



The White Moon Gallery Presents
Dahud-Ahès



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Dahud-Ahès, sometimes called Dahut, lived around the 5th century in Cornouaille (Brittany). Much of her story has fallen victim to demonization by the church, but look a little deeper and you find a powerful independent woman who will not be controlled by the church or men. A Breton Goddess. Like many ancient goddesses she is creator and destroyer; she is a lover and protector.

Dahud translates to "good witch", and Ahès translates to "key holder". Her mother was Malgven "Queen of the North". Malgven is often referred to as a magician or fairy. She had a magical horse named Movarc'h, meaning sea horse as he could gallop on the sea. Her father was King Gradlon. Dahud-Ahès was born at sea during a tempest and shortly after her mother either dies or leaves to return to her home. Either way Dahud is raised by her father.

When Christianity begins to take hold of Cornouaille King Gradlon falls under the influence of Saint Guenole. Dahud, who continues to follow the Old Ways of her mother, accuses the church of turning her father's city sad and boring. To keep her ways alive, and possibly escape persecution, she asks her father to build her a great city by the sea. Her city, Ker Ys, is built below sea level in the Bay of Douarenez where Dahud can be surrounded by the sea she loves so. Ker Ys means "city in the depths." Her beautiful city is protected from storms and tides by channels, walls, and a large door which allows ships in and out for trade during low tide. The key to the door hangs on a chain around Gradlon's neck.



In Dahud's city of Ys the old ways are preserved against the incoming religion of Christianity. Dahud practices free love and takes various lovers over time. The inhabitants are joyful and celebratory of life holding many great feasts and dancing in the streets. The church becomes more and more enraged by what they call a city of sin. Pressure mounts on Gradlon to build a cathedral on Ys and chastise his daughter. Fearing for the freedom of her city Dahud leaves Ys to go to the Arree mountains where she asks Cernunos

for help and protection. The following night Cernunos (referred to as Satan by the church's telling) comes to Ys. Dahud takes the key to the heavy door which holds back the tide from around her father's neck while he sleeps. She and Cernunos unlock and open the door. Dahud and Cernunos call upon the korriganes, Breton sea fairies, to engulf Ker-Ys so it will be hidden away in the depths of the sea and safe from the persecution of the church. A storm rages and the water rises rapidly. When Gradlon wakes and realizes Ys is flooding he mounts Movarc'h, Malgven's "sea horse", to escape. Fearing for his daughter's life Gradlon grabs Dahud to save her from the rising water. Saint Guenole is with Gradlon. He urges Gradlon to cast his daughter off to hasten their retreat, calling Dahud a demon. After some time Gradlon pushes his daughter away much to



Saint Guenole's satisfaction as he sees her death as payment for her sins: sexual freedom, denying the authority of the church, and ultimately denying male authority

altogether by taking the key from her father. Dahud-Ahès returns to the sea during a tempest, reflecting her birth, but Dahud does not die. The korriganes have saved the city by surrounding it with the sea and turning the inhabitants into

mermaids. They await the time for Ys to reemerge into a safe and accepting world.

Dahud's city lives on in the name Paris. Paris means "like Ys". It is said that when Paris is engulfed, Ys may reemerge. Her beautiful city inspired Claude Debussy's "La Cathédrale Engloutie"



From "The Drowning of Kaer-Is" from "Ballads of Brittany"
Translated by Tom Taylor

"Say, fisher, the mermaid hast thou seen,
Combing her hair by the sea-waves green,—
Her hair like gold in the sunlight sheen?"

"I saw the white maiden of the sea,
And I heard her chant her melody,



And her song was sad as the wild waves be.”

Dahud-Ahès' associations are:

Sea shells, the sea, dolphins, seals, and keys
Fertility, women's rights, protection, sex, love, courage,
wisdom, hidden knowledge

Her colors are blue, green, and white

Her stones are quartz, aquamarine, aqua aura, pearl, and coral

Her sacred day is May 1st when locals say you can see Ker Ys beneath the shimmering waves if the day is clear.



Watery ritual of Protection

Suggested items: salt water, white or blue candle, amber incense.

Ground and center

Light incense

Anoint yourself with salt water

To call Dahud you may say:

"Beautiful Dahud of the sea

I ask your presence here with me."

light candle and sit quietly to feel her presence

Then say:

"Water swirling round and round

protect me, keep me safe and sound"

Visualize water swirling around your feet and rising and swirling until it surrounds you completely. Once it has cleansed out any negativity let it calm until it is a protective bubble of water. Hold the vision and feel the peace and security within. Let the protective water bubble stay as needed.

When you are ready you may shrink your bubble within to
be called upon as needed.

Ahès of the Sea

By: Ahès

Ahès, holder of the key
Ahès, cast into the sea
The victim of an emerging male dominated society.

He fears your power
He craves control

You don't give in
You don't give up
The foam has always called you home

You call me now
I hear your voice
calling from the watery depths:

Women of the Goddess
Rise Up!
Reclaim your power
Emerge into the light
Now is the time for us to take flight!

"Women of the Celts" by Jean Markale

"Melusine the Serpent Goddess in A.S. Byatt's Possession and in Mythology" by Gillian M.E. Alban

"Ballads and Songs of Brittany" by La Villemarqué

"The Druids" by Peter Berresford Ellis

<http://matricien.org/patriarcat/mythologie/dahut-ys/>

http://www.bagadoo.tm.fr/kemper/villedys_e.html

<http://www.joellessacredgrove.com/Celtic/deitiesd-e-f.html>

The 1st painting is "Flight of King Gradlon" by E.V. Luminais 1884. Musée de Beux-Arts

The 2nd painting is J.W. Waterhouse's "A Mermaid" 1901