Celtic Creation Myth

In the beginning, long before the existence of the country we now call France, or the land before that called Gaul, there was no time, gods or people, only the sea and the land. Where the sea met the land, a white mare made of sea-foam was born, called Eiocha.

On the land grew a huge oak tree, and, in order to stay alive, Eiocha ate the sea-foam seeds from that tree. As time passed, the seeds transformed into a child inside her and she gave birth to the god Cernunnos. The pains of giving birth were very strong, and in her agony, Eiocha ripped a piece of bark from the oak tree and hurled it into the sea. The piece of bark sank into the watery depths of the swirling, frothing, stormy sea, and from it deep-sea giants were created.

Cernunnos felt lonely and outnumbered because there were so many sea giants and no other gods with whom he could share anything. Therefore, along with Eiocha, they created more gods: Maponos, the God of Youth, Tauranis, the God of Thunder, Teutates, the Protector, and the fertility goddess, Epona. For many years they were all very happy together, growing up on the land, but as time passed, Eiocha's children became adults and she started to feel sad with her life on the land. Longing to be back in the sea, Eiocha left the land to return to her life as a sea-mare, and became known as Tethra, goddess of the deep.

With Eiocha gone, the gods and goddesses, needing someone to worship them, took bark from the oak tree and created the first man and woman. Cernunnos then made animals from the bark and ordered the oak to grow into a beautiful forest for all his children and animals to use. Epona made horses, which she dedicated to her beloved mother Eiocha. The other gods took branches from the oak tree; Teutates fashioned a bow, arrows and clubs, Tauranis made thunderbolts and Maponos created a harp.

The deep-sea giants, however, looked on this paradise where the gods, the people, the animals and the trees all lived in harmony, and, when they saw how happy they were, soon became jealous. Their envy turned to seething anger and so they decided to attack the peaceful land-dwellers and destroy their paradise for ever. As the battle raged, the sacred oak tree provided safety for the gods and goddesses. Tauranis threw thunderbolts at the place where the land met the sea, and separated the sea and the land forever. Maponos split the sky and threw it at the giants. The giants used the power of the waves for protection, but Teutates was such a skilled archer that they were finally defeated and driven back to the sea.

The gods looked around at what was left of the paradise they had created, and were grieved to see that, in the fierce battle, almost all the humans had been killed. Epona, however, with her love for all living things, managed to save just one man and woman, who went on to create all human life on this earth.