earlier texts, is a complex figure who is seen as The World Soul. As such, she acts as a sort of protective membrane between the human world and the realms. She is seen as a savior who helps human souls ascend.

This is the Hekate of the ancient world. If you are interested in reading more about [ancient Hekate](#), there are many ways to going about this. You can sort through the translations of *The Greek Magical Papyri* or *The Chaldean Oracles* yourself. Sorita D'Este's book *Circle for Hekate* provides a great summary of historical Hekate.

Historical Hekate: Early Christian Era - 19th Century

As Christianity spread, the early propagandists preached on the evilness of Hekate as part of their joint campaign against women and the older deities. Hekate underwent a striking narrowing of her abilities. While the ancients revered her as a goddess with many characteristics and abilities,

the image that emerged afterwards is limited to that of an underworld goddess. One example of this restricted view of Hekate is found in *Pistis Sophia* where she is portrayed as basically the queen of hell. Shakespeare's portrayal of her in *Macbeth* epitomized this version of Hekate:



Robert Thew. *Macbeth*, Act IV, Scene 1.

While Shakespeare presented a version of Hekate and witches, it is unlikely that this reflected how witches understood and experienced Hekate during these times. We will never know what it was like for her witches through history, but they whisper to us in our dreams.

Go deeper: [Connecting With Our Witch Ancestors](#)

20th Century Hekate

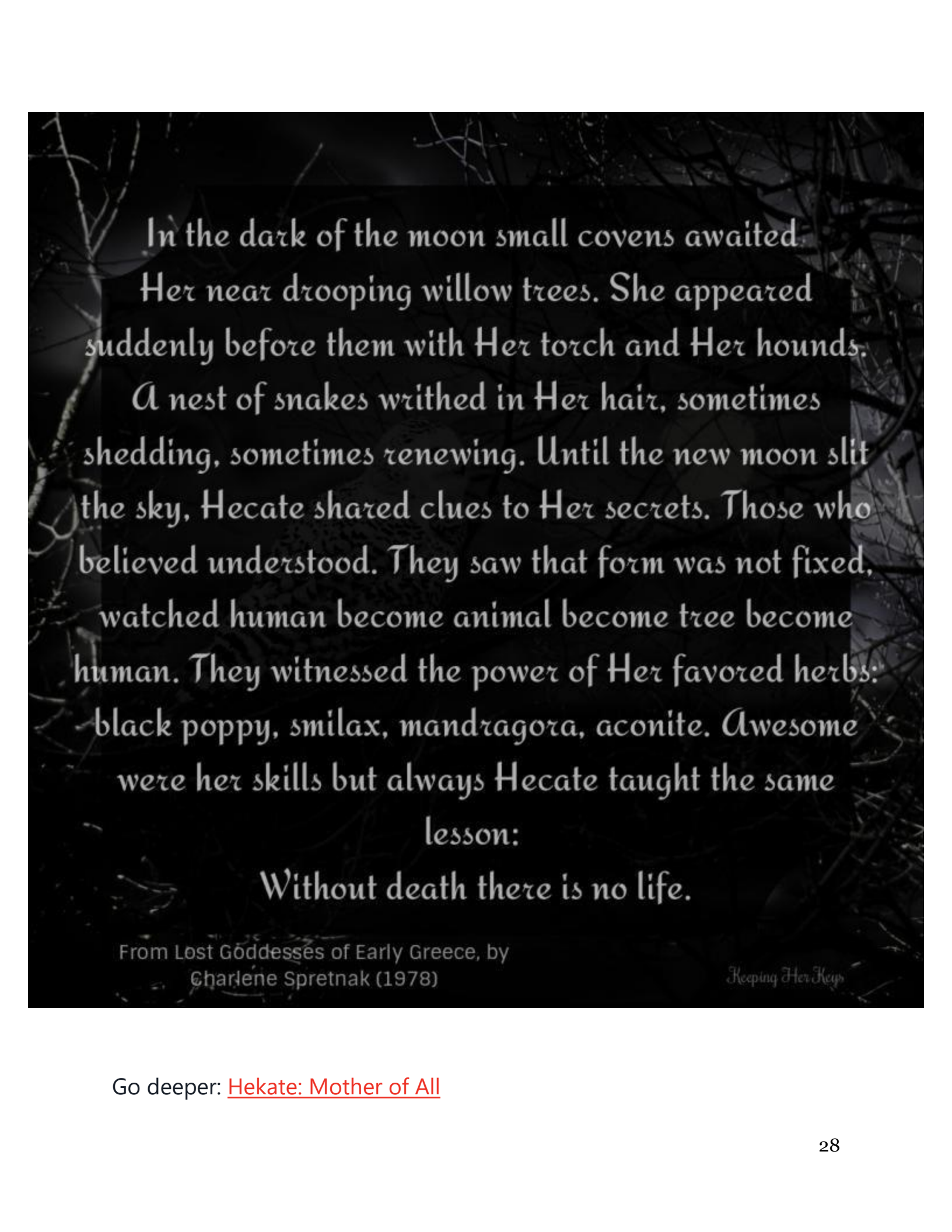
In the early 20th century Hekate's limited capacity as an underworld goddess was further reinforced through the works of Aleister Crowley and Gerald Gardner. Hekate (usually spelled the Latin way: Hecate) became widely known as The Goddess of Witchcraft in neo-pagan circles. It is obvious from the lives and works of these men, and others like them, that they held deeply troubling views of women. While their words may be inspiring, they are tainted by their spirits of depravity, misogyny and outright abuse. Our understanding of Hekate must be liberated from such entanglements, while acknowledging the beauty of some of these portrayals.

Maiden-Mother-Crone

Somewhere along the way, Hekate as a crone became a commonly held belief among neo-pagans. In addition to this interpretation of her as an individual, she was also placed in the "Maiden Mother Crone" tripartite goddess structure as the crone or as the entire trio. While the veracity of these applications of Hekate has been debated, there is ancient evidence that solidifies her as a maiden. Her role as a mother is reinforced through ancient epithets, such as Pammator, and there are a few tales portraying her as a biological mother. Accompanying this new application of Hekate's ancient characterization as a triple goddess was the Wiccan association of her with the moon.

Reclaiming Hekate

Thus, the 20th century witches understanding of Hekate was limited to two roles. As part of the Triple Goddess imagery she was often celebrated as the wise woman. In her dark goddess incarnation, she could be given homage as Queen of the Witches and summoned for certain types of witchcraft. Feminist scholars and goddess reclaimers began to speak the truth of Hekate through their rituals and writings, such as in this beautiful passage:



In the dark of the moon small covens awaited
Her near drooping willow trees. She appeared
suddenly before them with Her torch and Her hounds.
A nest of snakes writhed in Her hair, sometimes
shedding, sometimes renewing. Until the new moon slit
the sky, Hecate shared clues to Her secrets. Those who
believed understood. They saw that form was not fixed,
watched human become animal become tree become
human. They witnessed the power of Her favored herbs:
black poppy, smilax, mandragora, aconite. Awesome
were her skills but always Hecate taught the same
lesson:
Without death there is no life.

From *Lost Goddesses of Early Greece*, by
Charlene Spretnak (1978)

Keeping Her Keys

Go deeper: [Hekate: Mother of All](#)

Contemporary Hekate: The Dark Mother Rising

Today, many Hekatean witches view Hekate as the Dark Mother, the Goddess of Witches and Anima Mundi. This understanding of Hekate was greatly informed by the scholarship about her ancient origins that occurred in the late 20th century, notably S.I. Johnston's *Hekate Soteira*. As the 21st century began, other writers were presenting alternative ideas about Hekate, too. Accompanying the expansion of academic knowledge has been the surge of spiritual writings about her. Thomas Moore wrote of her in *Dark Nights of the Soul*. This is one example of the many deeper explorations of Hekate. Alongside these currents of awakening, many pagan and witchcraft traditions include Hekate. In popular culture, she has been featured in many books, comics, movies and songs. ***The Dark Mother is Rising***.

Modern Traditions

Sometimes Hekate is the focus of a certain path, like with the Covenant of Hekate's approach to her as the soul of the world, but other times she is part of a framework rather than the focus. Some of these perspectives are more intellectual and theurgical, while others are more witchcraft based. What these approaches have in common is that Hekate is a mighty goddess and that she is a powerful magickal force available to practitioners. Another shared thread is that all these perspectives use the historical interpretations of Hekate in developing their understanding.

Go deeper: [Not My Hekate: Reflections On Different Views](#)

The Coven of Hekate: The Keeping Her Keys Tradition

The Keeping Her Keys Tradition, of which I am the founder, views Hekate as The Mother, the fiery soul of the world whose magick, medicine and mystery is in all creation. She is The Dark Mother from whom we are born and to whom we return for our medicine, represented by her keys, her plants, her torches and her wheel. We are a Coven of Hekate dedicated to pursuing the sacred within through The Mother, and for sharing our medicine with those who seek it. Our work is that of the ancestors to bring healing and power to those who return to Hekate.

Join at keepingherkeys.mn.co

[Why Hekate And Her Witches Are Necessary Now More Than Ever](#)

Summoning Hekate

Should you feel called by Hekate, go wisely, yet boldly forth. She welcomes the sincere and inflicts wrath upon the insincere. She knows what lies in our souls, there is no [deception](#) possible.

Go deeper: [Evoking The Dark Mother: A Ritual For Summoning Hekate](#)

Understanding Hekate

I hope this brief overview of Hekate has made you curious to learn more about her, both in the intellectual sense and in terms of truly understanding her. Researching Hekate, whether through direct study of the modern interpretations of the ancient texts or by reading others'

takes on these writings is a very worthwhile undertaking. To me, there is a big difference between knowing *about* Hekate and knowing her.

Go deeper: [Diving Into The Unseen River: Ways To Deepen Your Connection To Hekate And Strengthen Your Witchcraft](#)

Hekate Abides, We Return

There are many ways to experience Hekate, and there are countless ways to understand her. We may be drawn to one aspect of hers (or a handful) or we may feel connected to Hekate in her totality. We may have an initial experience with Hekate where she presents herself in a complete vision that is entirely experiential, or we may experience her after we have already read a lot. The more we experience Hekate, the more we understand her. This understanding enables us to become better at witchcraft as we develop the skills necessary to involve her and her energies in our workings.

She abides. We return to her crossroads as we awaken,

Claiming the keys to our own sacred inner temple.

[Hekate's Serpent Medicine And The Awakening Of The Inner Snake Goddess](#)

Complete Index of Articles About Hekate