

Celtic Cosmography

Astronomy and Symbology

By M. G. Boutet

Celtic Cosmography

Part 1

To the memory of Donald Cyr of Stonehenge Viewpoint.

Acknowledgments

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Specific Nomenclature and Abbreviations

Astronym, coined from the Greek root words: astro-, "star, heavenly body," and -nym, "name;" a term used for names pertaining to heavenly bodies and stars.

Celtiberian, Celtic of Iberia; the Celtic-Iberian language had an early syllabary and cryptic literature.

Cosmogony, myths on the creation of the world; from the Greek: cosmos "universe, world," and -gonia, "begetting."

Cosmography, the science of the description for the mapping of the universe, from the Greek: cosmos, “universe” and graphia, from graphé, “drawing, graph, writing.”

Cosmology, the philosophical understanding of the origins and function of the Cosmos; from the Greek: cosmos, “universe” and -logia, “oracles, reasoning.”

Chronocrator, the principal coordinator of time and planetary ruler of a given astral house and/or constellation; from the Greek terms: khrônos, “time,” and krator “powerful, ruler.”

Diffusionism, a term applied in anthropology for the theory implying that cultural diffusion is the main factor in the dissemination of shared ideas and innovations.

Dumézilian, Dumézil’s methodology of tripartition used in the analysis of Indo-European cultural horizons.

Eschatology, the theology, and philosophy of fatality and death defining the sojourns of the soul; from the Greek names: eskhatos, “last, furthest, uttermost, extreme, most remote” in time, space, degree,” and -logia.

Ethnonym, coined from the Greek ethnos, “group of people sharing common traits, tribe, band, nation,” and -nym, “name;” name specific to related peoples or cultural-linguistic groups.

Galatic, also Gallic in English, the Gaulish language.

Lusitanian, an archaic Celtic language with early epigraphic testimonies.

Mythonym, coined from the Greek mythos, “speech, expression, story, legend, tale,” and -nym, “name, nomen,” a name specific to a mythological character, usually the name of a god, a hero or a legendary figure.

Theonym, coined from the Greek root words theos, “god,” and -nym, “name;” a term used to qualify the names of gods.

Trifunctional, the trifunctional, or tripartite, the conceptual hypothesis put forward by the French linguist historian, and anthropologist, Georges Dumézil for the study of Indo-European cultures and societies. Dumézil postulated that Indo-European ideology was fundamentally structured using sets of three. For example, the three functions of the social classes: clergy, equites, and producers.

Abbreviations and acronyms

BCE, before the Common or Christian era;

Brt, Brythonic or P-Celtic;

CE, Common or Christian era;

Gdl, for Goidelic or Q-Celtic;”

IE, Indo-European;

O-Clt, for Old Celtic

P-Clt, for Brythonic Celtic, included Gallic and British;

PIE, Proto-Indo-European;

Q-Clt, for Goidelic Celtic.

Author’s Foreword

In popular culture, it is commonly thought that the Celts had mysterious origins owing nothing to other peoples. So, how different was the Celtic understanding of the cosmos from that of the others? If we consider that Celtic culture was part of a greater Indo-European grouping, then it could not have been that distinct from the other daughter branches of the family tree. Henceforth, it cannot be disassociated from the other related traditions. And this is how the subject matter will be treated throughout the book.

At first, this book started as a research paper on astronomical symbolism in abstract Celtic Art. It quickly grew into a large series of texts which I had to separate into three sections: one on cosmology, a second on astrology, and a third on the futuristic or technological aspects of mythology. Therefore, the following constitutes the first part of a trypic on Celtic stellar lore. At the time, I was studying Art History and Iconography and was very intrigued by Donald Cyr's hypothesis, little knowing that I would spend the next decade investigating this very subject matter.

I do miss Mr. Cyr, and I think about him every time that I ponder on the skies or on the ancient naked-eye astronomers. If I owe anyone a debt of gratitude for this book on Celtic cosmology, it is to him.

And he knew the subject thoroughly. During his professional life in the fifties, was he not the technical editor at the world-renowned Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California?¹

While collaborating with Donald Cyr on *The Celtic Connection* papers which were made into a book, the idea germinated for a better understanding of Celtic Cosmology which at that time was poorly studied by serious scholars. And Donald Cyr took the matter seriously having devoted much of his research on diffusionism in the fields of Prehistoric Art, megalithic cultures, and Old and New World archaeoastronomy with a special focus on the Celts and the Chinese. His book, entitled *King Arthur's Crystal Cave*, is a good example of this. In his introduction to *The Celtic Connection*, he gave this comment:

The Crystal Veil summarizes some of my ideas on astrology, aided by Fletcher Freeman. You will notice that Michel-Gérald Boutet is comfortable with my crystal veil halo ideas. I do appreciate that. So why get excited by astrology? The simple answer is that Boutet noticed that the *Book of Ballymote* contains an Ogam zodiac.²

Donald Cyr was a pioneer in the areas of early cosmic meteorology and cosmography, along with speculations on the theory of diffusionism and cultural exchange. Apart from critical cross-referencing, one of his main methodological tools was in the discipline of compared iconographical and symbological studies. An example of his insights is found in *King Arthur's Crystal Cave*, on the Druid Awen symbol of light:

The three-pointers atop the Chinese words "light" and "bright" are reminiscent of the Druid Awen symbol denoting light (although inverted). Moreover, the Druid Awen night beams are arranged at 22-degree intervals, clearly an ice-crystal indicator. One wonders if there is a

relationship, distant to be sure, between the Druids who ended up in the British Isles and their counterparts who taught calligraphy in ancient China. Clearly, the dragon motif is found in both arenas. As was true for China, the dragon was revered in Wales and Scandinavia. Of course, one can find examples in Chinese art having dragon's eyes precisely rendered as parhelia (sun dogs) caused by ice crystal refraction of solar image.³

What Cyr was beginning to unravel was the underlying unifying Eurasian shamanistic concepts of cosmology, space and time. His remark on the semantic similarities between a Chinese ideogram and the Welsh bardic trigram for the Awen unlocks the mystery to the Indo-European notion of light and deity. That is, light emanation seen as the embodiment of a divine being. This notion is important in that day, light, and god, are all etymologically linked in the early Proto-Indo-European language. And, according to the linguist Julius Pokorny, this was expressed by the root words: dei-, deiǝ-, dī-, diā-, dīu-, meaning alternatively, "day, sun, sky-god, god, to gleam, to shine."⁴ And we now know that the early Indo-Europeans, the Tocharians of the Tarim Basin in particular, were in close contact with the Chinese Empires to the east. One can only ask if this was the result of cultural diffusion or of independent invention.

This being said, in the following chapters I will focus solely on the Celtic corpus comparing it occasionally with the other sister Indo-European languages and mythologies. Therefore, I will not risk difficult comparisons such as the one Donald Cyr had exposed. The book is presented in two parts, the first on cosmology and the second on symbology.

For more clarity and understanding, please consult the chapter notes at the back of the book.

Also, most of the illustrations presented here are by me except for the old book engravings and a few drawings by the Breton-French graphic artist and Celtic researcher Serj Pineau.

Michel-Gérald Boutet, Drummondville, Autumn, 2018.

Introduction

As with all matters Celtic, any attempt to better understand what the Druids professed on the subjects of cosmography, cosmology, astronomy, time reckoning, or symbology even, is an almost insurmountable task. All stones must be turned if one is to find not just hidden gems of knowledge but better, the proverbial pot of gold!

In this area, apart from fragmentary data, we had no extensive written record from ancient Celticity. It was, therefore, necessary to finely comb through the subsequent documentation of the classical authors and those of the medieval transcribers. Moreover, medieval and pre-modern texts are not always trustworthy, since being heavily marked by clerical rewriting. Most often,

these records are made to conform to the criteria of Biblical mindset and are interjected with many comments over the apparent paganizing sections. Therefore, weeding out these glosses is a tedious task, only accomplished by the means of compared cultural and linguistic methodologies. In short, apples are to be compared with apples, sometimes pears, but never with bananas and oranges.

If we are to trust Julius Caesar in his *War Commentaries*, Book VI, section 14, the Celtic Druids were very knowledgeable on the subjects of cosmography and of geography.

They likewise discuss and impart to the youth many things respecting the stars and their motion, respecting the extent of the world and of our earth, respecting the nature of things, respecting the power and the majesty of the immortal gods.¹

Unfortunately, as always, Caesar is very scant on detail. So, what precisely were these matters respecting the extent of the world and the earth?

Plutarch in his *Morals*, *De faciae quae in orbe lunae apparet*, 26, takes us a bit further than Caesar. Here he mentions that a stranger from Ogygia attained great skills in astrology, geometry, natural philosophy and that he was planning to visit the great island or mainland of Europe. Plutarch also mentions that his country is the isle of Ogygia lying in the Ocean's arms and distant of about five days sailing westward from Britain. That is, Ogygia was the Greek name for Ireland.

This stranger then, having been brought thither, and there serving the God in repose and at his ease, attained to as great skill in astrology as it is possible for anyone to do that has made the greatest progress in geometry; as for the rest of philosophy, having given himself to that which is called natural, he was seized with an extraordinary desire and longing to visit and see the great island; for so they call the continent inhabited by us. After therefore his thirty years were passed and his successors arrived, having taken leave of all his relations and friends, he put to sea, in other respects soberly and moderately equipped, but having a good store of voyage-provision in vessels of gold.²

This "great island" corresponded to the coastline of Europe and more specifically Armorica which the Irish called Letha, the Welsh Llydau, from the Old Welsh Lettau.

Letha / Lettau, from the Old Celtic Litauia, "continent."

Secondary source information is found in the medieval writings of the Celts themselves. These include the Irish and Welsh texts database. Other fragments can be retrieved from Scottish and Breton folk material. For corroboration, these can then be measured against similar themes and motifs developed in the parent Indo-European cultures such as those of the Baltic, Teutonic, Scandinavian, Slavic, Persian and Vedic peoples.

But then again, even though directly related to the subject, the insular documents do not always yield the expected information. Such a document, entitled *An Irish Astronomical Tract*, which

draws heavily on Arabic rewritings of known Aristotelian Greek and Ptolemaic Latin literature, fails lamentably to deliver but a sliver of the native Celtic material. The slightest influence of Druids is nowhere to be found. The text is an Irish translation of the Latin manuscript which can be dated no earlier than to the mid-fourteenth century CE.

In the online publication of *An Irish Astronomical Tract* translated by Maura Power, John A. Williams, in his notes and introductory comments, mentions that “the Irish term cercall can variously mean “orbit, circle or sphere.” Cercall, or cearcall in modern Irish, has the meaning of “circle, ring, hoop,” and is from the Latin circulus, “circle,” which can also be taken as for “a celestial zone, the revolution of a celestial body.” This term is therefore not of Celtic etymology and was thus taken in its correct old Latin sense. The Old Celtic words for circle were: cantos, crisos, and coros. Henceforth, an astronomical orbit was anciently termed celecotragos or celecotrogos... And albiio was the astronym used for an “orb.”

A similar problem results from the ambiguous variations in the Irish terminology for the planets, stars, and constellations. This has often led to confusion in Power's English translation. For example, in a passage describing the period of Saturn's orbit, the planet is referred to as retlann, for “star.” During the Middle Ages, the reference to the planets as stars was not new to Irish expression (nor even Latin for that matter). Most evidently, the use of the English word star, when referring to a planet, is misleading to contemporary readers who are not aware that a planet was referred to as a “vagabond star.”

Other medieval sources on cosmography are found in early Welsh literature as found in the second *Peniarth manuscript* called *Llyfr Taliesin* or “*Book of Taliesin*.”

What follows is the Song to the Great World:

The Song to the Great World, or Song of the Macrocosm

I will adore my Father, My God, my strengthener, who infused through my head a soul to direct me. Who has made for me in perception, my seven faculties?
Of fire and earth, and water and air, and mist and flowers, and southerly wind.
Other senses of perception Thy father formed for me.
One is to have instinct with the second I touch, with the third I call, with the fourth, I taste, with the fifth I see, with the sixth I hear. With the seventh, I smell.
And I foresay, seven airs there are, above the astronomer, and three parts the seas.
How they strike on all sides. How great and wonderful, the world, not of one form, did God make above, on the planets.
He made Sola, He made Luna, He made Marca and Marcarucia, He made Venus, He made Venerus, He made Severus, and the seventh Saturnnts, the good God made five zones of the earth, for as long as it will last.
One is cold, and the second is cold, and the third is heat, disagreeable, unprofitable.
The fourth, paradise, the people will contain.
The fifth is the temperate, and the gates of the universe.

Into three it is divided, in the minstrelsy of perception.
 One is Asia, the second is Africa, and the third is Europa.
 The baptism of consolation, until doomsday it will continue when everything will be judged.
 My Awen has caused me to praise my king.
 I am Taliessin, with a speed flowing as a diviner.
 Continuing to the end in the pattern of Elphin.³

Again, the medieval Welsh names for the planets owe to a medieval form of Latin, and the same can be said for the geography of the continents.

Sola, corrupted from Latin *sōl* < *sōlis*, “sun”; Welsh, haul < saulo < saualis < sauelia;

Luna, usual Latin name for the moon; Welsh lleuad < loudo, “moonrise”;

Marca, corrupted from Mars > March, coalescing with Welsh march < marcas, “horse”; the name of the planet in Welsh is Mawrth;

Marcarucia, corrupted from Latin Mercurius; Welsh, Mercher;

Venus, correct Latin spelling for the planet Venus;

Venerus, corrupted from Veneres, the vocative case of Venus; Welsh, Gwener;

Severus, Latin cognomen “severe, grave, harsh”; Welsh, Iau < Iovès, “Jupiter” in Latin;

Saturns, corrupted from Latin Saturnus; Welsh Sadwrn < Saturnus.

As noted, Taliesin gives two mentions for Venus. Venerus can also be taken as Veneris, the genitive case of Venus. Indeed, in early Greek Antiquity, Venus was regarded as two different astral bodies, the Morningstar Eosphorus, “dawn bringer,” and the Evening star Hesperos, “the evening.” The Romans called the Morningstar Luciferus, “the light bearer or carrier,” and the Night star Vesper, “the evening.”

In another poem from Taliesin entitled “*Primary Chief Bard*,” there is the mention of Lucifer in the context of the heavens and stars:

Primary chief bard am I to Elphin,
 And my original country is the region of the summer stars;
 Idno and Heinin called me Merddin, at length, every king will call me Taliesin.
 I was with my Lord in the highest sphere, on the fall of Lucifer into the depth of hell
 I have borne a banner before Alexander;
 I know the names of the stars from north to south;
 I have been on the galaxy at the throne of the Distributor (...)⁴

Thirdly, thanks to the progress of the linguistic science of epigraphy and philology, it is now possible to access the long undecipherable writings of the Celts of Antiquity.

Indeed, epigraphy is one of the domains of Antiquity studies which offers a database of theonyms pertaining to the cosmos. Sky deities are those to look for. One good example is the sky gods Grannos and Sirona. In the *interpretatio Romana*, Grannos is equated to Apollo, the sun god. In Gaulish, Grannos means “beaming, sunny,” and his Goidelic cognate was Greinanos.

Greina, yielding the Old Irish Grian, was the usual feminine name for the sun. As for Sirona, this theonym stems from the Old Celtic root *Dirona*, for “starry.” Therefore, for the Gallic pantheon, Sirona, the Star Goddess, was the consort of Grannos, the Sun god.

The goddess Sirona in epigraphy



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The bust of Sirona of Sainte-Fontaine. On a cippus found at Sainte-Fontaine in Lorraine, France, is a complete bas-relief bust depicting the Gallic goddess Sirona with the inscription *Dea Dironae Maior son of Magiati, Votum Solvit Libens Merito (VSLM)*, “to the goddess Sirona, Maior Magiatis Filius willingly and deservedly paid his vow.” This unique artifact was discovered in 1751 and was destroyed during the Library of Strasbourg fire in 1870. However, a plaster mold of it survived and was kept at the Museum of Saint-Germain. *Revue Celtique* tome IV, Sirona, Charles Robert, 1879-80, p. 136. Public domain.

Finally, when using Dumézil’s methodology of compared Indo-European mythologies, common motifs and themes show more clarity on fragmentary or obscure archaic material difficult to interpret. Greek and Indian literary source material is often less fragmentary than the Celtic and/or Germanic records and therefore helpful to fill in the void. This research was masterfully conducted by Bernard Sergent, president of the French Mythological Society, in his two-volume opus entitled *Les Celtes et les Grecs*, and in which he explores the common themes found with

Greek and Celtic deities. Apart from those of Lugh and Apollo, Manannan mac Lir and Poseidon, one such telling area of comparison is that of Oengus mac Oc and Hermes. Sergent points out that scholars of mythology were inclined to conclude that Oengus and Hermes were borrowed from pre-Indo-European cultures. He has demonstrated otherwise. This being, that Caesar's schematic translation of Gallic gods into the Roman ones does not cover their complete qualities. If Lugus shares many aspects with the Roman Mercury, he has much more to do with the Greek Apollo. The Celtic Apollo had a dual identity in those of Lugus and Belenos, who were the Gallic cognates of the Irish gods Lugh and Oengus. As with Hermes in Greek culture, Belenos / Oengus were the intrusted patrons of juvenile pedagogy. As Sergent suspected, this is probably something the Gallic Druid Diviciacus did not feel important to impart to Caesar. In his long and scrupulous study, Sergent concludes that Oengus and Hermes share everything in common, apart from one detail, in that Oengus was master of Time, which is a chronocrator, while Hermes was master of space. But then again, these two aspects cover a unifying theme that of epiphany, the ability of sudden appearance or manifestation in a certain time and space. Moreover, the fact that there are seven common myths surrounding Oengus and Hermes prove beyond doubt that these gods stem from an older god found in the Indo-European pantheon linked to the Greek Pan and Vedic Pushan. Hermes is from the Greek herma, an erected stone topped with the carving of a head.

Part One

Celtic Cosmography and Astronomy

Chapter I

A Word on the Early Celts



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Celtic deities, decorative metal breastplate Falero, third century BCE the Archaeological Site Manerbio (Brescia, Italy). Author's drawing after a photo by E. Lessing, Magnum, Museo Nazionale di Brescia.

Who Were the Celts?

Who were the Celts and what distinguishes them from the other Indo-Europeans peoples? How were the ancient Celts different from those of today? Many argue that the Celts were never a people but just a collection of disparate tribes who shared the same koine¹ and material culture. If this is true, then the same could also apply to the other ethnicities of Antiquity such as the Teutons, the Illyrians, the Romans, or even the Greeks for that matter!

What if the earliest and most permanent presence of the Celts was on the Atlantic face of Western Europe? This is exactly what professor John T. Koch concludes in a paper entitled *A Case for Tartessian as a Celtic Language* (my note in brackets for Tartessian):

That general conclusion (for Tartessian) could carry important implications for historians and archaeologists. It reinforces something we have known for some time, namely that the Celtic languages in the Iberian Peninsula, possibly unlike those of Gaul and Britain, cannot be explained as the result of the spread of the La Tène and Hallstatt archaeological cultures of the central European Iron Age. To find Celtic extensively used so far to the south-west at such an early date must also call into question the relevance of Hallstatt's Late Bronze Age forerunner, the Urn-field cultures, in the Celticization of the Peninsula. The immediate background and context of the earliest attested Celtic language appears, instead, to be the Atlantic Late Bronze Age, a conclusion broadly resonant with ideas expressed by Almagro (e.g. 1995), as well as the new theories concerning the origins of the Celtic languages of Cunliffe (2001) and Brun (2006).²

The name Keltos³ was first identified by the Greeks for these Hyperboreans. The Celts, along with the Latin peoples, the Tocharians, the Cimmerians, and the Philistines maybe, were among a number of Indo-European tribes of the Italo-Celtic group who split from the main branch at about 1200 BCE. To be more precise, these languages included: Italic (which in turn gave Oscan, Umbrian, and Latin), Celtic (Iberian-Celtic, Gaulish, Lepontic, Gaelic, and Brythonic) and Tokharian. The Tocharians were of a group of various IE peoples such as the Cimmerians, Scythians, and Aryans, who made their way by horse and chariot into the Great Plains of Eurasia while others made way for the Indian subcontinent. Others (Thracians, Greeks, Hittites), broke into Macedonia, the Balkans, via the Danubian river-valley route, on to the high hills of Anatolia and the Aegean Islands by way of the sea in river barks and horse-drawn chariots. Of the first groups to break forth from Western Europe were the Ligurians and the Proto-Illyrians. Then came the Proto-Celts, better equipped and in greater numbers, succeeded by imposing themselves on the mixed tribes of Indo-European and non-Indo-European stock. In time, the Celtic tribes evolved into a distinctive cultural group in two marked phases, the Hallstatt and La Tène cultures. As hypothesized, they were to impose a "common Celtic" language, the koine of a well-ordered caste system cementing the heterogeneous groups into one. In turn, the assimilated tribes enriched the Celtic language with an array of botanical, geographical, and geological terms unknown to their original habitat. From what was gathered, the posited homeland of the Celts lied somewhere north of the Danube around the Elbe⁴ in what is now Austria, Czechia, Germany, and Denmark.

According to the classifications the archaeologists and historical linguists, the ancient Celtic peoples were grouped in a number of greater distinct cultural-linguistic geographical groups. In a nutshell, they can be bunched as follows:

1. Alpine Celtic or Raetic, in the circum-alpine region;
2. Celtiberic, in greater eastern Iberia;
3. Celto-Galatic, in western Europe, Belgic, Gallic, Brithonic, Lepontic Cisalpine and Galatia (Asia Minor);
4. Danubian Celtic: Central Europe, the Hungarian plain, Pannonia, Balkans and Carpatians;
5. Goidelic, in the western British Isles, Ireland, the Isle of Mann and Scotland at a later period; with probable roots in north-western Iberia;
6. Lusitanian, western and southern Iberia;
7. Tartessian, in central southern Iberia.

Although spread on a large territory of western and central Europe the level of language, as shown through epigraphic data, maintained great unity. As Monard and Sterckx speculated in the 90s, this was only due to a strong level of education enforced by the druidical henge schools. In his *War Commentaries*, Caesar does mention that "it is a fact that to this day men going on for higher studies usually cross to Britain for the purpose" and that "privileges attract a crowd of students, some of whom offer themselves for instruction while others are sent by their parents or relatives." Only to add that "it is said that these young men have to memorize endless verses and that some of them spend as long as twenty years at their book."⁵

It is also argued, following Pliny, that the name druid was from the Greek word δρῦς, drus, for “oak.” This is in part false since it was a usual practice in the times of Antiquity to explain word meanings through wordplay. A similar misconception of etymology is found with the modern neo-druidical title ovate which stems from the plural nominative Greek rendering of vates: οὔαταις, ouateis, which in Celtic was uates “clerk, cleric.” Ovate, from the Welsh ofydd and Breton oviz is but their rendering of the Latin name of the classical poet Ovid (Guyonvarc’h and Leroux 1986).

The name druid is from the Old Celtic druuis, meaning, “true or firm seer,” and derives from the Proto-Indo-European root * u(e)id- “to see, to know,” * uoid-a “have seen, white,” whence the meaning “to know, have knowledge of.” The Latin video, vidēre, and the Old Lithuanian veisdi for “see,” and the English terms wisdom, and find, are also from this root. Again, it yielded the Proto-Celtic root uidtu < uidta < uidia, yields Gaulish uedio, Old Irish fiad, Welsh gwedd “sight,” and middle Breton gous. The Old Irish fiado, “master, mister,” is from Old Celtic root uedons < ueidons, from PIE root * ueidonts “over-seer, the supervisor” (Julius Pokorny 1959).

Let’s note that in Sanskrit the science of Vidya was also known as uidiia in Old Celtic, hence the name dru-uidia for “firm knowledge.” Both the ⁴rishis and druuides, as they were called in their old respective sacred tongues, were seers of perfect insight. Indeed, both names, mean just that: “seer, true seer” (David Frawly 2000).

As Monard noted for this section, the basic concept of social tripartition was structured accordingly for most of the early Indo-European Societies:

- 1, the learned elite or priestly class as Protectors against ideological and unknown forces: doctors, judges, priests, clerics, bards, poets, and historians;
- 2, Protectors against political and known forces: warriors, gentry, kings;
- 3, producers and workers feeding and equipping the protectors: farmers, herdsmen, fishermen, laborers, artists, and craftsmen. In general, legal ownership was the privilege of the two first classes. And as it was the custom, land titles were mainly given to the aristocratic warrior’s class who employed workers and serfs. For the third class, there was a minimal ownership granted mainly for the exploitation and rental of small plots of land, shops, workshops, and homes.

Was the cosmology of the Celts distinct from that of the other IE cultures?

Although each culture had its special coloring, they all stemmed from a common Indo-European root culture. That is, the philosophical, theological, eschatological and mythological ethos of the Celts diverged little from that of the mother civilization.

In large, the Cosmos was viewed as a multiverse envisioned as a great ball comprised of two bowls sitting on a gigantic wheel thus forming three major worlds or dimensions: the upper world, the middle world, and the lower world.

The greater world was animated by the actors of a mythological play in which the gods served as the instigators of observable and foreseeable cosmic events. More than fictitious characters, they

were the allegorical proponents of both the macrocosm and microcosm. In other words, the gods were the animating agents of this mystical world theater.



Gallic Warriors

Gallic Warriors, Old Encyclopedia illustration, Larousse, Paris, 1929 (public domain).
Boutet_03

Other Basic Indo-European Cosmological Views

The Indo-European seers maintained that from the ethers emanated seven rays that fired our solar system, and that in turn, these seven forces were governed by seven deities whose physical bodies resided in the stars and planets. From this cosmological standpoint, the Vedic seven Rishis or princely seers from the Great Plow (Ursa Major) were in relation to their wives, the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters. They were also called “the seven sisters” in Irish lore. One of these was called the “Old Woman,” or “Hag of Beara,” who appears in the legends, along with her two sisters Cailleach Bolus and Cailleach Corca Duibhne, as a triune goddess. She was also named Bui (Yellow), and certain accounts was said to be the wife of Lugh, the polytechnician king-god. In the Book of Lecan, it is said that she had seven youthful periods, marrying seven husbands and having fifty foster-children seen as the primordial founders of the Gaelic nations. As expressed in the Vedas, the Pleiades represent the female aspects of the seven cows as opposites to the male Rishis represented by the seven bulls. These fourteen powers combined, act through seven of the astral signs in accordance with the Brahma via the unseen spiritual Sun often referred to as the Great Central Sun, or Cosmic Sun, mentioned by western esotericists. Early Vedic Yogis understood this as the guiding principle of the three rays of energy emanating from the cosmic centers of Midheaven. Edward Williams, in his rewriting of Welsh manuscripts entitled *Barddas*, claims to a similar notion in the form of the Tribann (three rays). This implies that at an early stage traditional science and wisdom was a unified concept held sacred to both the Rishis of the South East and Druids of the North West. Let us note that Williams, who went

under the bardic name of Iolo Morganwg, that is, “Edward of Glamorgan,” had reclaimed this druidic heritage for the Welsh nation.

Proposed Western Indo-European Timeline

8000 BCE	6000 BCE	4000 BCE	2000 BCE	1200 BCE	750 BCE	450 BCE	50 BCE
Pontic and Bulgarian Mesolithic Culture	Lepenski Vir II Neolithic Danubian Culture	PIE Lepenski Vir III Danubian Culture	Megalith Builders Late Neolithic Proto or Pre-Indo-European ?	IE Expansion Early Bronze Age Pre-Celtic	Beaker People Late Bronze Age Proto-Celtic	Hallstatt Period Early Iron Age Celtic	La Tène Period Iron Age (Celtic)

The Irish Annals and mythologized History

According to the current theory, the megalithic structures were built by Pre-Celtic peoples who were sun-worshippers. This explains Stonehenge in England and other related sites such as the Orkneys complex of Scotland and Carnac in Brittany. It is generally admitted that they transmitted much of their astronomical knowledge and shamanic practices to the Celtic Druids. They have left many archaeological testimonies of their rustic civilization. Undoubtedly, their most impressive work remains the great stone circle of Salisbury Plain. It is not unlikely that the Celts remembered them as the fabled *Fomorii*⁵. The Celts saw them in possession of evil earth magic and of disordered chaos. This no doubt, because of the Hyperborean shamanism practiced by their wizard-shamans, as Monard proposed. In my mind, the Fomorri belonged to a class of mythological water spirits and that the mound-builders were probably identifiable to the Children of Ceasair mentioned in the *Annals of the Four Masters* who are said to be interred in Connaught at Carn Ceasara.

Moreover, quoting from Gordon Childe on Late Neolithic (ca. 4000 BCE) burial rites, we learn through archaeological interpretation on the practices of many burial rites in relation to the so-called megalithic tombs:

In Northern Europe, the earliest dolmens built in the Lower Neolithic were probably not collective tombs, but by the Middle Neolithic collective burial in megalithic tombs was general.⁶

The Megalithic culture was no doubt the true Atlantean culture. Many cataclysmic events taking place in the area of the Northern Sea clearly indicate that this first civilization suffered repeated massive land collapsing and tidal waves. This took place somewhere around 4000 to 1800 BCE, "seven years" according to the legends. And which probably refer to a full cosmic cycle (for example, the seven planets). Then, during the Bronze Age, around -1200, the weather dries up, thus indicating a warmer climate. The levels of lakes, ponds, bogs, and rivers drop dramatically, extensive clearing of the central European woodlands favor farming practices and the disfavor of hunting practices. This period (2000-1600 BCE) is marked by the great IE expansions mainly with the arrival of the Dorians in Greece, the Hittites in Anatolia and the Philistines into the Mediterranean Sea. The French writer Jean Markale maintains that these events were recorded in the Egyptian annals as the Hyperborean invasions. In Western and Central Europe this period coincides with the development of the Urn-field cultures.

Himilco, the Carthaginian explorer (c. 500 BCE), in an account of his explorations to the north-western Atlantic coast of Europe identifies the Ligurians as close neighbors of the Galli and Celts, along with the Albiones in Great-Britain and the Hierni of Ireland. In this account we find no mention of peoples other than Indo-European. Therefore, we may assume that by 500 BCE the Atlantean Iberians were already incorporated into the Ligurian and Celtic mainstreams.⁵ Joseph Monard gives the family portrait of the Proto-Celts as follows: Proto-Illyrian, the parent language of Illyrian, Etruscan (!?), Thracian, etc... Including Philistine, and Ligurian considered as an intermediate between Illyrian and Celtic and much closer to the former than the first. Let's not forget the Germanic

language which according to Feist and Hubert evolved from the adaptation of a Proto-Celtic idiom by non-Indo-Europeans of the Finnish family.⁷

According to the *Lebor Gabála Érin* or *Book of Invasions*, the fabled peoples of Ireland were: 1. the pre-Deluge children of Ceasair; 2. the post-Deluge tribe of Partholón; 3. the tribe of Nemed; 4. the Fir Bolg; 5. the Tuatha Dé Danaan; and the tribe of Milé otherwise referred to as Milesians.

As above mentioned, then the tribe of Partholón, or Partholonians, arrived in Ireland from Iberia they found a population of very unamicable people called the Fomorii. The French historian and archaeologist Bernard Sergent, using Georges Dumézil's comparativist methodology, discovered that the Irish Fomorii⁸ were identical to the Greek Telchines. Or again, that they could be classified in the same category of mythological beings. The Telchines were the offspring of the sea god Poseidon and the ocean goddess Thalassa. They are described as amphibious palm-footed scaled beings with many other hideous deformities. Their malicious gaze struck fear into mortals and was capable of metamorphosing them into more pleasant and godly forms. Also, they were skilled technicians but kept their science and skills to themselves. Likewise, the Fomorii were deformed creatures from under the sea having Tory Island as their capital. They manifest their opposition upon the arrival of Ireland's first people such as the Partholonians, as they later do with the other comers such as the Nemedians, the Tuatha Dé Danann, and the men of Belgium, Gaul, and Dumnonia. They lose their pre-eminence after the second Battle of Magh Tuireadh. They mingle with the Danaan gods with whom they have fabulous children. Their rulers include Balor of the Evil Eye, father of Cian and Bres, Conann, Morc and Cical. Cian was Lugh's father. In short, the Fomorii are the primordial otherworldly ancestors of the gods and mortals and are the embodiment of their primeval chaotic origins.

Partholón's eldest son was called Eber, the very same name as that of Milesius. According to Françoise Le Roux, the name Partholon seems to pun with the Greco-Aramaic Bar Ptolemaios for "son of Ptolemy." In fact, it most likely stems from the Old Celtic Bardalanos, "the epic poet;" the Goidelic voiced *B* hardened as a devoiced *P*. Legend had it that the Partholonians were the ones who instituted agriculture and ox plowing in Ireland. They also cleared the forests and built the first hostels.

As the name suggests, the Nemedians, Old Irish *nemedei*, from the Old Celtic *nemetoi*, the "holy ones," who much like the Partholonians, must have been Iberian Celts. The Nemetati, or Nemetates, were indeed a tribe living in Galicia, now the province of Minho in Portugal. Although it is risky to draw any conclusions about these people, it is nevertheless possible that they belonged to the Lusitanian nation. This is emphasized by the fact that they are said to have left for Ireland before the Celtic invasions. They, however, do seem to have been in contact with the Megalithic peoples as they shared certain practices belonging to solar cults. This is indicated by the fact that they cleared twelve plains clearly makes the point that they were accustomed to astrological or astronomical practices or thinking. This being said, the Nemedians, were in literal terms,

“the sky people, those from the ether...” In that, nem is from nemos for the sky, heaven, or ether.”

The Tuatha Dé Danann were said to reside in the islands of the North and with them came the primordial druidic teachers. Monard thinks that the Dé Danann, the Greek Danaans, and the Egyptian Denen are all one of the same. The Denen after having raided Egypt were forced back on to Cyprus and became known as the Dnan. As the Danuna, they contributed to the fall of the Hittite empire. Then, as the Danaoi, they mingle with the Achaeans and lead them into the battle of Troy. The apprehensions of Laokoôn were expressed thus, one thousand years later: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes." It seems that they were, along with others such as the Lusacians, of mixed Proto-Illyrian and Proto-Celtic origin and who at that time were hardly distinguishable. It also seems likely that they were detrimental in the Indo-Europeanisation of their Hyperborean Proto-Finish neighbors of the North Baltic who eventually became the Germanic. This explains why these Peoples of the Sea were labelled "Atlantean" by Plato. In fact, the geographers of antiquity maintained that Cap Skagen in Denmark was called Celtica Lytarmis. The Proto-Celtic ancestors to the Goidels⁹ therefore, came from Denmark (J. Monard 1995).

The Fir Bolg most likely came from Belgium while the Irish texts have them in Greece. Their eastern continental Celtic origin was probably blurred by the medieval copyist monks. The name comes from the Celtic names fir < uiros “man” and bolgios “heavy, bulky, muscular,” akin to bolgos “bag.” They are said to have sailed to Ireland not long after the Nemedians with whom they mingled. They arrived there with a coalition of other tribes such as the Fir Domnan and Fir Galeoin, or Fir Galion. The Fir Domnan, or Domnonii, were from Domnonea, Devon in Britain, while the Fir Galion were originally from Gaul.

This being said, as Joseph Monard once remarked, these invasions look more like a historicized account of the druidical Ages akin to the four Ages of Greek myths than actual peoples. This subject will be a topic of discussion in chapter four.

Map of the Celtic Pre-Roman Territories



In alphabetical order, the ancient neighboring Celtic and Celticized lands, kingdoms, and territories, identified on this map were alleged as follows: Bauaria, Boietia, Caledonia, Celtiberia, Celto-Eiqitania (Gallia-Aquitania), Celto-Belgaia (Gallia-Belgica), Celto-Eluetia (Gallia-Helvetica), Celto-Galatia (Gallia-Celtica), Denia (Celtica Litarmis), Gallaica (Galatia), Garmania, Iueria, Lusitania, Luiua, Pretania, Raitia, and Turdetania. Author's drawing.

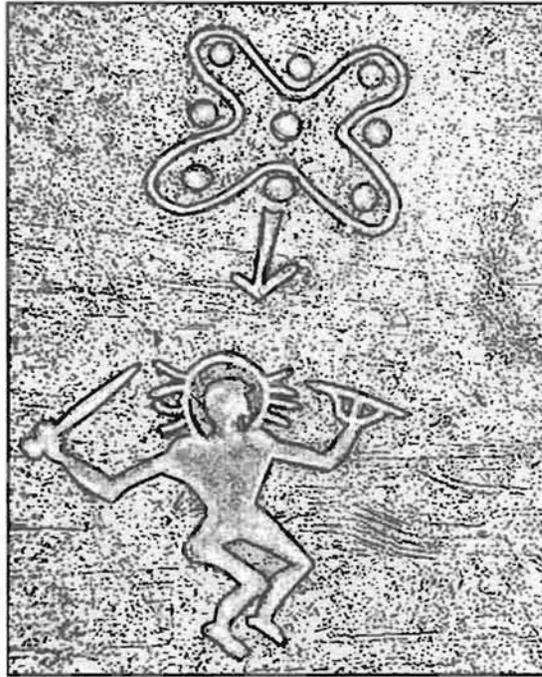
Boutet_04

To conclude, some may ask what use is there on insisting upon the Indo-European data when we could simply go ahead with the Celtic material. Only that we cannot thoroughly understand the underlying structure of Celtic cosmology without connecting it to the parent culture and civilization.

Chapter II

Indo-European and Proto-Celtic Cosmology

“I was created by the wisest of Druids before the world came,
and I know the science of stars since the beginning of time.”
(Taliesin’s *Cad Goddeu*, “The Battle of the Trees”)



The warrior solar master of the elements. Rock Art of Camonica, Italian Alps, Early Bronze Age, 4000 BCE. Author’s digital drawing after a UNESCO photo.

Boutet_05

A Cosmic Ideology

Indo-European religion in his worldview was basically cosmic. That is, that all beliefs and philosophical thoughts were centered on the concepts of the above, of light and darkness, or of all things pertaining to the sky, the stars, the Milky Way, the many heavenly bodies, and so on. This includes, the aspects of these celestial objects, their motions, and fixities, and including everything relative to the luminaries in what is both observable and perceived, real or imagined. That is, this multiverse Cosmos was declined in from its greatest element to its smallest, from the macrocosm to the microcosm. In its holistic makeup, this Cosmos was not to be taken as a universe or as a, but as a multidimensional realm. This multiverse was imagined as a three world construct having overlapping realities. Likewise, these worlds were each broken into three more parts, and so on. Hence, the many regions or scales of the sky separating the earthly surface from the median level of the heavens.

Among others, the Celts and the Norse imagined the world's pole as a tree taking root in the Underworld branching out as the luminous canopy of the Upper world with its trunk, axis, or pole, supporting the sky. The Hittites envisioned it as a scale of nine steps corresponding to the nine levels of mythology there connecting space between ground earth and the heavens. The earthly plane was populated the living and mortal beings while the firmament was the abode of the godly beings. Conceptually, the world was explained as consisting of opposing bowls sitting on the rims of a wheel or a disk-like shield thus forming a sphere which rotated on the great axis. This "Axis Mundi," is the universal pole extending from the lower to the upper world. Onwards, it traverses three worlds: the underworld, the middle world, and the upper world. And as Jean Haudry exposed in *La religion cosmique des Indo-Européens*, each of these worlds had its dominant light, and hue, corresponding to the three colors of the tripartite order:

*Dyew-, daylight, the sky, the Upper-world, the color white;

*Regwos-, dawn and dusk, twilight, the Middle-world; the color red;

*Temó-, "dark," or *Dhūw-, "black," night-time, the Lower-world, the color black.

At the abstract philosophical level, the related vocabulary is not less revealing:

*deiw-, "brilliant, light-emitting, light animation, god;"

*^hreg-, "right, just, order;"

*derma, "(religious) obligation," dedmos, "statute," dem- < dómos/démos, "house/district, people," and * dhétis, "rule, law;"

*temh-, "dark," Sanskrit tamas, Latin temere, Celtic adj., tam-os/-a/-on, tem-os/-a/-on, "very dark, somber."

The Rig Veda states that the principle of light and its element, fire, penetrates all the void of the Cosmos, including the liquid element. Following the example of daylight, water also originates from the sky.

Relentlessly they flow down into the filter of a thousand streams; let them have offspring in the third realm of the world. Four hidden springs pouring fourth butter carry down from the sky the ambrosia that is the oblation.¹

That is, the waters pour from the skies filling the void of emptiness. This notion of fundamental vacuum and plenty was not solely Vedic but was also maintained by the Chinese and Greek cosmographers.

According to Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles*, this duality of the world's nature was conditioned by the two states of fullness and emptiness as physical or metaphysical principles of emptiness and fullness. Only light emitting beings, in the metaphysical sense, could have, and may have, transcended these two conditions.²

In this situation, they sublimated less density, and were cooler than the groundwater. They consisted mainly of light and energy (or electricity, as the Greeks called it), hence their brightness and transparency.

Donald Cyr, in *King Arthur's Crystal Cave*, proposed that in prehistory the earth's higher atmosphere was veiled by a thin layer of ice crystals. This acted like a giant screen or

mirror on which the reflections of topography, seas, lakes, and rivers were projected. Cyr found that most mythologies of Europe agreed to the notion of a celestial tree or river. Thus, the entire Cosmos was said to bathe in a sea of ethereal fluid where celestial rivers also flowed. Hence the Homeric concept of “*rivers that fly in the sky.*”

The Hittite tablets are in total agreement with Homer on these heavenly waters. To quote from Emilia Masson (my translation from the original French text):

I will take the sun and spit it up! And what will the storm god do?
At the request of the Dawn, the storm god, wearing the antler of seven points,
climbing to the summit of the World's Mount to fight the dragon that blocks the
heavenly waters. There follows an aqueous cataclysm that floods the earth.
In former times, when the Ocean (...) Heaven, Earth, and Man (...) And the Ocean,
gave battle and pulled down (the Sun God of Heaven) and hid him (...) And evil was
(settled) in the country (...) And the Storm God called Telibinu, his good and right son:
“O, Telibinu (will) you too, with the Ocean and (back) of the Sun Ocean Sky.”³

In this early cosmography, the Earth, which was seen as a large disk or a wide area, and then a sphere, was seen as surrounded by a vast ocean. Four great twelve-spoked cosmic wheels revolved around it. These represented the four seasons and the twelve zodiacal constellations of the ecliptic. And in this ocean of the Milky Way, bathed the Pleiadean goddesses guarded by Arcturus, the Watcher. In each of the four regions of the sky were four great islands with a citadel and its ruler. This being that non-zodiacal constellations were seen as islands in a vast cosmic ocean. The land was bordered by nine seashores represented by nine scaled ladders that separated the realms of the pale mortals to that the luminous ones. A thick cloud layer acted as a screen or mirror that captured the reflections of the earth onto the cosmos. Hence the hermetic expression: “What is below is as above.” This mirror effect is still noticeable today in the skies of some northern latitudes.

All that was, emanated from the burst of rumor and sound.

And this rumor was not just the roar of the ocean's waves, the din of a mountain torrent, but also the whisper of the distant murmur of a brook. As expressed in Vedic literature, all that vibrates emanates from three founts, including prime being, mind and spirit.

The Indo-European traditions generally agree on the importance of the first sounds, the three prime utterances. Word first three syllables, the sound is the seed of creation, the principle of being and life desire. The philosophical problem was to find what came first in the fiery Cosmos: the Great Serpent, the Swan Spirit, or the Golden Embryo. Fire is gold as gold is in water, as it was primitively thought. These notions were thus expressed in the Rig Veda:

The young women, the waters, flow around the young god making him shine and gazing solemnly upon him. With clear, strong flames he shines riches upon us, wearing his garment of butter, blazing without fuel in the waters.⁴

From these early myths, a model of the Universe emerges. In short, for the Indo-Europeans, the earthly world consisted of a rocky island mass bathing in a great ocean

into which the sun plunges and reemerges. However, it came about that these mythological views were contradicted by the observational notations gathered by the sky-gazing astronomers. And the ancient cosmographers discussed much on the underlying mechanism guiding the heavenly bodies. By the 4th century BCE, many suspected that the sun was at the center of the universe, but many others, in agreement with Aristotle, believed that the sun and moving stars moved about Earth in concentric circles. The Celtic Druids knew of the Earth's rotundity, hence referring to it as Crundion, "the sphere."

Then by the 3rd century, Aristarchus of Samos seeing the impossibility for a geocentric system adopted the heliocentric model. The idea had been for floating about for some time since the metaphysicians of mystic tradition had already proposed that to the world's center radiated a hypothesized great central Sun.

Aspects of Indo-European Cosmology, Creation Myths, and Cosmography

Not unlike creation myths found within the Greek and the Vedic creation myths, the Celts also envisioned the birth of the world as originating from a cosmic egg. Although similar, the Celtic theme varies somewhat. For the Vedas, the world breaks forth from a swan's egg described as a golden embryo. The same motif for the Greeks where Nyx, a black-winged bird, lays the golden egg. But for the Gauls, it is a dragon-serpent that is spawned from the egg. The Norse creation myth also diverges from the golden egg theme in that it is a cow that emerges from the prime elements of ice and fire only to nurture the primordial man Ymir with her milk.

Cosmological elements of iconography can be observed in Celtic Art, particularly on coinage. It is therefore rare to find firsthand accounts in writing.

The following is my translation from the transliteration of The Botorrita plate was found in Spain in 1970. To this day, it is the longest inscription in Old Celtic consisting of twenty lines of text, front, and back. Since the Celtiberic script is biconsonantal, it permits the many crafty puns that were called for by the scribes of Antiquity.

Diricantam Bercunetacam tocoitos-cue sarnicio-cue suacom balcez ne litom.

"The starry circumference, the glorious one of the mountain, of the common ones and of the rite without obligation."

Or again, with Di = Ti alternative syllable yielding:

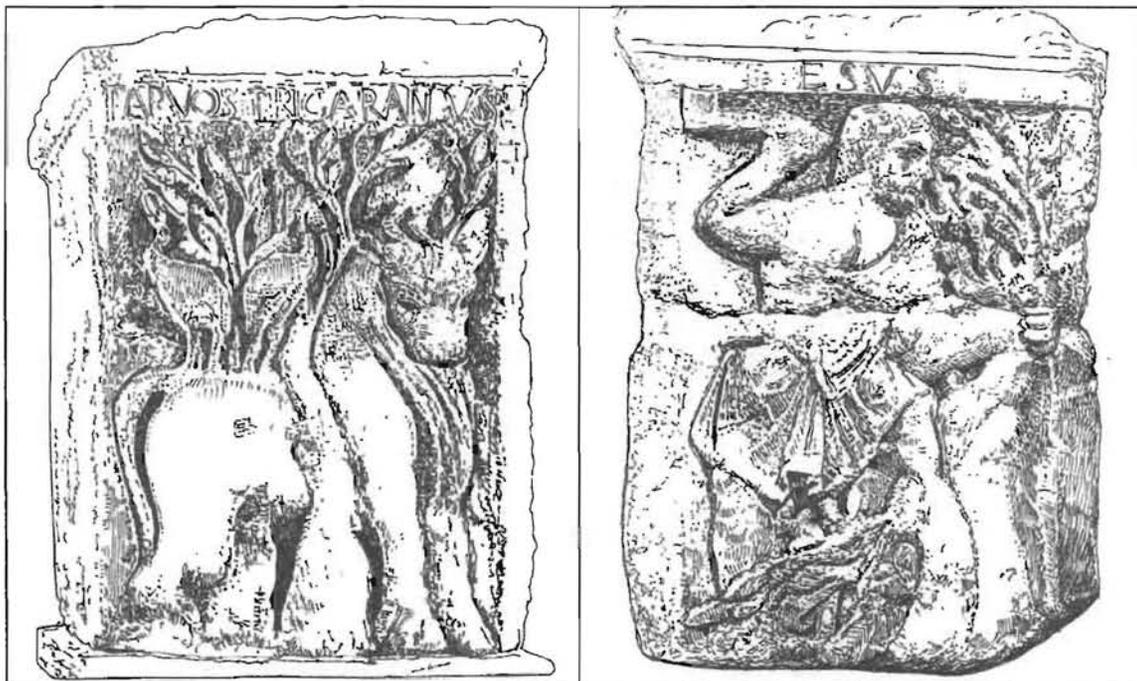
Tiricantam Bercunetacam tocoitos-cue sarnicio-cue suacom balcez ne litom.

"Beyond the circumference (of the world), the glorious one of the mountain, of the common ones and of the rite without obligation."

From this short line, we can deduce that the Celts of Iberia understood the Cosmos as a circumference surrounding a mountainous peak and that it was regulated by ritual order.

Diricantam and Tiricantam are similar in terminology to the Welsh Ceugant, “infinity,” found in Edward William’s *Barddas*, where he claimed it to be the last and outermost circle in Llewelyn Siôn’s 16th-century cosmogony.

As previously mentioned, in Indo-European cosmography this great circumference, in which were four vast plains and within their midst stood the world peak, was bordered by an ethereal ocean and a ring of fire. The Axis Mundi was set in the hub of this circumference seen as a formidable shield atop the umbo. The Greeks imagined the sky vault supported by four great pillars held in place by Atlas, the world giant. In Vedic myths, the primeval giant, the Purusha, was sacrificed and dismembered, and from his body parts, used as building blocks, the World was assembled. For the Norse, it was Auðumbla the cow, or the brown bull of Cooley for the Irish, that was the initial sacrificial victim. In early Indo-European myth, the bull, seen as a constellation, represented daylight along with the heat of days. The god of the day sky upheld the World Tree whose trunk served as the universal pillar or support. The four major earthly plains were collectively called Litauia in Gaulish. These were cleared to make way for the sun’s path. The wood of the trees then served to fuel the sacrificial pyre of the sun for the sky god. Once the solar path cleared, twelve domains were established along its way. These were the foundations for the twelve astral estates in which remained the choiced of trees positioned in each major zodiacal constellation.



The *Pilier des Nautes* monument featuring Taruos Trigaranos, the bull of the three cranes representing the stars of Taurus along with the Pleiades, and featuring the High God Esus trimming down the World Tree. Author’s drawing after a photo from the Musée de Cluny Paris, French Ministry of Culture, Paris.

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The Irish had mythological designations for these trees. The best description was given in the *Rennes Dindsenchas* as translated by Whitely Stokes. These fabled trees were namely: the Bile Tortan, the Éo Rosa, the Craeb Mugna, and the Craeb Dathi.⁵

All the common Indo-European cosmographic elements are present in this pseudo-historical mythological recount, including the outburst of waters.

Notice that four chief trees are given, each growing in a designated quarter of the plain of Luachair.⁶

Tea daughter of Lugaid son of Ith wife to Erem son of Mil (from her Temair was derived), and to her was given Temair Luachra and Bregian Temair and every other Temair which exists Ireland. Now Luachair itself was a flowery plain till the time of the sons of Ugaine – or (as others say) till the birth of Conn (of the Hundred Battles). Or 'tis then that (the rivers) Suir and Nore and Barrow burst forth, also Loch Riach, and Loch Léin in Luachair; and Tortu's Tree and the Yew of Ross and the tree of Mugna and the tree of Dathe were (first seen).⁷

Cosmography

The gods were seen as spirits pure beings of light. From these bright beings, emanates thought projected as beams of light. The proto-Indo-European root *dwi-, "daylight,"⁸ "deiw-, "god," is at the root of this esoterical concept. Diurnal time was expressed by the PIE root *agh-, "day, daytime," or again, *ayer- for "morning." The stars also had early denominations as evidenced by *aster⁹. The planets, as we understand them today, were seen as wandering or moving stars. Hence the Greek word planâthai for "planets."¹⁰ The term was borrowed by the Romans calling them astra planeta for "wandering stars."

The Old Irish name Tect¹¹, to designate planet Jupiter, was formed along the same lines as for the Greek astronomy. The same can also be said for Khecara, which in Sanskrit means "aerial entity, planet," and which also carries the meaning of "messenger of the gods," such as a bird moving through the air and seen esoterically as a messenger of the gods. Again, the Sanskrit word Mandala for "circle, disc," also means "planet," and understood as an orb in the sky. Mandala is from the Proto-Indo-European root *mAnd- meaning "slow and lazy." Again, the Sanskrit name for Saturn was quite fittingly called Manda or Mandaga, "slow, sluggish," in that it is the slowest of planets in the night sky. Not surprisingly, the Old Irish name for Saturn, Miln or Meln¹², also meant indolent or sluggish. The wandering stars of the Greeks included: Saturn: Phainôn, "the shining;" Jupiter: Phaeton, "the ardent," Mars: Pyroeis, "the fiery;" Venus: Eosphoros, "the dawn bearer," and Mercury: Stilbon, "the brilliant." Unfortunately, no assured common Indo-European names for the planets can be given. Nevertheless, if one should risk a few possible astronoms. Here are some of the proposed cognates: the Greek Ares is probably akin to the Sanskrit Ara and the Old Celtic Aros qualifying the god Mars and maybe denoting a deified heavenly body. That is, planets were seen as the embodiment of the gods. Therefore, in all logic, it is possible to propose astronoms from the basis of compared languages and myths.

Probable Indo-European root words for the planets

Planet	Indo-European etymology	Other designations
Mercury	*Bheudh- *astér- “far-seeing, awakened, star,” Sanskrit Budha, cf. Gaelic Boudh; planet Mercury;	Norse, Mals Stjarna “star of eloquence;” Sanskrit Himna, “cold, wintery,” and Pajcarcis, “five-rayed.”
Venus	*Aus- *astér- “the aurora or dawn star,” Avestic, Ušastara-; Ancient Greek, Heōsphóros, “dawn light;” Old Germanic, *Ausrowendil; Planet Venus, “the Morningstar;” and/or *Albh-*astér- or *arg’-/*e-*astér- and *k’weit-*aster, “morning star,” Norse, Blankastjarna, “white star;” Sanskrit, Sita, “white,” Sitahvaya, whitish,” Zveta, “white,” Zvetaratha, “the white wain.”	Welsh, seren fore; Gaelic realta na maidin; Norse, Morginstjarna, “Morningstar.”
Mars	*eReudh- *astér- “the red star,” Sanskrit, Rakta, Raktaga, “the red, reddish;” Sanskrit, Róhita, Lahitaga, Lohá-, Lóhita; Avestic, Raodita-, the red planet;” Tokharian, Rtär; Ancient Greek, Eréuthō; Gaulish, Roudios, Roudiobos; Old Germanic, Rudja.	Gaulish, Cocidios; Gaelic, Goac, “the red one;” Norse, Bloð-stjarna, “blood (red) star;” Latin, Mars, Greek Ares, the god of war.
Jupiter	*Dewt- / *Dwān- *astér- “front-running star, messenger star,” Sanskrit, Angiras, Dūtá- “messenger, envoy, emissary;” Celtic, Tectos, “messenger;” Old Germanic, *Tūwan-, *Tauwian- “front-runner.” *Taw-*astér- “big, strong star, and/or *Meg’a- *astér- “big, megastar,” Sanskrit Brhattejas, “star of great strength, overpowering;” Norse, Megenstjarna “star of greatness.”	Sanskrit Guru, “master,” Amaruguru, “masters of the gods;” Ancient Greek, Déuteros “the second one.”
Saturn	*Mand- *astér- “slow star,” Gaelic Miln, “slow, sluggish;” Sanskrit Manda, Mandaga “slow, sluggish.”	Norse, Gnogleiks-stjarna, “star profusion.”

The Three Main Deified Qualities of Heaven

The god of the daytime sky is the convener of the clouds while the god of the night sky is the keeper of the stars. The daytime sky is the realm of the living while the night sky is the realm of spirits. The worlds of the nightly earth and of the moon belong to the shadows of the dead.

The heavenly waters gather around the light of the Sun Goddess and her sisters, the pregnant watery Moon Queen, and Venus Aurora, both related to Fate and to the destiny of mortal humans. Venus, with her epiphanies as Morning Star and Evening Star, in her brilliance, shines like a pearl. Her reflection on the earth's atmosphere makes for surprising metamorphoses. Depending on the weather conditions, she is coiffed with horns, crowns, and wings. Hence her intimate relationship with the two major gods of heaven: the diurnal Jupiter and the nocturnal Saturn. Dumézil, who analyzed these gods, saw the Roman Jupiter-Dius Fidius, as the regulator Day God, and Quirinus-Vofionus or Mars Pacifer, as the disorderly Night God. In that, the daytime is clear, warm and reassuring, while night-time is dark, cold and disturbing.

According to the *Coir Anmann*, "The Fitness of Names," there were three godly pillars in the Old Irish faith. This very archaic mythological and theological theme was hardly remembered in the myths of the other Indo-European peoples, but nevertheless, has miraculously survived under the pen of the medieval copyist monks. In this Irish account, the three Fothad form a triad of sky gods linked to the qualities of daylight. The three Fothad¹³ are thus named in Whitley Stokes edition of *The Fitness of Names*, section 220: Aendia, Trendia, and Caendia.

Much of the ethos surrounding these allegorical characters is obscured in bardic wordplay, but which, nevertheless, shines through. For better clarity, here is the entire passage following Stoke's English translation from the Irish and which I have in part rewritten following Guyonvarc'h and Le Roux's French version of the same text.

The three Fothads were called fó-suithi since they were "good offspring. Or Fothaidh, as it is written, in that they were fotha suith, "foundation of offspring," Fuinche's firstborn. Or Fothaidh, that is, fo thaidhe, "by stealth," surreptitiously for Mac Niad, that is, Mac Con begat them with Fuinche, daughter of Béne Brit, king of Britain. Or Fothaidh, that is, from fi, "evil," and aed, "fire," because they were a virulent fire destroying clans and kindreds. Or Fothaidh, that is, fó-thádi, for good thefts, are they since every illicit copulation is a theft. Hence said the druid: "Welcome the theft whence the trio thus sprang." From then on, the name Fothaidh stuck to them. Their names were Oendia, "the one god," Tréndia, "the strong god," and Caendia, "the fair god." Oendia was the herdsman, Tréndia the charioteer, and Caendia was the one called Fothad Canainne. Fuinche bore them for Mac Con at one birthing. Fuinche gave birth to Oendia at nightfall (the name was given to him for the luck of having no king); Tréndia came at midnight (the name was given to him because of trésse, the strength he had from the gods); and Caendia arrived in the morning. The name Caen-dia was given to him because of delightfulness and for the beauty of the red morning light. The name Fothad Cananne was after Canann from a hound that he had. By him also was named Dinn Chanann on Mag Lin. Or again, Fothad Cainidae, for cáin, since fair and

beautiful were the dée, the gods, when he was born. Fothad Airgtech, “the moneyed,” because it is wealth that was dearest to him, as it was said. Fittingly were his possessions, his champion’s bracelet, his two rings, his golden torc, and his horse. Fothad of the Chariots, as he was named since horses and chariots were the portion he gave to his sons. Fergus Dolus was another of his names.¹⁴

These three godly pillars or columns of the Sun are but allegorical aspects of the old triple faced Sky God, which the Old Irish remembered as the Dagda, “the good god,” Eochaid, the powerful “all-father,” and Ruad Rofessa, “the red of great knowledge.”

Chapter III

The Great Cosmic Wheel and the Master of Time

"I know who made the great pole which connects earth and heaven (Taliesin, Book of Taliesin, The Hostile Conspiracy)."



The six-spoked wheel referred to as a Labaron in the old Gaulish language.

Boutet_08

Sky Wheels of the Ancient Seers

The wheel is one of the oldest symbols in Indo-European representation. The wheel and chariot were indeed an early innovation of the Steppes cultures. It was then seen as the allegory of the cosmic cycles of time. As a major theme of European Bronze Age representation, it is found primarily in Rock Art, on ceramics, in Bronze Art, and secondarily, in jewelry and numismatics. One of the oldest representations of the wheel god is found on the *Gundestrup Cauldron*. Behind a fearsome bearded man is a youth operating a large wheel. In Vedic literature, there is much mention of the Kalaçakra¹ which represented the revolutions of cyclical time along with its perpetual motion. The Sanskrit word Chakra is from the same Indo-European root as the Latin word circus and English circle. As mentioned, another similar Sanskrit name is Kheçara for “wanderer,” “messenger and planet,” as a wandering star.

The Irish king Ailill and his queen Medb’s had a circular palace called the Ráth Cruachan which moved through the air. This flying wheel is described as being pierced with twelve glazed windows. At the center of the disc are found Ailill and Medb’s bronze contour seats decorated with silver ornaments. Facing Ailill, a long silver pole sets against a partitioned wall. It was by the means of this rod, also called the scepter of authority, that he controlled the ship. Through twenty-seven glass windows, Ailill could observe each one of the palace maidens. The magnitude of this flying palace was such that there was room for any number of guests.

This theme is echoed in the Indian story of King Citaketu who had a similar vessel given to him as a gift from the high god Vishnu. It was equipped with long booms manufactured by Shiva that issued the solar fire. It was said to be brilliant in appearance from which emitted light beams which rendered him invisible.

This was not an isolated story with the Indo-Europeans for we find many other descriptions of such wheels such as this one from the *Ramayana*:

Protection under the feet of the husband is better than being on top of a lofty building or in aerial cars or in moving through the sky or in attaining all types of positions.²

Or again in the Rig Veda there is this passage:

The Wheel of Pusan has not suffered, the trunk is not reversed, the rim is not demolished.”³



Gallic coinage of the Turones, Loire France. Drawing by the author.
Sun god driving the chariot of the Sun.

Boutet_09

The earliest Hindu texts, the Vedas, use the word *Ratha*, meaning, “chariot, carriage,” or more specifically a light two-wheeled chariot, rather than *Vimana* to designate a “flying machine.” This does not mean that the theme of the shell, symbolizing celestial space, is not as old as the radiant flywheel or the sky chariot. That said, the Vedas often refer to the gods who ride in a flying chariot *Ratha* or carrying them in the firmament when it is not on a fabulous giant bird. It is, as we have said, a very common theme in the mythology of various Indo-European peoples. Think only of Persian art, where the halo winged chariot of the sun circle *Mithra* appears frequently on the ancient royal stela. Or, the chariot of *Helios* in Greek which has the quality to ignite as the sun traversing the ecliptic and passing through each of the astrological signs.

One day *Phaethon*, which is the illegitimate son of *Apollo Helios*⁴, the Sun, and *Clymene* the Oceanide wife of King *Merope*, doubting his divine son-ship, began to find his father. At *Helios*, where gold shines palace, it is always noon and it is never dark. Proof of filial gratitude, *Phaeton* gets permission to drive the celestial chariot of his father. But *Phaeton* cannot control this chariot which goes racing through the constellations, there projecting fireballs which fall onto the earthly plains and mountains and there setting them afire. Following complaints from the goddess of the Earth, *Zeus* seizes his lightning spear and throws it at *Phaeton* who makes a fatal fall. It goes without saying that the theme of the chariot of *Apollo Helios* is a well-known classical myth.

Moreover, according to *Bernard Sergent*, *Apollo* also has, along with other attributes, many other names in relation to the principle of light which bring him closer to the king-gods, the Celtic *Lugus* and the Hindu, *Indra*. As the king of the *Devas*, *Indra* has his residence on *Mount Meru* in an area called *Svarga* in the heavenly city of *Amaravati*. He travels on a flying car called, *Uchchairvas*, or *Vimana*, or *Pushpaka*, pulled by his horse and driven by a *Matali* box. His magic bow, *Shakradhanus*, has the appearance of a rainbow sky and elephant carries his throne *Airavata*, seven tubes. The Irish *Lugh* rides atop the waves in a self-sailing ship called the *Scuabtuinne*, “the wave sweeper.” *Indra*, as *Lugh* or his counterpart *Manannan*, is related to meteorology and celestial phenomena. And as *Lugh*, is associated with the forces of light and fire. The leader of the troop surge of *Maruts*, the gods of the storm, he is also the head of *Vasu*. Closely associated with *Vishnu*, he is the son of *Rudra*. And as *Aoghus* or *Belenos* and *Apollo*, he is forever young. Thus, it is *Indra* as a handsome young man armed with a strong *chakra* (disc or wheel) and a *vajra* (fulgurates or lightning). In the Germanic tradition, it is *Freyr* and *Wotan* that are drawn on a flying chariot. *Freyr*'s chariot, armed with three blazing horns, is led to the battle by *Gullinbursti* the boar. While in other myths, apart from *Sleipnir*, the eight-legged horse, the chariot of *Odin* or *Wotan*, is drawn by a flight of two eagles and a pack of ravens. Also, it carries a large bolt rod called *Irminsul*. Much like *Apollo* who travels the ecliptic through the *Zodiac*, *Wotan* presided over the eight major annual festivals of the Teutonic peoples. These being the major annual moon festivals. This doubling of four better explains the reason for *Sleipnir* having eight legs.



Gallic coin depicting the horned Cernunnos topped with a sun wheel (held to a cap by a two stepped scale or small ladder) and surrounded by a few stars. Author's drawing.

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In other words, the great flying or burning wheel, cosmic rays and lightning bolts, along with the winged-horse driven solar chariot, were all attributes of Indo-European the sky god and his acolytes. Again, all these symbols must be taken as elements of a broader cosmic play. In this mythological plot, the stage is set and the curtains are drawn. Although it would be easy to interpret these events and celestial objects according to our present science, we need not conclude to the evidence of an antediluvian technically advanced civilization or to the proof ancient alien visitations. As previously mentioned, the Indo-European mindset is basically cosmological. But then again, upon reflection, all of this does play out like a science-fiction novel.

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