

Witchfest 2012: Evocation v2

What Is Evocation?

Hello, in this session I will be talking about **my experiences with evocation**. This topic at first glance may appear off my usual theme of visualisation and projection, however, evocation has from the start been core to my experiences with my goddess. I'm by no means an expert in this subject at least not as far as the **traditional approaches take** on this subject, more of that later. I am far from traditional in many ways, my experiences, much like my entire solitary path has been about trial and error, and here I've made a few errors and so these are **my observations and current methods on the subject**.

Formal Definition

Over the past year I've been **writing a book** about my journey and this has shown me that my approach to evocation has **changed greatly** over the years, and so winding the clock back I will start with a formal definition I found in the **Concise Oxford English Dictionary** which it gave as the action through incantation to invoke a deity or a supernatural entity. Origin of 17th Century or perhaps a bit earlier, from the Latin evocat-, evocare, from e- (var. of ex-) 'out of, from' + vocare 'to call'. ME=Middle English.

My initial exposure to evocation was through the texts of the **traditional schools or systems** that employed it in this way, as a separate exercise to invocation. Invocation as you may know is generally used for an **internal enlightenment** or empowerment of a deities attributes of abilities, whereas evocation is an external summons of an deity so that you can converse with it. The OED may state its use from the 17th century, and yes, I would agree from what I've seen that the difference between the two appears around this time, in earlier texts I've not seen word defined and the process of calling out appears to be used for both internal and external summons.

This separation never sat well with me, and as I progressed with the **connection I have with my Egyptian goddess Selket**, these aspects became apparent. The first was that as I moved away from established systems and **explored ancient Egyptian magic**, the **absence of any difference** between invocation and evocation practice was becoming obvious. The second and quite possibly the more important was the **growing connection with my goddess** (another story entirely), but at some point she suggested I explore **better ways to interact** with her, one such method being evocation. And so I ditched these traditional methods the changed my approach to understand as much as I could from

Egyptian texts on how to do this and explored what would work for me.

Over the years as I took on board new methods and the traditional methods faded I learnt a few things that have proved handy throughout:

- Like all aspects of our paths, its a very personal one so one persons methods mean nothing to another, good to understand and try, but it might not work for you.
- **Attention to detail** is important, much like spell craft, when calling for something its a good idea to be absolutely certain.
- Be prepared for the **unexpected** with backup plans.
- **Stay calm.**

I've made mistakes and **ignored the above**, for example I've had few problems in particular case where **language is an issue due to translation** issues, those that created their magic long ago we have essentially lost the true meaning so in some ways its best perhaps not try and use it. I've found it either wont work or will have an unexpected effect because we get the sound, pronunciation or something else wrong as we don't understand the people, times and society, we don't live like them in their world view of those that created it. So I've had to make it up as I go along, and there is nothing wrong in doing that. Having heritage is great and we should treasure it as our roots but it should not limit us.

Apart from the language issues, another confusion laid in what were all these texts, ancient and later, about? For example the grimoire of **Abramelin The Mage** presents rituals that can take days, weeks or months of very specific acts, with one mistake rendering the whole process being useless. I've seen discussion about this ranging from these are really **hoaxes** to being incomplete note books where the actual reason for the requirements have been left out because the owner didn't think it important as they weren't for others. The **note book** reason is reasonably plausible to me as frequently in my BoS I will note I did such and such with just a few words and out of context they have no meaning so why waste the time unless you know how to use them. I can quite understand with all this mystery and frankly mess due to lack of clarity that people to treat evocation with a mix of caution, fear and perplexity. Myself included.

What Can Be Evoked?

Leaving my specific approach for one moment and talking generally, if most detailed texts mainly from the mediaeval period onwards focused on Christian ideas such as **demonic and angelic** forms does that mean these are the only ones that can be evoked? This view maybe what most associate

with evocation along with generally nasty things too. Well, considering where we are at the moment, I would suspect most of us don't find this area a familiar or comfortable one, its certainly not my path. For good or bad, this is all we know about in evocation documentation as Christianity was dominant in western culture when these grimoires were written. Those that have successively evoked **other spirits** are documented just need to look around as I have done. It is there, just look around, or better still make it up as you go along like I have too. Perhaps a little glib but you don't have to stick with what's already gone before. We have the **freedom to experiment and explore**. The key for anyone is work with what you have, I tend to only evoke my goddess Selket, maybe a **couple of other Egyptian deities**, and empowerment of thought forms not quite evocation but in the grey area.

Why Would You Need To Do It?

In the classic grimoires the most frequent uses are ones also frequently employed in invocation for **personal empowerment** being financial gain, health, information or obtaining items. The difference being that evocation is calling in the extra help of something more powerful than your own will or intelligence, or perhaps the task is physically dangerous or challenging and you don't want to risk injury.

How Do We Do It?

We have a reason, but **how**? First move like any act, you will need to know what you want to achieve or what's your **intention**, that would then provide the best idea on who should you try and talk to about it.

How do we then call it? Like learning all new things, **keep it simple**, and for me I tend to keep away from **poetry as I'm rubbish** at it, remember you are asking for the undivided attention of something very powerful, you don't want to upset them and they will usually see through the flowery prose, OK some may like that and again its down to what you are dealing with if its worth throwing lots of compliments at them then do so.

If you like ritual then go for a **form that if you like**, I did early on and **picked a traditional** ceremonial method to try, go with something that has **demonstrated some success**, now this of course will require research and some planning. Not worth rushing these things either. There is the possibility that if your own path has no easy to obtain methods and you have to **go outside your path** and look at others as I did, make sure you fully understand what they are doing, why they are doing it the way they are and if there is any aspect which may require change due to your own path.

If change is required then care needs to be taken to **not disrupt flow**. I did make a few mistakes with this and I will come to those shortly.

However once I had **grasped the ideas** that these texts were trying to work with, I **started to blend** in my own specific texts, slowly just so I know its still working. Don't change too many things at once. This process occurred over something like 3-4 years, so **your mileage** may vary. Going back to the issue of language I will give a simple example of where you can come unstuck like I did, while watching the film **Bed Knobs and Broomsticks** the name Ashteroth caught my attention as a good example of this translation and/or pronunciation issue, and doing a quick look on the web and wikipedia's page says 'Astaroth, Not to be confused with Ashtoreth'. Ashtoreth being a Canaanite goddess, similar to the Phoenician Astarte. And Astaroth is a demon. Which would you rather appear in front of you? Research is very important.

My Methods

Why do I do it? **Early on it was something to try**, I admit that I had no idea why I would want to, it was something to explore, that was a bad move not having a reason but **idle curiosity**, the cat was well and truly killed in my experience and at the end I will relate one such experience. Later on, and that includes as I am now, my goddess is always in my **head chatting away**, sometimes I like to get her out and the best way to describe it is its nice once in a while to have a face to face chat than a telephone call.

Another reason I use it is in combination with **thought forms**, more specifically the ones I use for protection and binding them to a fixed service.

Now, and depending on the situation and mood, I will decide to **either make use of a circle or not**, if I do then further choices on how much of one I use. I at least evoke the **four protective sister** goddesses Nephtys, Neith, Isis, Selket, and I use the common Egyptian renderings to call them being Neb-het-net, Net, Aset, Serqet-hetu. I call each one, taking Nephtys as north moving to Selket in the west, I tend to face west, as Selket being my goddess. I raise them for protective force and containment really. If I don't use these goddesses, as I may require to do an **evocation while moving** such as for **protection** (the goddesses use I tend to use for static), I evoke several thought forms, that I know are associated with my goddess and documented in the 'Lament of Isis and Nephtys': Tofun, Bofun before me, Mestet , Mestetaf beside me, Pothet, Thotet, Ma'atet behind me, this text is very reminiscent of the **Golden Dawns Lesser Banishing Ritual Of The Pentagram**.

Then the rest of the evocation will be to call whatever it is I want to talk to or even to talk to the four goddesses that I've already summoned.

My methods may or may not directly relate to you, like I've been saying just moments ago, **taking from other paths presents problems**, so perhaps my methods or approach to my methods may have a use. That is down to you.

The use of the circle has a common appearance in evocation for protection as there are some risks, although in my case it serves mixed uses and I only tend to use them for evocation only, general ritual use (as she is in my head anyway) is infrequent.

The Risks

- Danger comes in **not being careful**, pay close attention to protection and have a **backup plan** should you feel things are not going well, usually this is **straight grounding** unless it starts to go wrong when something has actually made its presence felt, in which case knowing what the recommended methods are for sending away what you have called are handy.
- Words, as I've previously mentioned, don't try and show off. Keep it simple, spirits and this goes for any magical acts, will sometimes **act literally to your request**.
- Make sure you **know what you want** from it and stick to your plan.
- **Maintaining control** is important.
- The number one **risk is not understanding the spirit** you are calling fourth. Don't over stretch yourself and call something that would be cool to talk to. If your intention is just a little chat about the weather then it could be really annoyed at the intrusion. That is not a good position to be in as I've found out.
- On the plus side, I've had some interestingly bad experiences but **I'm still here** and nothing has dragged me a way screaming into the dark.

What Happens Once We Get Moving?

The **events** during an evocation ritual can be varied and much depend on how you are actually performing it.

As far as out comes go, there are two, the first being it **doesn't work or something happens** not quite as you expected. Don't expect it to work every time. Ritual could have had a flaw and point of failure will need a little understanding. The one we want though is **partial or full manifestation** of what you asked for. So **stay alert** at all times, react the best you can to the situation, although choosing the right entity makes all the difference.

Remember you're **enforcing your will**, more so for the difficult evocations, and you may need to consider the **level of aggressiveness** and not over do it, and this comes back to research. Some of the grimoires and those of Elizabethan Dr Dee show the need to repeatedly enforce your will and beat down the entity into submission, and not just the nasty ones, spiritual forces that could be considered beneficial needed the same treatment. There is some **similarly in the Egyptian methods** too on this with throwing threats even to beneficial forces demanding they help. I've not had to use threats, I've not summoned anything that requires forcefulness that these texts seem to necessitate. I have enough issues keeping thought forms in line which are pretty dim, I don't want to be shouting at powerful intelligent entities, I think that would be a bit risky. Those I summon are **friendly to me or to my goddess** so I know I will get the help I need without having to resort to threats.

To finish up I will **relate an evocation that sticks in my mind**, even now, more than 20 years later its the only early one that I can vividly remember, only because it was utterly bloody terrifying. It was like that because I had ignored or not understood all of these subtleties I've been talking about. One night somewhere between 1993-1994, I decided to do an evocation on the spur of the moment, first mistake, with no planning of what I wanted to call. I raised a circle, perhaps the only good point. I did a few chants, the words I forget, couldn't have been important, only the outcome was. I called out for anything in the area to manifest. Nothing, No surprise there. I was going to stop, should have, but did it again. I then felt a presence, to my left outside of the circle. I could feel something around me, couldn't see anything. So I turned towards where I thought it was. And commanded it to appear. The presence was closer, still outside the circle. I thought I could see a shimmer. I started to feel some fear, don't know why. Cold too. Then in my head I heard a voice, pretty sure I didn't hear it. It said it had a gift for me. Fear, very solid fear. I had memories in the back of my mind about some spirits offering gifts and its a good idea not to accept them if you don't know who they are and they can lie too. So I ask. No response. I ask again more firmly. It replied Azrael. I had no idea who that was at the time, I do now though. I really was starting to loose control. Panic I wanted to run but I knew I had to stay inside the circle until it had gone. I very politely, considering my current state declined the gift and asked it to depart with thanks. It didn't straight away, I could feel the fear and panic slowly fade. I don't really have any memories of the rest of that night. What sticks is that feeling outside the circle and those words.

I learnt a lot from that experience.