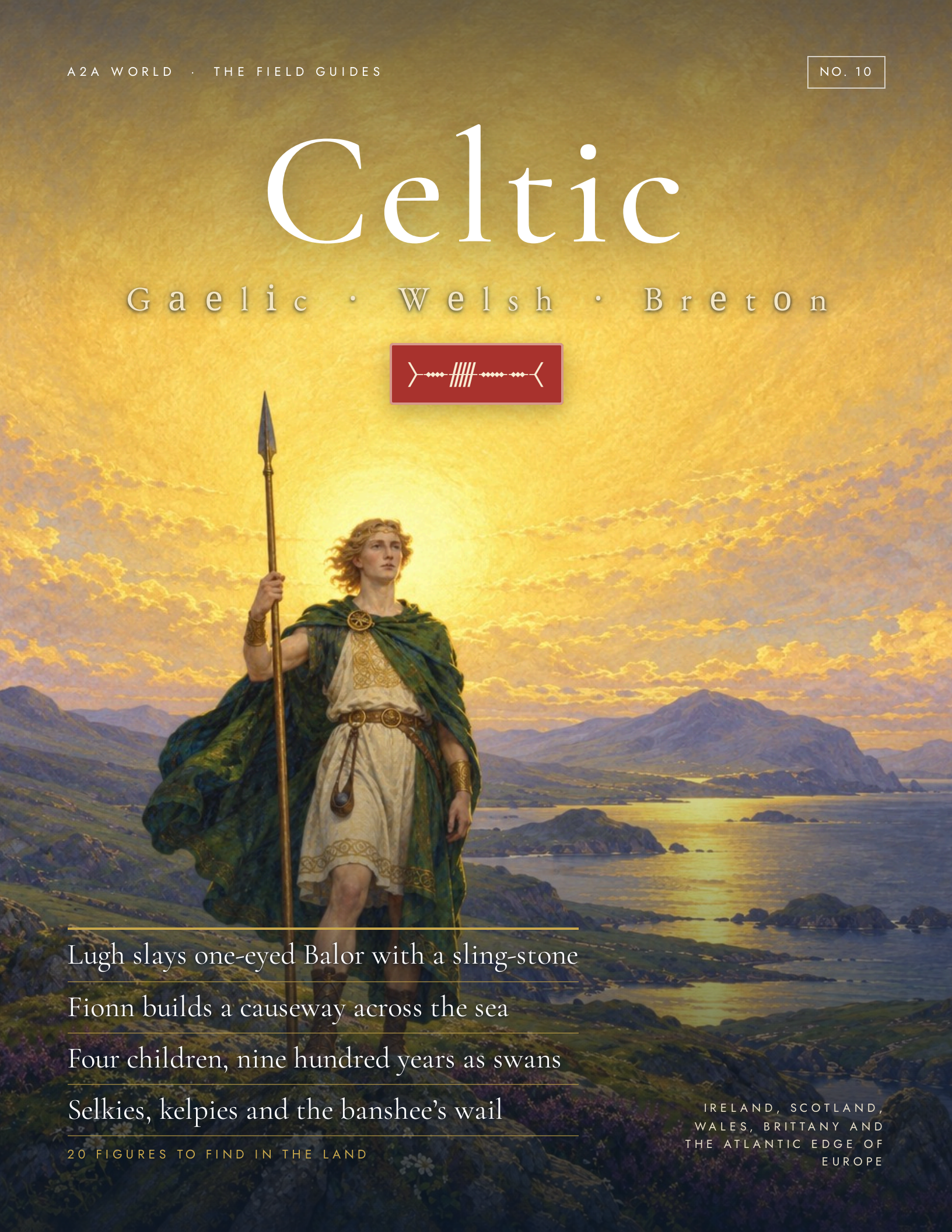
A2A WORLD · THE FIELD GUIDES

NO. 10

Celtic

Gaelic · Welsh · Breton



Lugh slays one-eyed Balor with a sling-stone

Fionn builds a causeway across the sea

Four children, nine hundred years as swans

Selkies, kelpies and the banshee's wail

20 FIGURES TO FIND IN THE LAND

IRELAND, SCOTLAND, WALES, BRITTANY AND THE ATLANTIC EDGE OF EUROPE

IN THIS ISSUE

Contents

	Introduction
	How the Celtic Lands Hold Their Myths
FEATURE	Fionn mac Cumhaill and the Causeway
I	Origins & Invasions — The Peoples Who Came to Ireland
II	Gods & Goddesses — The Old Gods
III	Creatures & Otherworld Beings — Beasts and the Fair Folk
IV	Heroes and Odd Tales — Stranger Narratives
	A note on respect



The four treasures: the Stone of Fál, the Spear of Lugh, the Sword of Nuada and the Cauldron of the Dagda

INTRODUCTION

Celtic Mythology Field Guide

Names, attributes, and narratives from Irish, Scottish, Welsh and Breton tradition — the invasions of Ireland, the gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann, the beasts and otherworld beings, and the stranger tales — organised so each entry can be used as a search target in deliberate pareidolia practice.

Celtic lore is full of place-stories: in Irish tradition the dinnseanchas, the 'lore of places', explains how hills, lakes and rivers got their names from the deeds of gods and heroes.

Landscape as story is native to these lands.

CONTEXT

How the Celtic Lands Hold Their Myths

‘Celtic’ covers several related traditions rather than one. The ancient Celts left few written words, and the surviving myths were written down by Christian monks in Ireland and Wales from the early medieval period onward, sometimes recast as history. Folklore of the fairies, selkies and giants survived orally into modern times.

Folklore of the fairies, selkies and giants survived orally into modern times.

SOURCES

The Lebor Gabála Érenn (Book of Invasions, 11th century). The Ulster Cycle, including the Táin Bó Cúailnge. The Fenian Cycle of Fionn mac Cumhaill. The Dinnseanchas (lore of places). The Welsh Mabinogion, preserved in the White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest (14th century).



Standing stone, high cross and round tower on the Atlantic edge of Ireland

A CELTIC PRECEDENT

The Giant’s Causeway in Northern Ireland, a field of basalt columns, is told as a road Fionn mac Cumhaill built across the sea to fight the Scottish giant Benandonner. The dinnseanchas tradition gives story-origins to hundreds of Irish places. Landscape as story is native to these lands.



Fionn mac Cumhaill builds the causeway to Scotland

THE FEATURE

Fionn mac Cumhaill and the Causeway

Leader of the Fianna; in folklore, a giant.

Fionn builds the causeway to Scotland. When Benandonner proves enormous, Fionn's wife Oonagh disguises him as a baby; seeing the size of the 'child', the Scottish giant flees, tearing up the road behind him.

LOOK FOR IN THE LAND

A reclining giant; a broken causeway across a strait.

The Salmon of Knowledge Bradán Feasa

Fish holding all the world's wisdom.

The poet Finnegas catches it after seven years; young Fionn, cooking it, burns his thumb, sucks it, and gains its wisdom.

LOOK FOR IN THE LAND

A salmon; a figure with thumb to mouth.



Bradán Feasa — the fish holding all the world's wisdom

THE TWO BEST FIRST TARGETS

1. Fionn mac Cumhaill as a giant — reclining giant figures in hills and headlands suit him. 2. The salmon of knowledge — a simple, strong fish silhouette. Strong alternates: the selkie, Cú Chulainn's hound, and the Dagda's cauldron.



I · ORIGINS & INVASIONS

I The Peoples Who Came to Ireland

Waves of arrivals, divine races and the retreat into the hills.

Above: The Tuatha Dé Danann arrive in dark clouds bringing four treasures

The Book of Invasions

Lebor Gabála Érenn

Ireland's mythic history.

Successive peoples arrive in Ireland — among them the Partholonians, the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha Dé Danann — each struggling against the monstrous Fomorians.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
>
> *Ships arriving on a coast.*

The Tuatha Dé Danann

The divine race of Ireland.

They arrive in dark clouds bringing four treasures: the Stone of Fál, the Spear of Lugh, the Sword of Nuada and the Cauldron of the Dagda.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
>
> *Four objects — stone, spear, sword, cauldron.*



Lugh slays Balor, whose single eye destroys whatever it looks upon

The Second Battle of Mag Tuired

Cath Maige Tuired

Gods against Fomorians.

Lugh slays the Fomorian Balor, whose single eye destroys whatever it looks upon, with a sling-stone.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
>
> *A giant with one great eye; a slinger.*

The Coming of the Milesians

The ancestors of the Irish.

They defeat the Tuatha Dé Danann, who withdraw into the sídhe — the hills and mounds — and become the Otherworld people.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
>
> *A round mound or hill with an entrance.*

Ériu, Banba and Fódla

Three goddesses of the land.

Each asks the Milesians to name Ireland after her; Ériu's name prevails as Éire.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
>
> *Three female figures; a land shaped as a woman.*



II · GODS & GODDESSES

II The Old Gods

Gods of plenty, craft, fire and sovereignty.

Above: The Dagda — club, harp and a cauldron that never empties

The Dagda

'The good god'; club, harp and cauldron.

His cauldron never empties; his club kills with one end and restores life with the other.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A large figure with a club; a cauldron.*



Goddess of poetry, healing and smithcraft — a flame and a woven cross

Brigid

Brigït

Goddess of poetry, healing and smithcraft.

Honoured at Imbolc (1 February); her tradition continues in the saint of Kildare and her perpetual flame.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A woman with a flame; a woven cross.*

Lugh

Master of all arts; spear and sling.

Gains entry to Tara by showing he has every skill. The harvest festival of Lughnasadh bears his name.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A warrior with a long spear.*



As a crow she perches on the dying Cú Chulainn's shoulder

The Morrígan

Goddess of war and fate; appears as a crow.

Foretells doom and perches on the dying Cú Chulainn's shoulder as a crow.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A crow on a standing figure.*

Rhiannon

Mabinogion

Welsh queen on a white horse; her birds sing the dead awake.

Appears to Pwyll riding a white horse that no rider can overtake, though it seems to move slowly.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A woman on a white horse; three birds.*



III · CREATURES & OTHERWORLD BEINGS

III Beasts and the Fair Folk

Shape-shifters of sea and hill.

Above: Selkies shed their skins to walk as humans

Selkies

Seal-people of Scottish and Irish coasts.

Seals that shed their skins to walk as humans; a man who hides a selkie's skin may keep her as his wife until she finds it.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A seal on a rock; a figure holding a skin.*

The Kelpie

Each-uisge

Water-horse of Scottish lochs.

A beautiful horse that lures riders onto its back and plunges into the water.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A horse at a loch's edge.*

The Banshee

Bean sí

Woman of the sídhe whose wail foretells death.

Heard keening for members of old Irish families.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A woman with long, streaming hair.*



Two dragons fight beneath Dinas Emrys; the red defeats the white

The Red Dragon and the White

Y Ddraig Goch

Welsh emblem.

In the tale told by Nennius and of Merlin, two dragons fight beneath Dinas Emrys; the red dragon of the Britons defeats the white.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *Two dragons locked in struggle.*



IV · HEROES AND ODD TALES

IV Stranger Narratives

Giants, swans and the lands beyond the sea.

Above: The Children of Lir spend nine hundred years on Irish waters as swans

Cú Chulainn

Hero of Ulster.

As a boy, Setánta kills the smith Culann's fierce hound and offers to take its place — earning the name 'Hound of Culann'. He later defends Ulster alone in the Táin.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A hound; a warrior tied to a standing stone.*

The Children of Lir

Oidheadh Chlainne Lir

Four children turned into swans.

Their jealous stepmother transforms them; they spend nine hundred years on Irish waters before returning to human form.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *Four swans on a lake or sea.*



Oisín rides across the sea with Niamh to the Land of Youth

Oisín in Tír na nÓg

The Land of Youth.

Oisín rides across the sea with Niamh to the Land of Youth. Returning after three years, he finds three hundred have passed; touching the ground, he becomes old.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A horse with two riders crossing waves.*

Brân the Blessed

Bendigeidfran

Giant king of Britain in the Mabinogion.

So large he wades across the sea to Ireland and lies down as a bridge over a river for his army. His severed head continues to speak.

> LOOK FOR IN THE LAND
> *A giant lying across a river.*

A NOTE ON RESPECT

Irish and Welsh names are given in their standard forms; pronunciation differs from English spelling. Many stories exist in several versions; note the source a telling follows.

The plates in this issue are interpretive illustrations, not historical artefacts.



A2A World LLC

Earth Heritage and Perceptual Resilience

© A2A World LLC 2026 · Atlanta, Georgia