

FRIULIAN WITCHCRAFT LESSON 1

Introduction to Friulian Witchcraft

Who is Magne Nere?

I'm a born and raised living in the morenic hills leading to the alps, and 2022 marks my 20th year of continuous practice and research.

I'm a third generation witch: the woman who initiated me (who was not my mother and didn't have kids at the time) was initiated by her grandmother. This happens quite often: witchcraft can skip generations and also get out of a family line for lack of a suitable heir.

Every generation adds and changes something.

I'm not saying this to imply I have blue blood: I'm saying this to let you know some of these practices are decade old and have been tested and applied under many different circumstances.

I'm also a professional Channel, healer and medium. All of these skills were used to enrich the lessons.

The lessons will include basic training on purification, protection, healing, dreamwork, spiritwork and more as older lessons are being revamped. Monographs will also be a thing: one shot, usually much bigger lessons focusing on a specific subject.

I decided not to call it a "course", as teachings are ongoing and can change overtime and also because there is so much material and so many techniques on different levels that organising them in a single course wouldn't work.

Lessons are built to be generally independent unless the description says otherwise.

Courses focusing on specific subjects are also in the making.

Last thing before I begin: browse my website and find me on social media for readings, long a short term coachings and personalised lessons.

Geographical and Historical setting

Where is Friuli?

Friuli (Friuli Venezia Giulia) is a region in the **north-east corner of Italy**, bordering with Austria, Slovenia and the Adriatic sea.

More specifically, the hub of Friulian Witchcraft is in the mountains of Carnia, in the flats above the village of **Cercivento**, where witches

historically meet for sabbats (pictured below: Plan das Stries – The Witches' flat)



History:

Friulian history is very complex and hard to sum up in a clear way, so the

one I'm giving is a simplified version.

Friuli has an extremely long and layered history that goes back to the first

Indoeuropean migrations in 1500 BC ,is

then molded by the presence of **Celtic**

populations and, around 500 CE, by the

arrival of Germanic tribes that originated by the baltic sea and migrated through Europe.

In the middle ages, **Friuli was ruled by a**

Bishop-Prince called Patriarca, whose

court was german speaking and a

cultural melting pot for artist, writers and great minds of the time.



The sequence of ruling cultures, its relative freedom and the contact with Slavic populations from Slovenia, gave Friuli an **UNIQUE CULTURAL CONTEXT** freely forming up until 16th century, when the Council of Trento marked a stricter set of rules for Christian worship and Heresy.

Inquisition arrived relatively late and was, for a long time, baffled by the complexity of knowledge of healers (who would never call themselves “witches”) and the Benandanti (“those who walk the good path”, a class of magic folk unique to Friuli, who worked healing and opposed to evil and chaotic magic practitioners in order to protect the land and its abundance.

(more on the history of Friuli, its people and stories in lesson 5)

Friuli also has its own language alongside Italian, based on Latin with Germanic influences.

The existence of this peculiar context also means that **there is no such thing as an “originary ancient cult” of Friuli**, as often Italian pre-Christian cultures are sold, but a series of influences that contributed in creating something unique and relevantly different from the rest of Italy and especially the southern regions.

WHAT IS FRIULIAN WITCHCRAFT?

Friulian witchcraft is, first of all, an *ecstatic* form of witchcraft, which means that **a lot of the work is done in altered states of consciousness or during out of the body experiences.**

It is also an *initiatic* form of witchcraft: it requires initiation, it has secrets shared among initiates and is orally transmitted from witch to witch.

Loosely using terms that are borrowed from other traditions, we can say that **Friulian Witchcraft is a combination of hedge witchcraft, fence crossing and some shamanism.**

“Hedge” is an old name defining the land in between two villages: a liminal place like swamps and caves that marks, symbolically speaking, the space where the world of the living and the world of the dead meet.



Being a hedge witch means taking care of that space and being able to communicate with both sides of the threshold. Mediumship activity is therefore a key subject in the tradition, and so is helping the dead cross over: the gift of talking with spirits always comes with obligations (More about this in lesson 6 and 7).

Fence Crossing, also called “hedge riding”, refers to the ability to travel to other worlds and has deep roots in the history of germanic tribes.

There is in fact a passage from the Poetic Edda called *“Havamal”*, possibly written around the year 900, in which Odin lists the spells he knows, one of which being the following:

“A tenth I know: when at night I see the witches (fence crossers) play in the air, I can so arrange it that they go astray from their proper shapes and proper thoughts”



When it comes to fence crossing, it’s fundamental to keep in mind that there are infinite other worlds and infinite ways to access them and that wandering without a proper training can be extremely dangerous: you will never know if something has come back with you, or if the person who came back is actually “the same who went”. In fact, as Odin said, **you might even not come back at all.**

Being able to cross the fence also comes with the huge responsibility of being a keeper of the “border”: taking care of it, knowing what else crosses and why, but also know where something ends and something else begins, **where the threshold is between light and dark, life and death, right and wrong.**

It requires a very stern ethic approach and great consciousness: there are dangers in every world and even more so where worlds connect and reality is thin.

Hedge riding can be done both in an altered state of mind or, as is more traditionally described, in sleep, making dreamwalking another fundamental part of Friulian Witchcraft.

An infinite number of situations can be experienced through dreaming: traveling to other worlds, communing with the dead, making and breaking spells, fighting spirit attachments and demons, meeting with other witches, spirit guides and deities, diagnosing illness and operating healing.

For this reason, I dedicated two lessons (so far) to dreamwork only: lesson 4 and 8.

Lastly, I think everybody who is going to read this file is familiar with the rather problematic and abused term

“**shamanism**”: Friulian Witchcraft has aspects that can be traced back to Siberian prehistoric shamanism, which is tightly related to North American Native shamanism, possibly due to people migrating from a continent to another during the ice age. So, while we use this term very carefully, this is not an appropriation situation.

We can therefore say that Friulian Witchcraft has a deep relationship with the land, both physical and spiritual.

Agricultural festivities, taking place around the same dates of wiccan solar sabbats, are still very much felt and celebrated under a thin layer of Christian sincretism, with solstices in particular being still celebrated by lighting bonfires in a way reminiscent of old celtic and pre-roman traditions.

FRIULIAN MAGIC:

Of course, Friulian Witchcraft is also **“Making Magic”**: the art and technique of modifying reality (or its perception) in order to achieve a person’s goals.



Like many older rural traditions, it **doesn’t require a complex set of rituals** and tools: it works everywhere and with anything as long as one is mindful of the rules. Also, being it an ecstatic form of witchcraft makes it possible for the (very!) experienced witch to cast spells without any tool at all, during an out of body experience or in an altered state of consciousness.

The most important feature is therefore its adaptability to context and means.

Historically, traditional magic responded to the specific needs of the population (as it still does today) with the use of spells called “preenti” that involved prayers to God and the Saints and are considered to be God’s power and will flowing through the healer’s hands.

In the past couple of generations, though, **witchcraft evolved to meet new needs and a different perception of (mostly pagan) spirituality** and I therefore need to make a necessary disclaimer.

ROOTS, TRADITION, NEW PRACTICES.

While having been initiated and having learned most of the basis of my practices in the traditional oral way and still honoring that as the core of my practice, in my evolution I started to incorporate skills and abilities that were not transmitted to me, like channelling at a professional level, mediumship and a more complex study of magic.

I create modern solutions for modern people with a technique and

mindset rooted in my tradition.

This opens a debate on the authenticity of some of my everyday practices as I don't rely on the Remedies enough to fit the "traditional" (and a bit folkloric) image of the witch but rather update them and elevate them to a higher level of potential, making them effective in the modern times. We need to bear in mind an concept that is extremely important when we approach the study of a traditional practice.

MAGIC IS ALIVE.

Magic grows and transforms through the people actually doing it.

Every woman who was taught and transmitted magic added some of her abilities, her knowledge, to it.

No generation stayed the same as the one before.

Moreover, the way we intellectually understand magic and spirituality has changed.

17th century witches didn't know the term "out of body experience" or "astral travel", but their souls still left their bodies to fight, learn and meet with others as they were asleep.

The fact that we might call this with another name, or that we studied the dynamics of dreams, doesn't make our experience less valid than theirs.



We now have a wider understanding of the dynamics behind the Remedies, the sabbat and Magic in general.

We have a non-Christian spirituality (often. I personally do) that is aligned with some phases of History (g.e. La Signora del Buon Gioco, about which I will talk in the future) and less with others (Having a special dispensation from the Parrish to use your "preenti" after declaring they are God's power and not yours).

We honor our roots but we must not think of them as the only authentic option, that must not be sullied with anything modern.

Roots are fundamental but they don't mirror the reality we actually, really live in.

Magic changes as our needs change: it's rare, nowadays, that we find our household's well being in jeopardy because our cow stopped giving milk, but there are equivalents to those concerns that are very real in our everyday life: bills, for example. Or having a steady income.

To sum it up: roots are essential, we need them.

But we also need to move forward, learn new Things, ENRICH OUR MAGIC with new knowledge to keep it working.

Magic is alive, magic evolves because it's made by people for people. Let's not get stuck for the sake of old times and arbitrary authenticity.

Moreover, as Jason Miller explained very well in a recent article, **authenticity can take different forms:** there can be **historical authenticity**, stating that only the oldest recorded remedies are valid.

There can be **cultural authenticity**, that reflects the present and past cultural aspects of a practice and there can be, lastly, **functional authenticity** that measures how well a practice actually works basing on the needs of the practitioner.

In my practice, and therefore in these lessons, I will try to keep all three of them in mind, with special regards to the historical and cultural aspects of what I teach. My witchcraft is, of course, not the only witchcraft practiced in Italy, or even in Friuli.

This is the witchcraft I learned but also the one I live, teach and practice every day, shaping it into an organic, consistent system that people are able to learn and adapt for themselves while being mindful of its origin and roots.

Giving an example that is a bit of a clichè, as I am Italian and therefore

very serious about food, I could express it this way: Magic is like cooking. Every person who learns their nonna's recipe, tweaks it a little bit basing on taste, ability (neither me or my mother have been able to reproduce the exact taste of some of my nonna's dishes) and availability. Some dishes remain remarkably similar over the centuries, some are changed, some go out of fashion and some new things are introduced and can become a pillar of the whole cuisine (think of polenta!).

EXERCISES:

I assume most of you will be already familiar with the following techniques, but I think it's better to start from the basics.

Even if Friulian witchcraft has ancient roots, this doesn't mean it can be practiced without basic knowledge of energy manipulation.

It's therefore necessary to know how to ground, center, elevate your vibration, clean your space and so on.

I'd advice not to attempt to do anything described in this paper without a good grounding and centering technique, so please focus on these exercises to prepare for the next lessons.

GROUNDING:

Grounding allows you to reinforce and stabilize your connection with the Earth.

Grounding is essential to be stable, focused and in charge of your energy body.

It's a matter of calmness and control, and being ungrounded can be both dangerous and unpleasant: it can help parasites attach to you, you can feel dizzy, emotional, static shocks can happen, you can experience nausea or disturbed sleep etc.

The first step is to learn how to breathe: Sit straight with your shoulders rolled out and fill your lungs with air (top to bottom), then release.

Online you can find every kind of tool to aid you in the process of focusing on your breath, including visual phone apps for paced breathing:

explore them and use whichever works for you.

The grounding meditation I think is the best is the so called “tree meditation”, which requires you to sit straight and visualize roots growing out of the bottom of your spine and going into the ground as you breathe. When you feel they are long enough, you can start visualizing them drawing energy from the earth and pulling it into your body. Branches can sprout from your shoulders and head and release such energy into the atmosphere around you.

Youtube is full of good grounding meditations and music: feel free to find one that you like. Whichever works for you is legit.

Other things can help you ground and stay grounded:

eating grains, nuts, beans and vegetables (clean eating in general), drinking

herbal teas, having a stable routine, avoiding junk food, alcohol and caffeine.

Good news: eating chocolate also helps you ground! (Dont use it as an excuse to feast on chocolates, though!)

Being outside also helps: gardening, going for a walk, sit in the park. If it's not possible, caring for house plants can work too.

Crystals of course can help, and I have also been told that caring for animals (especially farm animals) can be a great way to ground.

CENTERING:

Centering means getting in touch with yourself, your emotions, your spirituality and your thoughts. It helps you find a perspective.

Being uncentered might mean: being restless, having overwhelming emotions, experiencing self hatred, nervousness, confusion and unfocusedness.

When I'm uncentered I feel all over the place and anxious, like a rag in the wind.

How to center: visualize your solar plexus / core as a bright light and “suck” your energy in with every breath, drawing the “rag” inside your body until things are in focus.

Be mindful of your senses: what you hear, smell, taste, fee etc.

Find something pretty and pleasant and focus on it, or count the things you can see, hear, smell, and touch.

Repetitive activities are helpful as a form of meditation: folding laundry, washing dishes, cleaning etc, so are creative activities.

As for Grounding, you can find a number of centering suggestions and meditations on the internet: explore, try some out and find your favorite!

Find the recorded lesson here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/58baxk1zr9ke7b3/Friulian%20Witchcraft%20lesson%201%20-%202022.mp3?dl=0>

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