



# **Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices**

*Claude Lecouteux*

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# Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices

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## **Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices** Claude Lecouteux

An exploration of the wild spirits that once roamed the lands and inhabited the waters and the pagan rites used to gain their good will

- Explores medieval stories and folk traditions of brownies, fairies, giants, dragons, will-o'-the-wisps, and demons
- Explains the specific rites performed to negotiate with the local spirits and ensure their permission before building on new land
- Shows how these beliefs carried through to modern times, especially in architecture

Our pagan ancestors knew that every forest has brownies and fairies, every spring its lady, and every river malevolent beings in its depths. They told tales of giants in the hills, dragons in the lakes, marshes swarming with will-o'-the-wisps, and demons and wild folk in the mountains who enjoyed causing landslides, avalanches, and floods. They both feared and respected these entities, knowing the importance of appeasing them for safe travel and a prosperous homestead.

Exploring medieval stories, folk traditions, spiritual place names, and pagan rituals of home building and site selection, Claude Lecouteux reveals the multitude of spirits and entities that once inhabited the land before modern civilization repressed them into desert solitude, impenetrable forests, and inaccessible mountains. He explains how, to our ancestors, enclosing a space was a sacred act. Specific rites had to be performed to negotiate with the local spirits and ensure proper placement and protection of a new building. These land spirits often became the household spirit, taking up residence in a new building in exchange for permission to build on their territory. Lecouteux explores Arthurian legends, folk tales, and mythology for evidence of the untamed spirits of the wilderness, such as giants, dragons, and demons, and examines the rites and ceremonies used to gain their good will.

Lecouteux reveals how, despite outright Church suppression, belief in these spirits carried through to modern times and was a primary influence on architecture, an influence still visible in today's buildings. The author also shows how our ancestors' concern for respecting nature is increasingly relevant in today's world.

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