

HEKATE'S WHEEL: THE STROPHALOS AS MAP OF ALL REALMS AND SELVES

A Modern Hekatean Witchcraft guidebook by Cyndi Brannen

Not for sharing outside of Covina

I am the Wheel that turns through all worlds.

I am the spiral that descends and ascends.

I am the labyrinth that leads to the center.

I am the flame that burns at the heart of all.

I am the Strophalos—Hekate's living symbol.

I am the witch who walks the wheel.

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The Strophalos—Hekate's Wheel—is far more than a simple symbol. It is a complete cosmological map that contains within it all three realms, all three selves, and the Sacred Flame that unifies them. When we gaze upon this ancient symbol, we are looking at nothing less than a representation of the entire universe and our place within it.

The Parts of the Strophalos

The Strophalos consists of three distinct spiraling sections that form a labyrinth around a central point. Each of these three parts corresponds directly to one of the eternal realms and one of our three selves:

The Outer Labyrinth — Lower Self/Underworld/Sea: The outermost spiral represents the realm of Sea, the Underworld, and our Lower Self. This is the path of descent into the depths, the journey into emotion, intuition, and the mysteries that lie beneath surface consciousness. The black color symbolizes the primordial darkness, the womb of transformation, and the deep waters of the subconscious. Here we encounter Hekate *Chthonia*, *Einalia*, *Bythios*—the keeper of the depths.

The Middle Labyrinth — Middle Self/Middle World/Land: The central spiral represents the realm of Land, the Middle World, and our Middle Self. This is the path we walk in our daily lives, the crossroads where we make our choices, the intersection of inner truth and outer expression. The red color symbolizes the blood of life, the passion of action, the vitality of manifestation in the material world. Here we encounter Hekate *Enodia*, *Hegemonen*, *Propylaia*—the guide at the crossroads.

The Inner Labyrinth — Higher Self/Upper World/Sky: The innermost spiral represents the realm of Sky, the Upper World, and our Higher Self. This is the path of ascent toward the divine, the journey into higher consciousness, intellect, and the greater mysteries. The white color symbolizes purity of spirit, clarity of vision, and the light of gnosis. Here we encounter Hekate *Ourania*, *Kleidoukhos*, *Noeros*—the key holder who unlocks the celestial mysteries.

The Central Star — Sacred Flame/Spirit/Integrated Self: At the very center of the Strophalos burns a star or sacred source point. This represents the Sacred Flame—the fire that flows through all three realms, animating and unifying them. The purple or silver color symbolizes the divine spark, the World Soul (*Anima Mundi*), and Hekate as *Lampadios*, *Hieros Pyr*, *Pyriboulos*. This is the essence of witchcraft itself, the point where all paths converge and from which all creation emanates.

The Multidimensional Reality of the Strophalos

What we typically see when we look at the Strophalos is a flat, two-dimensional representation—a symbol drawn on paper or carved into stone. But this is merely a shadow of what the Strophalos actually is. The flat image we work with is a flattened version of a multidimensional, spinning sphere that contains the entire universe.

Imagine the Strophalos not as a flat wheel but as a dynamic, three-dimensional sphere constantly rotating through space and time. The three spiraling paths are not simply lines on a surface but energetic currents flowing through multiple dimensions simultaneously. The labyrinth spirals inward and outward, upward and downward, forward and backward through time—all at once.

This spinning sphere is the cosmic cauldron itself, the container of all existence. When Hekate holds her wheel, she holds the entire universe in her hands. When we meditate upon the Strophalos, we are not simply looking at a symbol—we are gazing into the structure of reality itself.

The Serpentine Path and the Center Point

The Strophalos symbolizes the labyrinth of life—the serpentine path we walk as we journey through the three realms. Unlike a maze with dead ends and wrong turns, a labyrinth has only one path that winds its way to the center. This is the path of the witch: spiraling through the Lower Self's depths, the Middle Self's crossroads, and the Higher Self's heights, always moving toward the center where the Sacred Flame burns.

The center point is crucial. It represents the still point at the heart of all motion, the source from which all emanates and to which all returns. This is where the three realms meet and become one, where the three selves integrate into unified consciousness, where the witch stands in complete alignment with Hekate's power.

In ancient symbolism, the center of the Strophalos is often depicted as a star or a flame. This is the *Hieros Pyr*—the Sacred Fire that Hekate tends. It is the divine spark within each of us, the eternal flame that can never be extinguished. When we reach the center of the labyrinth, we discover that we ourselves are the flame we have been seeking.

Walking the Wheel: A Meditation Practice

You can use the Strophalos as a meditation tool to journey through the three realms and integrate your three selves:

1. Begin by gazing at the Strophalos, allowing your eyes to trace the outer spiral (black/Lower Self/Sea). Feel yourself descending into the depths, connecting with your emotions, intuition, and magickal power. Breathe into your root center.
2. Move your attention to the middle spiral (red/Middle Self/Land). Feel yourself standing at the crossroads, aware of your actions and choices in the material world. Breathe into your heart center.
3. Shift your focus to the inner spiral (white/Higher Self/Sky). Feel yourself ascending toward higher consciousness, opening to the mysteries and divine wisdom. Breathe into your crown and third eye.
4. Finally, rest your attention on the central star (purple/silver/Sacred Flame). Feel the fire flowing through all three spirals, unifying them into one. Experience yourself as the integrated witch, the complete vessel for Hekate's magick.
5. Visualize the entire Strophalos beginning to spin, becoming a multidimensional sphere. You are at the center, and the three realms spiral around you. You are both the center point and the entire wheel—microcosm and macrocosm united.

The Strophalos in Ritual Work

Incorporate the Strophalos into your practice by:

- Drawing it on your altar or workspace, using the appropriate colors for each section
- Tracing it in the air with your finger or athame before ritual work
- Visualizing it spinning within your body, with the center point at your heart
- Meditating on it to understand which realm or self needs attention
- Using it as a mandala for deep contemplation of Hekate's mysteries
- Placing offerings at the center point to honor the Sacred Flame

Incorporating The Realms and Their Colors Into The Strophalos

Working with the colors of the Strophalos is a way to integrate the realms and selves into the strophalos, deepening your connection to each realm and self:

Black (Outer Spiral): Use black candles, stones (obsidian, black tourmaline), or cloth when working with your Lower Self, emotions, intuition, or Underworld journeys. Black represents the fertile void, the womb of creation, the depths where transformation begins.

Red (Middle Spiral): Use red candles, stones (carnelian, red jasper), or cloth when working with your Middle Self, taking action, manifestation, or crossroads decisions. Red represents the blood of life, passion, vitality, and the courage to walk your path.

White (Inner Spiral): Use white candles, stones (clear quartz, selenite), or cloth when working with your Higher Self, spiritual connection, or seeking divine wisdom. White represents purity, clarity, illumination, and the light of gnosis.

Purple/Silver (Center Point): Use purple or silver candles, stones (amethyst, moonstone), or cloth when working with integration, the Sacred Flame, or calling upon Hekate's complete presence. Purple represents the divine spark and mystical union, while silver represents the moon's light and Hekate's torch-bearing nature.

The Living Symbol: The Strophalos is not a static image but a living, breathing representation of the cosmos and your own being. Each time you work with it, you are activating the connection between the macrocosm (the universe) and the microcosm (yourself). You are the Strophalos—the three realms spiral through you, the Sacred Flame burns at your core, and Hekate's power flows through every aspect of your being.

The Strophalos as Gateway

In advanced practice, the Strophalos becomes a gateway—a portal through which you can travel between the realms. By focusing on different sections of the wheel, you can shift your consciousness to the corresponding realm and self. The outer spiral takes you to the Underworld depths, the middle spiral grounds you in the Middle World, the inner spiral lifts you to the Upper World, and the center point integrates all three.

This is why the Strophalos is often called Hekate's Wheel—it is the mechanism by which she moves between the realms, and it is the tool she offers us to do the same. When we understand the Strophalos, we understand the structure of reality itself. When we embody the Strophalos, we become the crossroads, the labyrinth, and the flame.

Remember: The Strophalos is not something you study—it is something you become. Every time you breathe, you are walking the spiral path: inhaling down into the depths of your Lower Self, exhaling up through your Higher Self, with your heart at the crossroads holding it all together. The wheel is already turning within you. Your work is not to create this sacred geometry but to recognize that you have always been it. When you feel lost in the labyrinth of life, remember there are no wrong turns, only the spiraling path that always leads home to the flame at your center. You are not seeking the Strophalos—you are it, spinning through the cosmos, holding all three realms in your bones, blood, and breath.

May the Strophalos guide your journey through the three realms, may it illuminate the path of your three selves, and may the Sacred Flame at its center burn eternal within you.

