



In an old, tattered book -- but not as old as the origins of Mead -- I read recently that Mead goes back at least 6,000 years, & likely far longer. When the Phoenicians arrived in SW Britain in quest of sources of tin ca. 3,000 years ago, the IndigeNous peoples of Albion so venerated honey that the visitors from the East dubbed it 'Honey Isle.' What the Irish knew as 'Mid,' the Greeks called 'Hydromel' . . . "For he on honey-dew hath fed, / and drunk the milk of Paradise." (these being the resonant lines with which Coleridge memorably ends his 'Kubla Khan,' which was published in 1798, to bring us a tad more up to date).

There could well be age-old reasons for the centrality of Golden Bees at Minoan & Mycenaean sites, as well as the role of Bee imagery in Orphic tradition, Virgil, the Beehive huts on Skellig Michael off SW Ireland, & among the Merovingians in France, who interred their kings with Bees fashioned from Gold. Bees have long been thought to symbolize the Soul, which is a trope that can be traced as far back as the cave complexes in the South of France.

As for the Elixir derived from their Hives, so exquisite are its properties that it leaves one simultaneously inspired, a la Coleridge & Co., and at a loss for words in a Way more than casually suggestive of the Ancient Initiatory -- not to say 'AlcheMystical' -- Mysteries. So when a Celt or a Viking is quaffing Mead from the skullbone of an enemy, I'd be so bold as to suggest in my turn that there is likely more meets the eye of a casual observer of an Archetypal -- not to say 'Immemorial' -- Grail-like ritual. At least Three Cheers for the Nectar of the Gods & Goddesses of yore !!!