



The Mythology of Executioners + Red Lady Guardians

BLESSING AND RELEASING, BANISHING AND BECKONING

EXECUTIONERS

Bow your heads as the Executioners pass by. They are dressed in monk's habits because theirs is a sacred duty. They are drawing the Great Grump effigy through the streets of the village for the very last time.

Hear the creaking of the cart which bears the Sacrifice for the health of the People and the Place Spirit. This duty takes great strength of body and character. This is a somber ritual for which the entire village waits every year.

The Grump has been tried at the Court of the Harvest Mother. The Grump has once again been found Guilty as Charged!

Now, surrounded by the Torchbearers' flames, accompanied in procession by all of the Archetypal Embodiments, the Grump is being escorted to the Harvest Fires. Here It will be consigned to the flames in the Ceremony of Sacred Sacrifice. The Executioners have spent important time honoring this sacred gift, ennobling the effigy in its promise to exchange its energies so that the Green Man, symbol of all life, and the Red Lady, our Mother Mountain may be preserved and protected to rise again in health and harmony for the coming year.

The Executioners bear a heavy weight, but one which lightens the hearts of the People as the Great Grump's sacrifice transforms our troubles and negative thoughts in the cleansing Fire! We are grateful.

THE RED LADY GUARDIANS

These are the ones who carry the Red Lady, Embodiment of our Mother Mountain, upon their mighty shoulders.

The mythology of the Vinotok Red Lady Guardians begins in Northern Europe, the roots of many of our local folks' ancestors and ancient traditions. At the end of the 8th Century, the Germanic, Celtic, Scandinavian, and Anglo-Saxon tribes were launching their westward explorations. Often accompanying these journeys were the *Runemals*, the Rune Readers, the *Seidr*-workers, storytellers, singers of sagas—and of course the tribal Seer.

Most often this was a wise woman, considered powerful, influential and in touch with Destiny and the workings of the Rune stones. She would be accompanied by a select circle of women who sang for her as she traveled the land, *Seeing* for the People, the livestock, and the creatures of Nature. She was called to visit when there was illness, drought or any need for restorative healing by far-off farms, large homesteads and the *Carls*, or leaders of the clans.

To assist her in her ability to *See* and to beckon her oracular skills, she ascended a special High Seat from which she could scan across the Land. Her services were very valuable because, when all else had failed, she was able to direct the folk into right practices, protection, and preservation of the sacred Earth.

In our Vinotok ceremonies the woman who embodies the Red Lady, representing our precious Mother Mountain, is the woman to ascend this High Seat. She is carried through the village on the shoulders of the Guardians in the Procession of the Great Grump effigy. Each Seer, for every year, calls upon the Earth to assist her and her people. She receives the guidance of Nature and brings this to the folk of our village. And because the mountain she represents is still a phenomenon that must continually be preserved from exploitative and extractive mining, the voice of this Seer has importance for those who protect, advocate, and honor her and our wilderness environments.

The Red Lady Prophecy. During the Great Grump Indictments, The Red Lady steps forward and speaks her prophecy guided by the Land, to and for the people. We receive this Earth awareness and Received Knowledge as guidance to be honored and followed for the traditional Year and a Day. Once her pronouncement is made, the Red Lady offers each of the Guardians who carry her to the Crossroads a single red rose. She honors them for their courage, endurance, and protection of her beloved Valley. We depend upon the strength and fortitude of the Guardians to hold our Red Lady and her teachings aloft, and in safety.

Every Autumn Equinox the Seer and the Red Lady Guardians show us the way to honor and defend the Red Lady Mountain, especially for the magical time frame of a year and a day.

It is so!

By Vinotok Godmother and Founder, Marcie Telander