

## FW 295.17-295.25

### Loosh and sexual magic

by

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From a “factual” perspective **FW 295.17-25** is the description of Dolph drawing the second circle, having the same **A-L** radius of the first one, but its centre in **L (Lambday)**. There is in fact the shifting of the position of the compass's spike and pencil ( the **somersault** of **295.21**), and the ensuing graphic execution of the round figure:

**295.23: Allow, allow! Gyre O,**

**295.24: gyre O, gyrotundo !**

But to dismiss it as a simple geometric operation would indeed be unfair towards Joyce and his literary subtleties. If we follow Joyce's alluring invitation to give a more attentive look, an extra “c”, that is: “see”, like the one hidden in “**Luccan** / Luc(c)an : Look-see-an”, we may find some interesting and contextually justified allusions.

Let us start from **295.17**, with Kev who keeps making fun of Dolph with his sardonic “**Straorbinaire!**”, suggesting Dolph's limited “seeing” capability [Italian “orbo” (blind), “straorbo” (ultra blind)] and his approximate illustration of the subject under examination (the female sex), like the same “approximate” geographical charts of Strabo (thanks, Dominique!). But Dolph is ready to counter-attack Kev's negative criticism.

**295.17: I bring town**

**295.18: eau and curry nothung up my sleeve.**

The French “*eau*” (water) entitles us to read “**town eau**” as “*ton* (yours) *no(n)*”. And since “eau” is pronounced “O”, there is a further reference to the circle. Thus Dolph's retort:

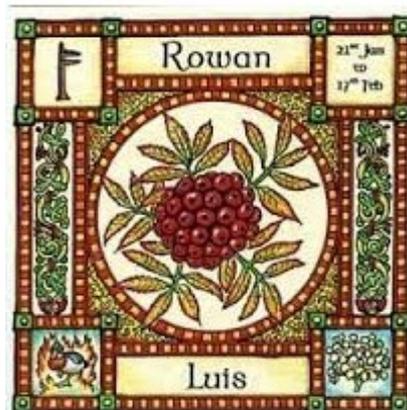
“I understand (**bring town** → bring home) your 'no' about my round 'O'; but I will show you how unsubstantial (bring down, defeat) your criticism is; since I can reverse your (ton) no(n), your “nothing”, into a “**Nothung**” (Sigfried's powerful magic sword), which is in fact a victorious “ace” up my sleeve. And furthermore I will turn your disgusted 'no' into a delicious and spicy dish: a 'tuna curry'.”

[“town eau” is Italian “tonno” (tuna fish). Thus: “ton no” into “tonno”. With an implied “Ton awe!”].

And here Dolph starts his technical preparations in order to draw the second circle.

**295.18: Now,**  
**295.19: springing quickly from the mudland Loosh**  
**295.20: from Luccan with Allhim as her Elder tetra-**  
**295.21: turn a somersault.**

This apparently obscure passage may be explained with a certain ease if we filter it through *Ogham* alphabet and the *tree-language*. The first action is that of “**springing quickly**” (we'll come to it in a moment), from the mud/mother island, the **Loosh**, who is a female, being assigned the pronoun “**her**”. McHugh informs us that **Loosh** hints at *Luis*, which, in the magic tree-language, is the quicken tree, and, in the Ogham alphabet, corresponds to the letter L.



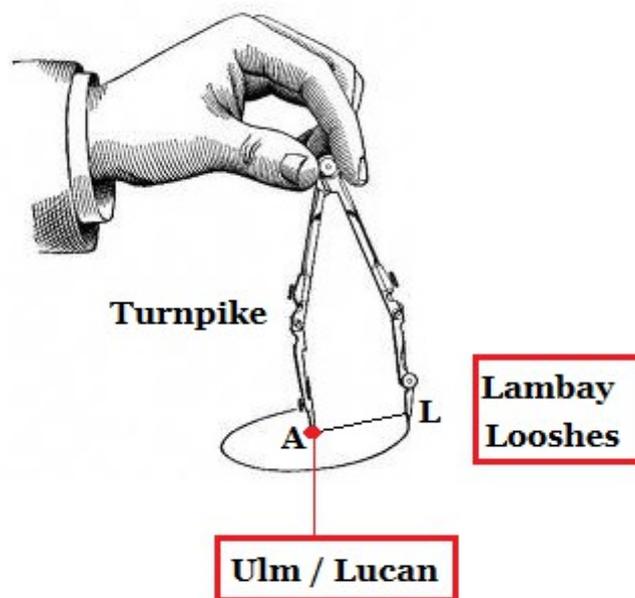
**Lucan** is “*the place of elms*”. If we go back to **293.14-15** we find a **Turnpike** and a **Great Elm** and I think it is legitimate to infer

that “turnpike” is the spike of the compass (that will draw the first circle), planted in Lucan (Great Ulm), which, in Ogham alphabet, corresponds to the letter “A” (Ailm/Ailim).

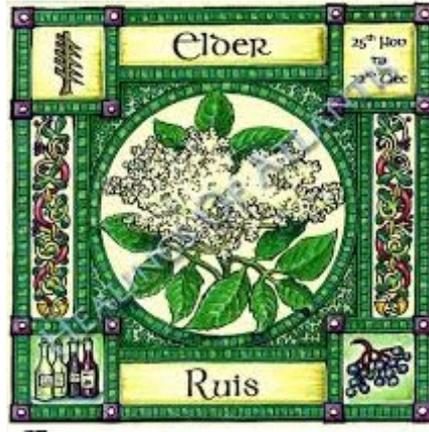


Although “Ailm” seems to be a pine tree, or a Scots pine (its meaning, though, is uncertain), the similarity with “elm” seems undeniable, so I think we may take the liberty of morphing it into an elm.

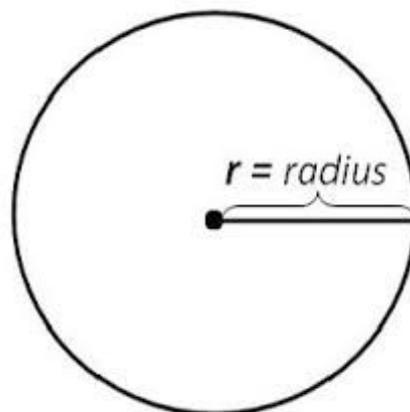
The pencil of the compass is placed at **Lambday** (Lambay island). Their radius being the “**strayed-line (294.3)” AL**.



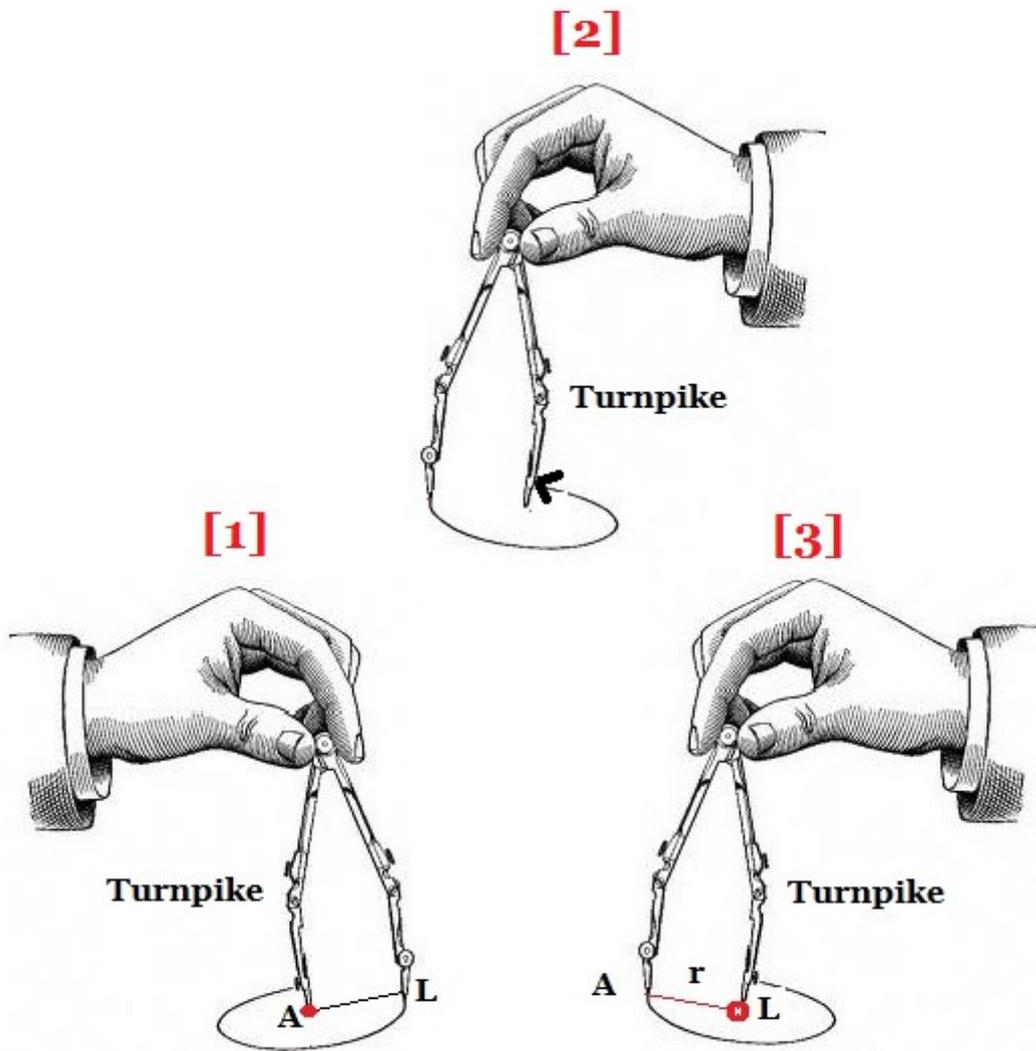
“**Allhim as her Elder**” (leaving aside the reference to the Father figure of Allah as Ancestor), alludes both to “*Ailm/Ailim*” (*elm* and *A*) and to the “Elder”, that corresponds to *Ruis*, the letter R.



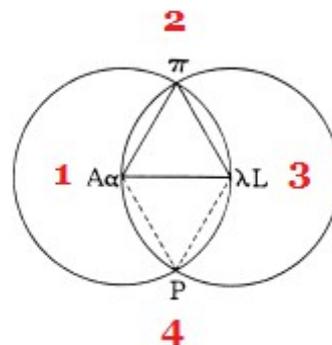
Now, in geometric notation, “R / r” is often used for “*radius*”;



thus *Ailm-Elder* is in fact the “radius” of the circle, the “**strayed-line (294.3)**” that starts from A “**and stops ait Lambday**”. So we may infer that “**springing quickenly**” is the act of lifting the compass from the surface of the page (**mudland**); both the spike (**Luccan/elm**) and the pencil (**Looshes/Luis**), preparing the “**somersault**” that describes the spike-pencil shift.



But "**tetraturn**" poses some problems. "Tetra" is Greek "four". But why "four"? Or should we say "What for/four?". First there is the most immediate answer: four corresponds to the four cardinal points that the pencil of the compass (its spike in L) meets in its drawing of the second circle; or, better, to the four intersections of the two circles.



And again a possible reference to the four *Zoas* of Blake's. But there is another answer, the one Dolph is given by his instructor:

**295.21: All's fair on all fours, as  
295.22: my instructor unstrict me.**

"unstrict" hints at "constrictor", thus at the edenic serpent (*boa constrictor*);

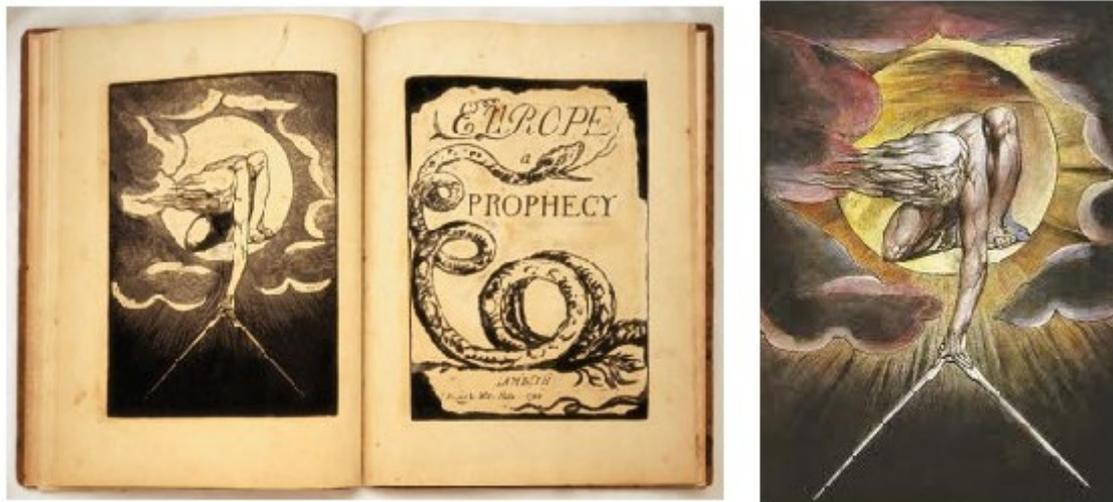


and consequently at the devil, who is certainly thought to be Dolph's teacher and advisor. "**All's fair on all fours**" may have different interpretations. The one who is "on all fours" may be a baby; thus we have the image of Dolph looking patronizingly at his brother's naiveté. But "on all fours" may be a variant of "*fall on one's feet*", like cats, allegedly known to fall on all fours. And of course "cat" is "*pussy*". So Dolph's sneering answer to the "What four?" of "tetraturm" is that any action centered on the "pussy" is always fair and just; and it justifies the drawing of the second circle:

**295.23: Allow, allow! Gyre O,  
295.24: gyre O, gyrotundo ! Hop lala ! As umpty  
295.25: herum as you seat!**

But all this does not take into due account the stylistic nuance that shows Joyce's creative solution. The drawing of the second circle is not a passive repetition of the first one, which may be seen just as the technical execution of a geometric figure. The drawing of the second circle is introduced by a magic aura which modifies the general atmosphere of the textual passage. In the gradual approach to the mystery of sex Joyce makes use of the druidic Ogham

alphabet, with its esoteric language of trees. But what triggers the sequence of cross references is the word "**Loosh**" in its connection with "**Luccan**". As I have already said it seems that Joyce is inviting us to adopt a "double view", the double "Cs / see" of **Lu[cc]an**, alerting us to consider the double Os of "**L[oo]sh**"; or, better, its "extra O". If we get rid of one "o" to balance "Lucan" we obtain "Losh", with a possible allusion to William Blake's "*Los*". The reference to Blake is more evident if we give a look at one of his plates

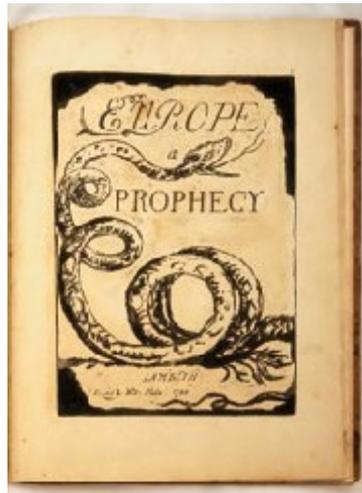


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in which we can see a holy (**Allhim** / Allah) old man (**Elder**) with what seems to be a huge compass. In fact its "*spike and pencil*" are more like symbolic hands, but a Blakean compass is quite evident in another of his plates



thus justifying our hypothesis. (Please, note the "serpent" we were talking about;



and the "Prophecy" it *constricts/unstricts*, connecting it to **Allhim** and his "*prophet*" Dolph. )

What I am saying is that the choice of esoteric terms and allusions in this passage is a brilliant literary solution that lets us gradually penetrate the magic aura of the female triangle.

