

Brigid

Etymology: derived from IE root indicating height, authority, power, probably meaning “exalted one.”

Holy Day: Festival of Imbolc, at the beginning of February.

Three goddesses/triple goddess
Three sisters who are all named Brigit
Brigit the poet
Brigit the smith
Brigit the healer
Not "maiden/mother/crone"

Poets and Poetry

Cormac's Glossary: Brigit a goddess whom poets worshipped, for very great and very noble was her superintendence. Therefore they call her goddess of poets by this name.

Music

Inventor of *caoineadh* (keening songs) at the death of her son Ruadán and invented whistling as a form of signaling at night. St Brigid blessed the sons of a king so that they would be able to play harps for her, though they had no skill before. They became famous harpers.

Smithcraft and Metalwork

Cormac's Glossary: Whose sisters were ... Brigit, woman of smith-work

Law and Judgment

Brigid Brethra, Brigid of the Judgments, offered a true judgment regarding women's rights of "entry" or taking of land. Sencha, another judge, had offered a judgment that women's entry was the same as men's, but blisters rose on his face, showing it as false. Brigid corrected his judgment.

Healer

Cormac's Glossary: Brigit, woman of healing.
St. Brigid associated with many healing miracles.
Invoked in Carmina Gadelica for healing in charms.
Broccan's Hymn to St. Brigid says: “She blessed the nun suffering from dropsy: she was healed without poison or disease.” In the same hymn she heals the blind and the mute.

Provider of Plenty

St. Brigid provides repeated miracles of creating food or drink, turning water to ale, or expanding food stores so that they are undiminished.

Sarasvati

Etymology: derived from PIE root indicating marshy, full of pools.

Holy Day: Sarasvati birth is celebrated as Vasant Pancami, the 5th day of the bright half of Magha, in January/February.

Tisrah Sarasvatih “three Sarasvatis”

Sarasvati – considered preeminent among them
Ila – sacrificial goddess, mother of a herd of cattle
Bharati – sacrificial goddess, speech as recitation
Not "maiden/mother/crone"

Poets and Poetry

Bhavabhuti vs Kalidasa in a poetic contest: Each poet would write his poem upon a palm leaf, and the two leaves would be floated in a pot of water in the temple of Sarasvati, the Goddess of the Arts; the more substantial and weighty verse would sink a little more into the water. ... But now the goddess intervened ... With her fingernail she flicked a tiny grain of pollen from the flower she wore in her ear onto Bhavabhuti's palm leaf. Now the two verses floated at an equal level. (Rao & Shulman, PATRM p141)

Music

Carries the vina as the Goddess of Music. In Matsya Purana Sarasvati as Gayatri is invoked with: "The Vedas, all the Sastras, the songs, the dances, etc. are not separate from you, O Goddess, so may I have successes." Sarasvati appears to Asvatara offering a boon and he chooses two, one of which is the knowledge of all sounds. “The seven musical notes,” the goddess announces, “the seven modes in the musical scale, O most noble Naga! The seven songs also, and the same number of modulations, so also the forty-nine musical times, and the three octaves—all these thou and also Kambala shall sing ... I have not given these to any other on earth or in Patala.”

Smithcraft and Metalwork

No connection found.

Law and Judgment

No direct connection found, but as she is the goddess ruling study and education, the study of law would certainly fall in her purview.

Healer

Sarasvati is invoked to remedy defects in body, speech, and action, to destroy poison, and, together with Heaven, Earth, Indra, and Agni, to cure worms. In the Yajur Veda she heals Indra after drinking Soma to separate the Soma from the surama by reciting a poem of his deeds: “O mighty one! When with your abilities you drank the Soma from the surama, then Sarasvati healed you.”

Provider of Plenty

Ludvik says Rg Veda hymns offer passages where Sarasvati's worshippers ask her for "everything under the sun, from wealth, vitality, and progeny, to pleasure, fame..." "O Sarasvati, lead us to prosperity.

Warrior and Protector

Brig Ambue, “Brigid of the Cowless Warriors,” is associated with warriors. Brigid as both goddess and saint is associated with protection. Many examples from the Carmina Gadelica ask for Brigid’s protection, and the Descent of Brigid poems are explicit in their assurance that the recitation will offer Brigid’s protection for the recite. The tradition of laying out the Brat Brigid is used for both protection of the wearer and for healing.

Fire

The fire of the smith’s forge, the flame beneath the cauldron of healing herbs, and the fire of inspiration are all associated with Brigid. As saint, she was associated with a perpetual flame at Kildare in Ireland.

Mother and Midwife

Mother of Ruadán, and of Brian, Iuchar and Iucharbha, the Three Gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

St. Brigid is called upon in the Carmina Gadelica as “aid-woman” (midwife), and some tales say that she was the midwife and foster-mother of Christ. In Cogitosus’s *Life* she provides birth control by miraculously removing a fetus from the womb of a young woman.

Water

Healing wells are prominently associated with Brigid, and all the rivers of the world originate in the well of wisdom in the Otherworld.

Speech

Poetry in pre-Christian Ireland was oral and, as patron of poets, Brigid would be deeply associated with speech in this way. The druids were said to have created the world through speech, according to continental sources. Saint restored speech to a mute girl.

Inspiration

Imbas is the word denoting poetic inspiration, poetic frenzy, prophetic ability, and the flowing fire-in-water of the Gaelic poet and seer. In the Cauldron of Poesy poem it is compared to flowing water, estuaries, and rivers in a phrase that holds connotations of milk flowing from a breast.

Animal Associations

Bird: Oystercatcher (Gille Bride, Bridein), waterbird, black and white with a striking red/orange eye and beak. In Scotland its cry is interpreted as *bi glic, bi glic*, translated as “be wise! be wise!”

Cattle: Brigid is widely associated with cattle, and with milk and butter. St. Brigid is particularly associated with white, red-eared, cattle. Brigid the goddess has two oxen named Fea and Feimhin. Sheep: Imbolc/Oimeal, Brigid’s holy day, is associated in folk etymology with the lactation of ewes.

Boar: Brigid was said to possess the supernatural boar, the Torc Triath.

Plant

Dandelion: yellow flower, spring-blooming, bitter milky (white) sap

Warrior and Protector

Sarasvati is called Slayer of Foes, Conqueror of Enemies, “a fortification, an iron wall.” The Rg Veda says, “But the well-known Sarasvati, the terrifying one, golden-tracked, slayer of enemies, she wants of us the good praise.” The Buddhist Sutra of Golden Light says “May she continually protect me in the midst of enemies.” With Ila and Bharati, she is invoked to sit upon the sacrificial grass and protect it.

Fire

The banks of the Sarasvati river were considered the best place to establish a sacred fire. The *Tisrah Sarasvati* are called the triple tongues of sacrificial fire.

Mother and Midwife

Mother of Sarasvata (a son), who was fed on fish during a drought to keep him alive.

Sarasvati is invoked to place the embryo into the womb, and addressed with the Asvins to assure a safe pregnancy and delivery.

Water

Sarasvati is the goddess of the Sarasvati river, who has become the goddess of knowledge and wisdom. She is addressed as “O rich waters”

Speech

Sarasvati is frequently identified with Vac, the goddess whose name means “speech.” Poetry and prayer and the recitation of inspired hymns are Sarasvati’s realm.

Inspiration

Dhi is the word for inspired thought, leading to poetic speech. It is vision and inspiration associated with seers and verbalized by poets. It is specifically associated with water, with Agni and fire, and with cattle and flowing milk. Agni is addressed in the Rg Veda with the words “human inspired thought has swelled with milk as the milch cow giving milk to the poet in sacrificial enclosures.”

Animal Associations

Bird: *hamsa*, white goose (*rajahamsa*), often represented in iconography as a swan, waterbird, associated with the *atman* or soul. It is said to be able to separate milk from water.

Cattle: Sarasvati and other rivers are described as yielding good milk, like cows. The Sarasvati river “roars with energy like a bull” and “bellows like a cow.”

Sheep: Ewes were sacrificed to Sarasvati and in some places rams were, also. NE Indian sculpture around the 11th and 12th centuries shows a ram as Sarasvati’s mount. The ram was given to Sarasvati by the gods as a reward for healing Indra.

Boar: The Sarasvati river “snorts ragingly like a boar.”

Plant

Mustard: yellow flower, spring-blooming during her festival, bitter milky (yellow) sap