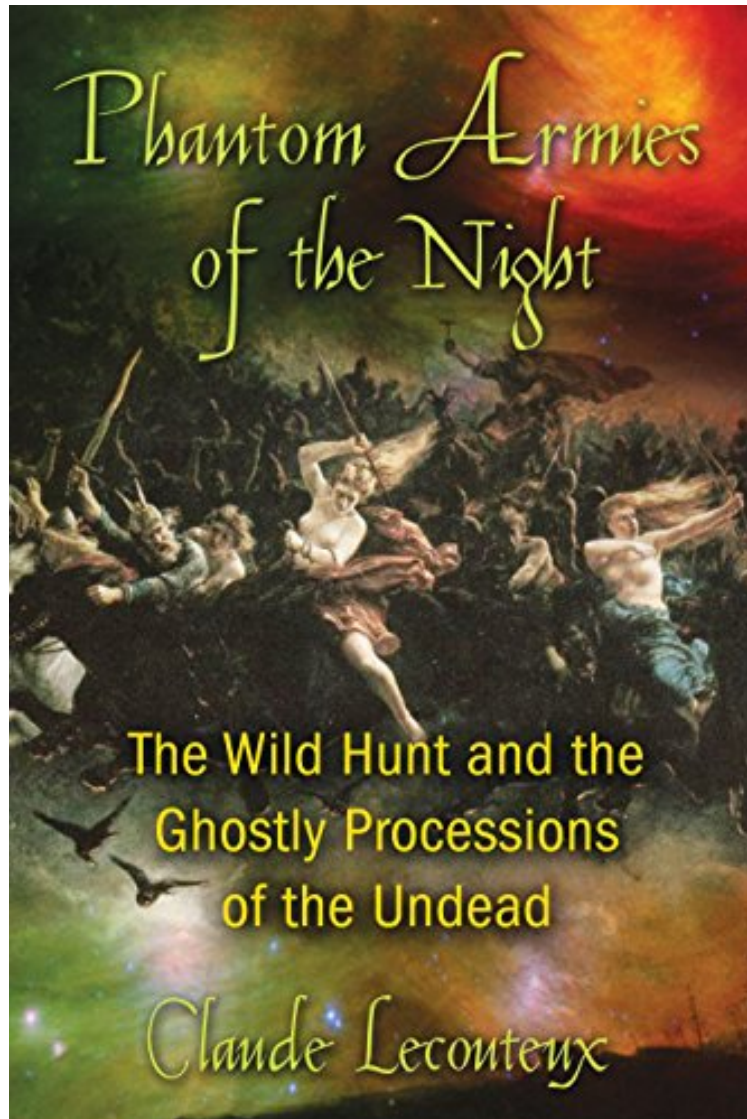


## Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead

*Claude Lecouteux*

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**Claude Lecouteux : Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Phantom Armies of the Night: The Wild Hunt and the Ghostly Processions of the Undead:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Glad I got this By Chris Whitmore Fantastic book. Well researched and informative. Definitely would recommend to anyone interested in this subject or European myths in general. 6 of 8

people found the following review helpful. Interesting and informative  
By M. Oxley  
First let me say that if you buy his books, this should be the first one in the set of 3 that I have bought. *Witches, Werewolves, and Fairies: Shapeshifters and Astral Doubles in the Middle Ages* by Lecouteux, Claude  
*The Return of the Dead: Ghosts, Ancestors, and the Transparent Veil of the Pagan Mind* BUT, that was my error and not the Author's. He relates and introduces ideas and premises very clearly and uses other sources such as Ginzburg and Davies so that the information is very understandable. I came away understanding all of the different versions of the Wild Hunt in quite a few countries and how they came to be and NO the female deity is not left out. She is just not stressed any more than the other versions. I again could not put the book down and had it read and consumed in 3 days. If you do work with the spirit or with traditional witchcraft as a path and not a religion, if you are not wiccan based only, this book will really help for you to deepen your own path. I actually would advise the other two books above and you will see similar reviews of them.  
3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Wild Hunt  
By S. Cranow  
There is a phenomena in Europe called the "Wild Hunt". A group of spirits lead by a spirit, which is either male or female, tromp through the forest and woe to anyone who is caught in the forest whilst they are on the prowl. There are many different versions of this story. Mostly from oral history which transferred into Written history and sometimes went back in to oral history. There are many different versions of this hunt so it is hard to say which one is real. Pagan legends say that a Goddess leads her train of witches to Brocksburg where they hold their sabbat. The witches follow one of three goddesses, Diana, Habondia and Percht. Brocksberg is also called Mount Venus. This train of spirits is composed depending on the legend of either all females or a mix of male and female followers. It is believed that they meet with the Devil and the faeries and have a big feast. These spirits are the astral doubles of witches who put flying ointment all over their body that enables them to astral travel. These astral double according to some legends stop in peoples houses and eat food and drink beverages. They stop in only clean houses. If they are happy with your offering of food then they bless you with prosperity. The legends of the wild hunt are pagan in origin but have been turned into something else by Christian propagandists. According to Christians the specters of the wild hunt are the restless dead. The restless dead cannot enter into paradise and are trapped in sort of purgatory. Some of these souls have died violent deaths, others are sinners in need of penance, some souls have died before their time and are destined to wander until their destined day of death arrives. The wild hunt at times is portrayed as an army. sometimes armies reappear at given times and reenact their fight. Sometimes they occur as part of a warning that a disaster is coming. Lots of legend is connected with Herla, who travelled with his troop to the dwarvish nether world and came back hundred of years later. If he touched the ground he would die. Fae folk were thought to be dead people. One leader of the Wild hunt is Odin. He is oft demonized yet he has also taken jobs from Thor and other gods. Odin maybe the God Odin or a powerful magician. He leads the wild hunt as he is a shamanistic god who also acts as a psychopomp or guide to the dead as they traverse to the underworld. His followers oft banded in groups and were able shape shift into different animals. Sometimes they would battle vampires and those who would steal fertile seed. This book is an important work on the wild hunt. It uses a variety of legends to analyse this phenomena. Well documented and well researched.

An exploration of the many forms of the ancient myth of the Wild Hunt and its influence in pagan and early Christian Europe. Recounts the myriad variations of this legend, from the Cursed Huntsman and King Herla to phantom armies and vast processions of sinners and demons. Explains how this belief was an integral part of the pagan worldview and was thus employed by the church to spread Christian doctrine. Reveals how the secret societies of medieval Europe reenacted these ghostly processions for soul travel and prophecies of impending death. Once upon a time a phenomenon existed in medieval Europe that continuously fueled local lore: during the long winter nights a strange and unknown troop could be heard passing outside over the land or through the air. Anyone caught by surprise in the open fields or depths of the woods would see a bizarre procession of demons, giants, hounds, ladies of the night, soldiers, and knights, some covered in blood and others carrying their heads beneath their arms. This was the Wild or Infernal Hunt, the host of the damned, the phantom army of the night--a theme that still inspires poets, writers, and painters to this day. Millennia older than Christianity, this pagan belief was employed by the church to spread their doctrine, with the shapeshifters' and giants of the pagan nightly processions becoming sinners led by demons seeking out unwary souls to add to their retinues. Myth or legend, it represents a belief that has deep roots in Europe, particularly Celtic and Scandinavian countries. The first scholar to fully examine this myth in each of its myriad forms, Claude Lecouteux strips away the Christian gloss and shows how the Wild Hunt was an integral part of the pagan worldview and the structure of their societies. Additionally, he looks at how secret societies of medieval Europe reenacted these ghostly processions through cult rituals culminating in masquerades and carnival-like cavalcades often associated with astral doubles, visions of the afterlife, belief in multiple souls, and prophecies of impending death. He reveals how the nearly infinite variations of this myth are a still living, evolving tradition that offers us a window into the world in which our ancestors lived.

Claude Lecouteux marshals what must be a virtually complete recounting of stories from throughout Europe involving nocturnal sightings of the Army of the Dead, also known as the Wild Hunt, and traces their thematic origins from pre-

Christian times through the filter of the medieval church. His primary sources are exhaustive, ranging from the medieval period to 20th-century accounts by various authors along with church records and folktales. His secondary sources draw extensively on scholarship, particularly from France and Germany. The connection of the figure now known as Harlequin and other figures to rites for the dead is particularly well presented. The Wild Hunt was clearly associated with the spirits of the dead but also with fertility, fecundity, and certain times of the year. Lecouteux explores these and many more aspects of a civilization that both lies behind us and is in faint form still present. (James E. Cathey, professor of German and Scandinavian studies, University of Massachusetts at Amherst) One of the most frightening and persistent visions recorded throughout Indo-European history, legend, and folklore is the spectral array of the Wild Hunt. Claude Lecouteux's brilliant scholarly detective work results in the definitive study of these ghostly processions that have haunted the night skies of Europe for millennia. *Phantom Armies of the Night* is teeming with tales that will fascinate, delight, and terrify--often all at once. (Michael Moynihan, author of *Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground* and *tra*) This book is an excellent jumping-off point for scholars wishing to untangle the lines between early Christianity as it blended and then separated from European Paganism. Excellent scholarship along with thought provoking legends and a light hand on interpretation makes this an outstanding addition to a historians library. (Diana Rajchel, *FacingNorth.net*, October 2011)...clearly associated with demons and spirits of the dead and the author describes this folklore with eerie tales that will fascinate you. (Dave H., *Book Bargains and Previews*, November 2011) This excellent book...is the most comprehensive study of the subject so far written and it is very highly recommended. (*The Cauldron*, February 2012) Overall this work is wonderfully rich in detail and gripping material centered around a subject which is uncommon in modern sociological, or spiritual works. This volume is well worth a read for those interested in historical mythological themes. (Frater U.I.F., *Behutet Magazine*) This excellent book by a former professor of medieval literature and civilization at the University of Sorbonne in Paris is a continuation of the authors ongoing research into the mythological and folkloric aspects of death and popular beliefs about the survival of the soul and the afterlife. (*The Cauldron*) I would recommend this book to anyone who loves European and Religious history and lore, as well as those seeking to understand the differences between Christian and Pagan worldviews. It will make an interesting addition to their library. (Uloboridae, *Pagan Books*, February 2013) This book is ambitious, thick with information, and impressive...After finishing it, I felt as if it is the kind of book one likes to have on the shelf for reference and consultation, rather than the kind of book one reads from start to finish in the usual way. Unless, of course, you are an academic, who enjoys reading analytical books for fun (as I do). Still even if you are not an academic, I'd recommend it to you anyway. (Brendan Myers, *Witches Pagans*, December 2013) This is an exciting and absorbing study of a form of folk mythology that has spanned Europe for more than a thousand years. Lecouteux provides both a mass of valuable information and a viable working hypothesis of explanation. (Ronald Hutton, professor of history, University of Bristol, England) From the Back Cover **FOLKLORE / MYTHOLOGY** Claude Lecouteux marshals what must be a virtually complete recounting of stories from throughout Europe involving nocturnal sightings of the Army of the Dead, also known as the Wild Hunt, and traces their thematic origins from pre-Christian times through the filter of the medieval church. --James E. Cathey, professor of German and Scandinavian studies, University of Massachusetts at Amherst Once upon a time a phenomenon existed in medieval Europe that continuously fueled local lore: during the long winter nights a strange and unknown troop could be heard passing outside over the land or through the air. Anyone caught by surprise in the open fields or depths of the woods would see a bizarre procession of demons, giants, hounds, ladies of the night, soldiers, and knights, some covered in blood and others carrying their heads beneath their arms. 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