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**Celtic Cosmography**

**Part 6**

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**Chapter 4**

# The symbolism of the Tree Alphabet of the Irish Ogham

The Lord answered them,  
Through language and elements:  
Take the forms of time principal trees,  
Arranging yourselves in battle array,  
And restraining the public.

*(The Battle of the Trees, The Four Ancient Books of Wales, The Book of Taliesin VIII.)*



The three sons of Elatha, Ogma, Bres, and Delbaeth. Author's drawing.  
Boutet\_71

Tree symbolism is probably the best remembered by those interested in Celtic esoteric thought. Although there is much to be found in the domain of Gallic Antiquity, Irish and Welsh tree lore is more readily accessible. Quoting from *The Book of Ballymote*, we have these poetic lines which inform us on the underlying esoteric philosophy of the Irish Druids:

Ogma being a man much skilled in dialects and in poetry, it was he who invented ogham, its object being for signs of secret speech known only to the learned, and designed to be kept from the vulgar and poor of the nation... It is called Ogham, by the inventor, Ogma." An asserted derivation is ogham, which some believed in relation with "og-uaim," that is the "og-uaim" or wisdom through which the bards were enabled to compose; for by its branches, the Irish Bards sounded their verses. The father of Ogham is Ogma, the mother of Ogham is the knife or hand of Ogma. "Soim" is said to have been the first thing written in Ogham. On a Birch, it was written, and given to Lugh, the son of Etlem. "What

is the place, time person and reason for the invention of the Ogham? Not hard! The place is Hibernia insula quam nos Scoti habitamus. It was at the time of Bres, son of Elatha, king of Ireland, that it was invented. The person is Ogma, son of Elatha, son of Delbaeth, brother of Bres, Bres, Ogma and Delbaeth are the three sons of Elatha, son of Delbaeth. Thus it was Ogma, a man very wise in language and poetry, who invented the Ogham. The cause for this invention, as a proof of his intelligence, is that this language was reserved as the property of the learned to the exclusion of the brutish and the shepherds. From what does the Ogham take its name after the name and thing? Who are the father and mother of the Ogham? What is the first name that was written in Ogham? In what letters was it written, by whom was it written and why does the 'b' precede each letter? *Hic uoluntur omnia.*<sup>1</sup>

This account, taken literally, would imply that Ogma<sup>2</sup> was not a god but a mere mortal, “*a man much skilled.*” This brings us closer to the theme of the Greek champion and mythical hero Herakles (Hercules), who was clearly identified to the Gaulish Ogmios by Lucian. Much like Herakles, Ogmios was pictured by a Gaulish painter, in a lion's skin, a bow and arrows, and a club, and there leading a band of merry slaves tied to his tongue with golden fetters. This in order to express his powers as god of eloquence and magical binding. More impressive still, was Hercules's challenge in performing a set of twelve labors imposed on him by Hera, Zeus's sister, and companion. This just indicates that Ogmios is an important astrological figure. Hercules is a northern constellation between Corona Borealis and Lyra, again linking him to Arts and Poetry. Not hard to guess that Ogmios<sup>2</sup> was the Gallic name for this constellation. According to Monard, the best etymological definition of Ogmios is “champion,” with the implied meaning of “notcher.” This is corroborated by the *Book of Ballymote* where it claims that *Soim*<sup>3</sup> was the first word ever written in Ogham.

Enough beating around the bush, lets branch on to the linguistic, iconographical, and mythological details concerning tree symbolism found in Ogham:

### **The Beth-Luis-Nion with etymological derivations**

#### **B, the Tribe of B from Birch.**

Betua, “birch” / Bitu, “the world;” biuitos, biotos, “life;” batus, “death;” beitis, “way;” bissis, “finger;” and Budh < Boudios, one of the names of planet Mercury.

Although the labial consonant *B* has the same value as with the Greek beta, in Old Celtic, it was subject to certain mutations. For example, *ban*, the Irish name for “woman,” evolved from the Proto-Celtic root \**guena* to *bena*, and *mbna*. The nasalizing of the initial *B* to an *M* can also be noted. This sound shift can be observed with the Gaelic *ban* yielding *mhan* and *mna*. The shift of *U* to *B* can also be noted in names such as Goidelic *bodua*, “crow-hen,” yielding *bodb* in Irish Gaelic.

According to legend, the primordial word, *soim*, was written on birch-wood. The birch sign stands for the world of the living, life and death, and the path. The phonetic equivalents of *Beth* originate from the root word *Betua* for “birch,” which in bardic wordplay yield many related puns. Birch was always seen as a lively and luminous tree. Science has it that it was the first of deciduous trees to re-conquer the post-glacial wastelands, and it is the first to bud in early spring. Its bark is bony white or white as milk. *B* is therefore for *Bitu*, “the Land of

the Living,” this world which we call Earth. In mythical terms, it is Tir na mBéó<sup>4</sup>. In the eyes of the Druids, the Birch tree very much expresses this notion of life for it was taken to be a symbol for the great mother goddess. It does also relate to the Irish theonym Boand<sup>5</sup>. In astronomical terms, it symbolically relates to the Milky Way. Was it not called Bealach na bó finne or Bealach na bó baine, the track of the white cow,” in Gaelic Irish?<sup>6</sup>

**L, from Luis, the quicken-tree of the wood, the delight of the eye that is Luisiu**

Luis < luis, “mountain ash;” Leucis, leuxsis, louxso, “a bright flash;” Luan < luana < luxsna < louxsna, “light emitting, the moon;” louxsnos, “light emitting;” lemos / limos, “elm-tree;” lemos, “stag;” loucios, “lighteous;” lugion, “oath;” and lugios, “wished for;” Luctos, “the war party, a dash of light,” name of the planet Mars coalescing with Leucetios / Loucetios, “the light bearer or carrier,” an epithet of the god Lugus.

This Ogham letter matches the Greek lambda. Luis is taken to either represent both the mountain ash, the quicken-tree, or alternatively lemos or limos, the elm tree. In the Scandinavian Eddas, Yggdrasill, the giant ash spans and outbranches into the three worlds. The Gallic nation of the Lemouices gave their name to Limoges, in the old province of Limousin in France. Their name means “those who vanquish by the elm.” The Celtiberic mercurial god Lugus and his two brothers, the two Lougoues, are associated to the Lusitanoi, “the mountain ash people” of western Iberia. The Lusones were of the grasslands. At the old level of language, the name Lugus punned with lugos, for “bird, or raven.” In ancient times, the letter “L” could have also stood for laurasios, “laurel tree,” which crowned the heads of heroes, a tree mainly known in southern Gaul and Iberia. Strabo in his *Geography* thus describes the land of the mountain ash people: “To the east the Gallicians border on the nation of the Asturians and Keltiberians, the others [border] on the Keltiberians. In length Lusitania is 3000 stadia; its breadth, which is comprised between the eastern side and the opposite seacoast, is much less. The eastern part is mountainous and rugged, while the country beyond, as far as the sea, consists entirely of plains, with the exception of a few inconsiderable mountains.”<sup>7</sup>

**N in Ogham from Nion, the Ash for spears.**

Nuin < onna < oscna / ‘Lnos < olnos, “flowering ash;” Neart / neirt < nertos, “myrtle” / nertos, “might.” Nucturos Uosiros, “the nightly slowpoke,” planet Saturn.

The letter *N* carries the same value as with the Greek nu. It represents the flowering ash tree of the fraxinus genus and the olive family. This sign, first of the eight “chieftain trees” listed in the *Book of Ballymote*. Ash is from the Old English word aesc which was oscna, then osna Old Celtic. It later contracted to Onna which became onnen in Welsh and nion in Old Irish. In modern Irish, it is spelled fuinnseog. In early Germanic myth, the ash tree was considered as the cosmic axis, linking the upper world with the middle and lower worlds. Ash wood was prized in spear-making, and let’s not forget that the spear was an important solar symbol in relation to the sun’s entry through the Eastern door. Since the initial letter for ash wasn’t the letter *N*, it is probable that the ascription for it may have been nertos for “myrtle.” The name Nertos carried the dual meanings of “might, strength,” and “myrtle.”

Therefore, it was only in Old Irish that ash could start with an *N*. At the old level of Celtic, *N* could also be for *namos*, or *nemos*, “the sky,” and *neinos*, “the zenith.” This brings us to the Old Celtic notion of the sky’s vault upheld by an ash pole. A few Greek authors such as Lucius Flavius Arrianus (86 – 160 CE), commented on the way the Celts boasted of fearing nothing but having the sky fall on them.

“Ptolemy son of Lagos, mentioned that during this campaign, that the Celts settled in the region of Adria came to meet Alexander in order to gain from him the benefits of friendship and hospitality. The king received them warmly, and during the meal, he asked them what they feared the most, persuaded that they would answer that it was of him. But in reply, they boasted that they feared no one powerful, fearing only that the sky should fall on them, and that they placed human friendship, such as that of Alexander, above all else.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **U: 'V/F' from Fern, the Alder.**

Fern < *uernos*, “alder” / *Uernos*, “good;” *uernon*, “estate;” adj. *uer-os/-a/-on*, “truthful, rightful, honest;” *uiros*, “man;” *uirionia*, “truthfulness, rightfulness, honesty;” *Uasnia*, “dawn,” planet Venus, the Morning Star; *Falias* and *Findias*, two of the four fabled cities of the Tuatha dé Danann.

This *U* semiconsonant is not to be confused with the vowel. It was written as *V* in Latin, which eventually mutated into *F*. It has no Greek match. Symbolically, *U* could stand for goodness, truth, and virility, or *faol*<sup>9</sup>, “wild,” and connoting “wolf.” Alder was made very useful in the preparations of dyes. In fact, three grades of dyes could be made from the alder tree: red from the bark, brown from the twigs, and green from the flowers. These colors were varied in many hues for the weaving of plaids. An ancient art that the Celts and Scythians learned from the Cimmerians, it was said. This sign can also be taken for Fergus and Ferann, including all references to Fionn and his band of heroes the Fianna. *Fid*, from *uid-*, puns with both *uidu*, “forest,” and *uidia* / *uidiia* / *uidta* / *uidtu* > *uissu*, “wisdom and science.” Like the yew, it is a “bleeding tree” for its sap turns red as blood. It was, therefore, made sacrilegious to fell the ax to this human-like tree. In folk tradition, it was believed that alder was the most powerful vehicle for magic-making. Did not the Druids carry whistles made of an alder branch to call the winds? Its wood found great use in waterworks as piles for wharves and raised piers for riverfront buildings, ship-building, mills, crannogs, and dikes. Its charcoal was also used for sword-making. For these reasons, alder wood was the ideal kiln wood for blacksmiths as it gave the best charcoal for smithery.<sup>10</sup>

#### **S from Sail, a Willow from the wood.**

Sail < *saelicos*, *salicos*, *salix*, “willow;” *sauelia* / *sauelios* > *sualis* / *saulios* > *saulo* / *saulos*, “sun;” *sulis*, “eye;” *suliuia*, “well colored,” theonym *Suliuia* the eye of the Sun, the Sun goddess.

Sail matches the Greek sigma. That is, *S* for *saelicos*, *sauelia*, and *sulis* is to be understood as a very old bardic pun going back to the early Indo-European culture. The eye and the sun motif linked to color was also entertained in the *Rig Veda* of India. The sun’s eye is an allegory of the triple goddess as consort to the sun god. These Fate fairies were folklorized

as the Banshee<sup>11</sup>, female earth-spirits hosting the Sun, always bring about change and transformation if not rebirth. In oral lore, it was held that certain fairies were particular to certain families, warning them of death's encroachment by sending out eerie sounds. Willow was held sacred by poets and it was sacrilegious to have it burned. Mid-wives<sup>12</sup> and empirical medicine-men knew how to prepare remedies from the willow's bark, extracting the salicylic acid for easing of pain, or rheumatism, migraines and riding of lunacy. In popular superstition, it was thought that these ailments were caused by evil moon spirits or malevolent sorcerers. And in empirical medicine, willow was associated to head and bone ailments, all linked, as tradition had it, to the effects of moon radiation on water. In other words, willow infusions corrected the effects of those struck by moonbeams.

**H from Huath, Whitethorn, a crooked tree or bush because of her thorn.**

Uath < huath < uaəos < squaəos, “test tree, whitethorn;” sgitheach < scuiats / spetes (Brt), “hawthorn, whitethorn;” and/or in other Old Celtic spellings: xquiats (Gdl) / xpetes (Brt), “hawthorn;” and/or scobies, “elder;” scubulon, “black nightshade;” scetlon < scuetlon, “narration, account, story;” sculon, “knot;” \*squittu > cittu (Gdl), “clumsy, lefthanded.”

This letter is often given as huath, from h-Uath, and having the phonetic value of the aspirated consonant *H*, and which has no equivalent in Greek. It isn't a cognate of the runic haglaz either. Since the letter *H* as an initial sound did not exist at the ancient level of the various ancient Celtic idioms, it is likely that this letter was a consonantal cluster of *S* as it is expressed in Gaelic tongues and the elision of *S* in later Brithonic Welsh. Henceforth, the value of *Sc* is a derivative of *Xq* in Old Goidelic and as an aspirated deafened *Sq* as a softened *H*. In Welsh and Breton the sibilant *S* muted into an aspirated *H*. Take for example the Old Celtic adjective *senos*, *senā*, for “old, elder, ancient,” which yielded *hen* in Welsh and Breton. Therefore, the shift was expressed as follows: *Sc* < *Xc* (Gdl); *Sp* < *Xp* (Brt). And, it expresses the aspirated velar stop sound as for the Goidelic squiats which parallel Brithonic spetes. This sound grouping is corroborated by the Irish folk tradition which groups the Sceog thorn bushes in a category of their own as trees of protection. Protection in that thorn bushes and hedges keep out intruders and wild animals. In folk tradition, it was considered unlucky to bring May blossoms into the house. In Old Irish Gaelic, uath stood for “hawthorn, Earth, small number, and connoting uath, “terrible,” and homonym which is from a different etymon<sup>13</sup> altogether. The element uath is also found in the name of Uathach, the female champion who trained Cuchulainn in the martial and tantric arts. The name Uathach was from uataca, “terrible.” Could this also be hinting at uatissa, an inspired female technician?

**D from Dur, the Oak of fate from the wood.**

Dur / duir < daruos (Gdl) / deruos (Brt), “english oak;” deruuidia, “certainty;” driuos, druuios > driuolos, “wren;” druuis, “druid;” duoron > doron, “door;” drustis, “robust;” Diuon, “luminary,” the moon's astronomical name.

The letter *D* was called Delta in the Greek alphabet. Traditionally, the oak was always the tree associated with the Druids. Pliny wasn't the first to confuse the Greek word drus for

“oak” with the Celtic druuís for “druid.” It rather derives from stems of PIE root dru-, deru- for “firm and “steadfast.” Indeed, many puns can be made with the prefixes dru- and dur- which seem to have had much favor in “bardic wordplay.” It goes a long back in time since it was the principal symbol of the Indo-European sky god \*Perkwunos, who was identified to \*Dyeu-peter, “the father god,” the Greek Zeus and Roman Jupiter. These related to the Celtic high-god such as the Gallic Taranis and the Gaelic Dagda or Ruad Rofessa. Gaul alone, had no less than eleven different kinds of oaks, almost one for every spoke of the Sun Wheel.<sup>14</sup> This explains the importance of the oak as a prime sacred tree. Its Old Goidelic names such as tannos or glastotannos link it to fire and sky, and most specially taranos, hence tharan in Old Irish, for the holm-oak (quercus ilex) as we will see for the *Th-Oir* forfedha. Many tribes had it as an ethnic name, the Darinói of Hibernia, the Dervaci and the Deructai of Albion, and the Dervones of Cisalpine Gaul. As a side note, the oak is of the beech family (quarqus / percuss > ercus in Old Celtic) and produces a rounded nut. In poetic terms, doron darui, “the oaken door,” and the apple bough, were seen as gateways to the Otherworld.

**T from Tine, Cypress, or from the Elder tree; T from Tine, the Holly.**

Tine < tinne / teine < tanno / colennos, “holly;” tannos > tannio / tennio, “holly-oak, holm oak;” tann-os/-a/-on, “hot, fiery;” tennia < tepnia, “(wood) fire;” ten-os < tenou-os/-a/-on, “tenuous, thin, skiny;” Tectos, the planet Jupiter.

*T* for tau in the Greek alphabet. The Gaelic Irish name for cypress is cufróg which is from the Latin cupressus and Greek kyparissos. Therefore, tine for cypress is a misnomer since the scribe should have defined it as “holly” instead. Therefore, the letter *T* defines a leafy evergreen only similar to the coniferous cypress. Holly can be any of the many trees and shrubs of the Aquifoliaceae family. Symbolically, it is in relation to tan<sup>15</sup> and it was thought unlucky to burn it indoors. This would indicate the dual nature of the *T* sign as holly for “mother,” and holm oak for “father.” Holly (ilex), was called colennos in both *Q*- and *P*-Celtic, was most likely attributed to this letter since it drew confusion with the following letter of *C* for coll. Holly has thick glossy spiny-margined leaves and bright red berries. Holly was an important winter solar symbol in connection with the Sun chariot. Chariot shafts and war clubs were made of holly wood, as a symbol for the rage of fire. Much like hazel and apple, holly and oak, form an orderly pair. In that they follow each other in the Ogham tree list. In druidical symbolism, tepnon (fire), and aedon (ardor and sacred fire), all partake in solar symbolism.

**C from Coll, the Hazel of the wood.**

Coll < cosla / coslos, “hazel;” cailos / coilos / coelos > celos, augury;” calos, “hard stone;” caletos, “hardness;” caletos, “brave;” caldis, “forest;” celios, “friend;” colos / culos, “vehicle;” Cocos, planet Mars.

The letter *C*, never pronounced as a soft sibilant, but always as a hard *K* akin to the Greek kappa. Fruits, flowers, and leaves of the Red Hazel would fall into wells and ponds and tint the waters red. Salmon would chew on these fruits which in turn made their sides red. It

was said that from fabled wells, seven streams of wisdom poured out. In Gallic mythology, the god Bormo<sup>16</sup> was the healing spirit of thermal waters. Nuts were compared to the heads of fallen heroes. Creams prepared from hazelnuts were used in ancient Gaul to ward off infertility in women. As an allegory for water medicine, hazel trees represent the gushing waters of the goddess Boand. Wisdom is to be found in wells where the hazel tree grows, and out of which the nuts of innate knowledge fall. The most reputed of sources, the *Well of Segais*, was said to contain the mystical salmon of wisdom. Nuts dropping into the well would cause fermenting bubbles of intoxicating inspiration. It was said that there were nine hazel trees growing around the well of Segais or Conlai, as it was also called. Only four holy entities were privileged to visit the sacred well of Segais<sup>17</sup>. These were, Nechtan, the cleansed, and his three cupbearers: Flesc, Lam, and Luam<sup>18</sup>. Legend has it that Balor's head (Caput Medusa) was hung on top a mountain on the branches of a hazel by his grandson Lugh. And from his head dripped a poisonous blood that brought death and sterility to everything it touched. This was probably the basis for another wordplay involving *cnu* < *cnuā*, “nut” and *ncu* “death.” Also note that divining sticks were made of hazel wood. Satirists would utter their spells and incantations holding a hazel wand or a dowser in search of underground wells. Also, in the Irish tales of the *Red Branch Cycle*, there are the three Colls; Colla Uais, Colla Menn, and Colla Dachrigh,<sup>19</sup> the three cousins of Muiredach Muinderg<sup>20</sup>, the high king of Emain Macha. The Gaulish lord of the hazel tree was known as Cuslanos. The Irish texts also mention such a figure in the name of Mac Cuill, son of the hazel. At the common Celtic level, these gods could have respectively be known as Coslanos and Coslogenos. The white hazel was allegedly an allegorical solar symbol. At the older level of language, it could also have been taken for *sonnoloudextio*, the sun's rise at the eastern door, and *sonnouertomu*, its noon hour acme at summer's solstice. The sun's door can be imagined made of white hazel-wood. Through crane symbolism, hazel was also in relation to the bull Taruos Trigaranos, the bull of the three cranes, a zodiacal astral animal. Finally, the bull's horns of Taurus could also represent moon crescents.

### **Q from Quert, Apple.**

Quert < qert / cert < qerta / certa, “crab apple tree, apple bush;” cf. Gallic *certocos*, “small bush, crab-apple tree;” *qarios*, “cauldron;” *qacris*, “circle, chakra;” *qeisla*, “thought.”

This letter is only akin to the Phoenician *qoph* for *Q* and finds no equivalent in the Greek alphabet. In the Goidelic dialect, the letter *Q* generally corresponds to the Brythonic *P*. This particularity was also noticed when borrowing a name from the Brythonic tongues into Goidelic. And as Joseph Monard, remarks, when the British monk Sucatus Magonios, who had taken the Latin name of Patricius, evangelized the Emerald Island, he became known as Qatricios, hence the medieval Gaelic spelling of Cuthraige. It was only after the British occupation that the Church of Ireland adopted the English form Patrick which became Pádraig in Irish.

Qerta or certa for “apple bush,” could be of the same etymology as the P-Celtic *perta* for “copse or coppice.” However, the Gaulish name for the crab-apple tree was *certocos*, yielding the French *croisier*. Hence we have the Gaulish term *certilis*<sup>21</sup> for cider.

Aballomedus, for “apple-mead,” was the fermented drink. The cultivated apple tree was termed *aballa* and the wild-type *aballos* in Old Celtic, from which came the Irish *abhal*, *aball*

in Middle Irish, ubhal in Scotts' Gaelic, and afal in Welsh and aval in Breton. Certa was, therefore, a thorny bush grouped along with rosebush and whitethorn. This makes the crab-apple bush the second of the said "thorny trees of protection." Its esoterical symbolism ties it to the otherworldly island of Avallon or Emain Abach of the Welsh and Irish myths<sup>22</sup>. In most Indo-European mythologies, the apple, fruit of love and medicine, stood for youthfulness, beauty and eternity. It was the prime fruit of Apollo and that of the Gallic love-god Belenos Maponos or Aengus Mac Oc in Ireland. The aballomedu, or apple-mead, was the rejuvenating potion which cured the sorrows of the heart. It was the intoxicating drink, much like mead, of the gods.

**M, Muin from Muinia, the Vine branching finely.**

Muin < mUinia < uinia < uiniia, "grapevine," an alternative of marcos / marcus, "rustic vine;" and in word connotation: mana, "mind;" monia < masnia, "moss; monio, "mountain;" Miln < Melnos, "sluggish," planet Saturn; Murias, one of the four fabled cities of the Tuatha dé Danann.

Muin corresponds to the Greek mu. The initial *M* mutation for muin, from muinia, results from the nasalization of the consonantal *U* pronounced as *W*. It suggests a prototypical Goidelic alternate term of uinia with emarcos > marcos, "rustic vine," in the old oghams. The letter *M* was also for mesca > medca, "drunkenness," derived from medu, "mead." The creeping vine was one of the most celebrated trees of Southern Gaul and the natives themselves went through great pains to have the precious nectar of its grapes delivered to them via the Roman trade routes along the Rhone River valley. Drinking was not just a ritual in the spiritual sense, but also a trance-inducing method for gaining battle frenzy. It was therefore highly prized as a fortifier by the warrior caste. Chieftains went through great pains to have their host well fed and well entertained. The epic tale of the *Red Branch Cycle* entitled *The Intoxication of the Men of Ulster* is a good reminder of this. Although it is not at all sure whether the vine was the original tree ascribed to this sign, there are strong indications that mletto, larch," a coniferous of the pine family was the original tree. Larch is well distributed in the southern sector of the French Alps and in the Occitanian fringe of the Italian Alps. Larch is the only deciduous conifer of the high regions of Europe and it can grow to be 30 to 35 meters high. Mletto could pun on Mileto for "havoc." This reputation was granted to larch because of its ability to colonize areas by dropping its needles, thus creating an impression of awesome desolation.

**G from Gort, Ivy towering.**

Gort < gortia, "ivy" and/or gabrostos, "honeysuckle;" gortio, "enclosure, fenced field; gortos, gorton > gartos; "garden;" gortus > gurtus, "heat;" gorti-os/-a/-on, adj "to love, like;" garana, "crane, hag;" Gorias, one of the four fabled cities of the Tuatha dé Danann.

Gort matches the Greek gamma. *G* for gortia, spiny bush," could also have been *G* for gabrostos, "honeysuckle." The ivy tree is a widely cultivated ornamental climbing or prostrate plant. Gort stands for gort, a "tilled fenced field," and can also be taken for gart, a "garden or vineyard." It is a hardy plant that can grow to be a hundred years and its trunk can swell to be quite massive, over a foot in diameter. *G* could also be for geneta or gnata,

“daughter,” in its association with Garana, the crane hen found in the company of the Gallic god Esus. Gort can, therefore, be taken as a sign of feminine gestation, of fate and destiny, linked to the changing cycles of life and nature. Astronomically, it is in relation to the Pleiades<sup>23</sup> star system in the Taurus constellation.

**NG from Ngetal or Giolcach, a Reed.**

nGetal / getal > nGéatal < ‘n-caitalis < incaitalis, or simply caitalis, “reed,” also caitalis secsca, “sedge;” ‘ncu < ancu / anco < ancauos / ancouos “fatality”, “death, fatal outcome;” ‘nacantios < anacantios, “calamitous;” inigena (gdl) / enigena, “daughter,” a daughter in her parents household.”

The letter *Ng* matches the runic *ing* or *inguz*, “seed,” but has no match in the Greek and Roman alphabets. In the modern botanical sense, although reed is not a tree, it is, nevertheless, a high growing plant. And indeed, in the days of Antiquity, it was regarded as such, because of its hard woody cane stem. Reed can be any of the various tall grasses with long slender and often prominent jointed stems that grow in marshy areas. Reed was put at much use by the ancient peoples. Reed for thatching, for making pens, and in the confection of wind instruments such as pipes, flutes, and bagpipes. Also, the reed in a pipe instrument was made from the hollow joint of the reed stem. It seems that the scribal runists who devised the Ogham went through great pains to have reed comply with the *Ng* sound cluster, and there was a good reason for this. If we are to study the Ogham closely, in the beth-luinnion letter order, the third letter of the first few has the value of *N* and in the third line, the third few corresponds to *Ng* along with *U* as the third vowel in the fourth line. This is a very subtle encrypted code using three bars expressed as follows: Boutet\_72 , for *NgU*. That is, *Ng* from *Nc* for *ncu*, or *ncen*, from the Old Celtic *ancen*, which means, “unavoidable necessity,” and by periphrasis only, “death.” In Breton lore, *Ancu*<sup>24</sup>, “the nondog,” the hound of death, was the psychopomp spirit who lead the souls of the deceased to their path of “unavoidable necessity.” Therefore, the many uses of reed in traditional society, in their application, was reflected through complex and subtle symbolic meanings.

**Sd < Ð > Z) from Draighean, Blackthorn.**

s-D < \*Ð, Straif < sdragenos < ðragenos, “barberry” and/or ðrausa, “green alder;” ðragena / dragena, “mistle thrush;” ðragenoc-os/-a/-on / ðragenoc-os/-a/-on., “thorny, spiny;” dracu > dragu, “observer, watcher;” ðira > sdira > sira, “star.”

There is no equivalent to this letter in the Greek and Roman alphabets and has no direct link to the runic *algiz* for *Z*. It notes the evolution of *St* to *Sd*, then *Z*. The barred *Ð* was used in Gallo-Roman inscriptions to note the mutation of voiced palatal stop *D* towards the alveolar sibilant *S*. An example of this is found in the shiftings of the Gallic star goddess *Dirona* from *Ðirona* to *Sirona*. This can also be verified with the Irish *draighean* in the Goidelic evolution of *sdragenos* < ðragenos < dragenos, for “thorn.” This also hints at a semantic coalescence of *dragena* to *draigin*, “thorn or “blackthorn,” with *streipon*, “to tear, to cut,” or “to strip.” This explains why the 14<sup>th</sup> letter of the Ogham was given to other spiny bushes such as as barberry or blackthorn. It is a small tree of the rose family whose

fruits resemble those of the crab-apple tree that could also be used in preserves. The blackthorn shrub produces suckers which make a single plant the nucleus of an impenetrable thorny thicket. Interestingly, in a line of Taliesin's *Cad Goddeu*, blackthorn is coupled with a medlar. At the Old Celtic level, sdragenos can also connote drugnu, "abuse." Its long red berries hanging like red tongues were taken for the allegory of derision and ridicule, that is, those who had the arrogance to claim the wisdom that was not their own. Ironically, this bush harbors for a season a type of fungus that attacks oats and cereals leaving on these crops rust-like stains.

### **R, Ruis, which is Graif.**

Ruis < ruscia, "elder tree," from rusca, bark, and rusca, "rowan;" \*roudioscobies, "red clustered elder," and/or reusmen, "sappy alder;" rixs, "king;" Reia, Riia, the planet Venus.

Ruis matches the Greek rho. It is not clear whether the elder tree was the oldest attribution for letter *R* at the Goidelic level. Most of the Old Celtic names for elder were *S* names such as scaua, from scauies, scobies or scobo, and sabucos, or sambucos. And it is not clear either why graif<sup>25</sup> is given to *R* and not for the letter *G*. In all likelihood, this attribution is a late clerical musing because of the elision of the mute *G*. Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) is a Eurasian tree of the rosaceous rose family. It has white flowers and small red pomes called rowanberries.

Much like the hawthorn, it was considered very unlucky to bring the tree indoors or burn its wood in the family hearth. It was also thought to ward off evil and malevolent spirits and was hence planted by the front door as a magical barrier. Traditionally, the elder bush connotes shame and blushing, for it was from its red berries that lady's blush was made. In medieval society, blushing was held as a mark of daintiness and coyness. Ruadh Rofessa<sup>26</sup> is the proposed godly patron for this letter. And as described in the old stories, before battles, Druids were said to have kindled fires of rowan wood and pronounce incantations over them. Rowan whips were used to subdue and stimulate horses, as well as in dowsing. Elder was used for its medicinal properties against colds, flu, rheumatoid arthritis, and other ailments such as gout.

### **A, from Ailm, Fir.**

Ailm < alamios, "pine tree, scots pine;" arulla, "Spanish pine;" and/or secondarily: aballos, "apple tree;" abolos, abulos, opulos / oqiolos, "service tree;" amistron, "mistletoe;" and punning with: alama, "livestock;" alamo, "rich in livestock;" Albiio/Albiu / Albiios / Albis, "the universe, the cosmos;" Albiorixs, "king of the cosmos." Albiorix < Albiiorixs "King of the Cosmos."

The Greek alpha and runic ansuz are akin to ailm. In the *Book of Ballymote*, letter *A* is given to pine: "that is the divine Pine from the wood, from whence are drawn the "Ifins," thus #, per alios, the name of that branch."<sup>27</sup> Ailm, from the Old Celtic alamios, was the name for the Scots pine tree and was later attributed to other non-leafy trees such as the imported cabbage palm tree (*Cordyline australis*) from New-Zealand. Joseph Monard pointed out that alamios punned with alamos for "livestock, and cattle," and that conversely, in countries

such as Celtiberia, almos stood for “poplar,” and that almios stood for “Spanish elm.” In Gaul and in the British Isles, the elm tree was called lemos, or limos. The main Goidelic name for pine was giuos As for Spanish pine, it was called araua, or arua / arauos, when not arolla or arulla, in Celtic Iberian. Among the other names for pine in Old Celtic there was padis, or pados, uctaca, or uctaco, and itus which meant “resinous tree.”

Mistletoe (*Viscum Album*), or amistrion in Old Celtic, is a semi-parasitic green shrub which clings and grows on trees. It has waxy-white glutinous berries and small yellowish flowers. The Druids sought it for its medicinal qualities. One of their paraphrases for Mistletoe was olloiacetos, which meant that it “cures-all ailments.” According to Pliny, on the sixth day after the full moon of late December, the Druids judged this the optimum time to harvest mistletoe. This probably has to do with the dormancy of trees and the slowing of sap flow.

### **O, from the Broom or Furze.**

Onn < odocos, “ground elder;” onna / onnos, “ash tree;” oestino / acstino > attino, “juniper;” ogios, “youth;” ogmio, “magic bond;” onnio, oniu > uniu, “onion;” onna, “river;” onn-os/-a/-on, adj “compact;” onuana, “unflawed memory;” odaccos, udaccos, “host, husband.”

The Greek omicron and runic ôpila are cognates of onn. This letter was never pronounced like a mute vowel but more rounded, much like the interjection oh! Gorse, furze, or whin, is a small bushy, thorny tree which grows in siliceous soil in open country, never in wooded areas. The Old Celtic names for gorse and furze were gabarros, toia, and iauga, or iouga, names which don’t rhyme with *O*. The letter *O* is linked to the Oghma, keeper of the Ogham and tree symbolism. To better understand the complexities of this sign, one must relate it to the ash tree. Indeed, at the antique level of language, if there is one tree that could match the Old Irish onn attribution, it was onna, for “ash.”<sup>28</sup> The ash is phonetically associated to the Gallic goddess Onniona whose name means “never failing memory,” and puns with Anuana, or Onuana, “non-feeble, of water,” connotes both onna, “ash-tree,” and onna “stream.” Onniona was a topological goddess of ash groves and thickets. This would place the gorse ascription in the category of other various bushes along with broom, brier, and rosebush. Broom also had no link to this letter because of the names banatlos, and genista.

### **U, from Ur, Heath.**

Uhr < ur < uroica > fraoch, “heather;” ura, “rustic olive-tree;” ura, “grave;” ur, uron, “(sacred) fire;” uracca, “old woman, hag, witch;” uraccaia, “spark, flying spark;” urga / urgo, “purple colored material;” uranca, “branch;” urasta / urosta, rain;” uraua, “pure water;” uritu, gain, profit;” urnia, root; Urnia, name of the Ourne River goddess.

Upsilon in the Greek and üruz in the Futhark alphabets. Ur has the phonetic value of the vowel *U*, which in Celtic was pronounced like the English “oo” and never “eoo” as in you. Heather (*Erica cinerea*), or common heath, is rustic to the northern and Alpine regions of Europe. It has small leaves and tiny purplish-pink or white flowers which make it attractive to bees. Heather ale is a restorative and it was put to good use by healers and midwives under the patronage of the goddess in her role as “queen-bee.” It is, therefore, to be taken as a sign of female activity and emotion. Therefore, this sign can be put under the protection of the equine goddess Epona Magosia. This is an earthly symbol related to water (lunar) and

dampness, in that Magosia / Macha is of the fields. In her role as “psychopomp,” that is as a leader of the souls of the dead into the Otherworld, Epona not only acts as a carrier but also as a protector. She is often depicted with child, accompanied by a bird or a puppy, and carrying a fruit basket or cornucopia in a motherly or warrior-like attitude. The color purple, *urga*, or *urgo*, links it traditionally to the women’s priestly craft of druidism and bardism. *Ur* has the literal meaning of “fresh, new,” or “moist,” with the associated meaning of the morning dew. Magically, *Ur* is thought to bring luck to any venture to which it is associated. It marks the entrance-point to the inner worlds. In common folk tradition, Esoterically, heather was seen as a charm against bad luck.

### **E, from Eadadh, trembling aspen.**

Eadadh < edato, “trembling poplar;” elto, “aspen, poplar;” edenno, “ivy;” educa > ebuca, “dwarf elder;” eadadh < idato, also crithach < critacos, “aspen;” ercus, “leafy tree, oak or beech;” edesno > edenno, “Ivy;” edan-os/-a/-on, adj “nourishing;” edaxma, “judgement, arbitrary act;” Eidscos, one of the names of the moon; Edrinos, “arbitrator, judge.”

Epsilon and ehwaz in the Greek and Futhark alphabets. The letter *E* in Goidelic was never pronounced as in English, but rather like the French *É*. Aspen, or white poplar (*populus tremula*) tree, is called *Pobail ban* in Irish and *aethnen* in Welsh. The aspen tree is very hardy and resistant, growing in the most varied and unlikely terrains. Its leaves flutter in the slightest winds because of their flattened petioles. This links it to the wind, especially that of druidical wind. In the Mediterranean countries of Greece, and in southern Gaul and Iberia, priests devoted to Hercules wore poplar crowns during bull rituals. And In the southern Celtic regions of Gaul, and Transalpine Gaul, it was the general cultivating practice to let vines grow on bushes and larger trees such as guelder rose, dogwood, linden, maple, hornbeam, elm, ash, black poplar, and oak, and secondarily, aspen. The Old Celtic name for a vine supporting tree was *rumpotinos*. In Christian practice, Aspen and poplar tree were used to mark cemetery grounds.

### **I from Ida or Ioda, the Yew tree.**

Ida, ioda < Iuos, also Iburos, “yew;” and/or secondarily, itus, “pine;” iu-os/-a/-on, adj “clear, visible, convenient;” itu, “wheat, corn;” itauis, “firebrand.”

The letter *ida* was akin to the Greek *iota* and runic *eihwaz*. At the old level of Goidelic, *I* was pronounced like the French *I* or the English *E*, as with *ee*. Yew tree, along with the apple-tree and oak trees, was one of the most celebrated trees of Celtic lore. For the ancient Druids, *iuos* meant clarity of perception in that this term was an indicator for clear skies. As a meteorological term found on the *Coligny Calendar*, it served to note the sky's conditions and had the meaning of “very distinct, good or fine.” One of the other names for yew was *iburos* (Gdl) or *eburos* (Brt), a word which also served to name the boar. Indeed, one of the names for the Great Dipper's was *Eburos*, “the Boar,” again punning with Yew. It was also called *Andarta*, the she-bear. Much like the boar's coat, its wood is rusty brown, making it very attractive for woodworkers and cabinetmakers. Barrel-makers prefer its wood to oak and traditionally refer to it as the “coffin wood of wine.” It is also widely used in horticulture and landscaping because of the many shapes it can be given during trimming.

The Yew's needles are persistent, which means that they are kept all year-round. The Yew tree is well distributed in Europe as well as in the Mediterranean basin, at the foot of the Alps, and in Iberia. The tree can grow to be 15 meters tall and live many centuries. In Mythology, the yew of Macha was rival only to the hazel of Munga which fostered the Salmon of wisdom which chewed on its nuts. And then there was the yew of Ross which was the primeval tree of wisdom and knowledge. From its strong wood, the Celtic woodworker, the eburarios, was given to the craft of eburariactio, there fashioning sturdy shields, swift spears, bows, and arrows. Did not Mog Ruith possess a great flywheel made of yew wood? Therefore, yew and boar were not only synonymous in word but also in deed. Both belonged to the warrior class and the name was given to many kings and heroes. Think of Eochaid<sup>29</sup>, brother of Ogma, whose name meant “yew fight.” It too was traditionally planted on commercial grounds and its pretty red berries are highly toxic.

**X > Ch, for xi, “chi,” that is Choad for Copse or Coppice.**

Choad < xotia < cotia < coitia, “forest, coppice;” cassanos > xassanos > cassinos, “sessile Oak,” yielding the French *chêne*,” and/or xaimon, “home-land, fatherland;” xdonios, “chthonian;” xodonios, “earthling, earthly being, mortal human;” ximalos, “hops;” crota > xrotta, “harp;” element: calios, “hard, stone;” caliuos, “gland (as a chakra or spiritual center);” caletia, “hardness;” cloca > cloch, “round stone, pebble,” or alexs / alixs > ail, “stone.”

*Xi* was identical to the Greek letter *xi* or *chi*. There was a second *X* with the value of *Xs* called *ximor*, “great x,” it is, therefore, logical to call this one *xibeag*<sup>30</sup>. Cassanos < \*xassanos “sessile oak,” and all other shrubs and bushes. *X* was the first of the *forfedha*<sup>31</sup> dual symbols. This being that the *forfedha* had two phonetical values, part consonantal and part vowel diphthong, which set them apart from the other ogham symbols. A coppice is a grove, a thicket, or a growth of small and tiny trees. At the Goidelic level, a pun can be made with *coitia*, “forest,” and the adjective *coet-os/-a/-on*, for “usual, common, and current.” The Old Celtic name for “bush” was *boxsos*, that is, “box-tree,” or again *bodia* for “bush,” proper. Thus, *X* can be taken for any small ornamental shrub or bush that can be cut and trimmed. In mythology, as with all of the oak species, it was linked to the sky god of thunder and lightning. In horticulture, it refers to small ornamental trees that were trimmed into various shapes or forms. Sessile trees are ornamental trees serving to outline and mark garden passages and entrances. The Celtic sanctuaries, called *nemeton*, had set trees associated with specific deities.

**EA, Easadh, the Aspen.**

Easadh < esados, “white poplar;” edenno < edesno “common ivy (*Hedera Helix*);” another type of poplar tree was *critacos*, “*populus tremuloides*;” *eaecos*, “present dweller.”

This letter was given the phonetic value of the *Ea* diphthong and is carrying over of the *E* for *eodha* aspen tree sign. However, this value could only apply at the level of Middle Irish, since in Goidelic it would have been pronounced as a long vowel much like with the French *Ê*. The Romans called it *tremulus popula*, literally, “trembling people,” since from a

distance this tall thin tree in a row looked like standing people. The quaking aspen was thought to shake its leaves as to signal the passing of unseen presences. Therefore, it was believed that poplars forewarned mortals whenever the soul of a deceased or any other spirit entities went by. This is the reason why it was used to border cemetery roads. In Gallo-Roman representation, Nemetona, a war divinity, wore poplar leaves in her long wavy hair. The underside of its leaves is a dark green hue while the upper side is an ash grey, thus indicating its sinister relation with the Underworld, as named in Old Celtic is of the herbaceous family, or araliaceous, and which includes Ginseng also. A plant with evergreen leaves, small yellowish flowers, and blackberries.

**TH-OI sign, there is a ring of truth to this. TH, for Tharan, that is Dair thoilm, the “holm oak.”**

Tharan < taranos (Gdl) / tannos (Brt), “holm Oak;” and/or thesmerion, “hibiscus, “shrubby mallow;” tarandros, “reindeer;” taranos < tanaros, “thunder;” taranautos, “thunderstorm;” thsotto, “compact lump, ground hole;” torindos, “anvil spark.”Element: Tepnia > teine, “(wood) fire;” ur, “fire.”

Tharan finds its equivalents in the Greek theta and in the runic thurisaz or thurs of the Scandinavian Futhark. As a thunder stricken oak, taranos, “the holm oak,” is strongly associated to the Celtic sky god Tarannis also known as Tuireann, when not Ruadh Rofessa, in the Irish myths. Tarannis carried a thunder hammer called meldon in Gaulish. In the Irish cycles, Tuireann and Brigid have three sons, Brian, Iuchar, and Iucharba. This triplet was responsible for the deicide of Cian, Lugh’s father. In preparation, they were forced on a perilous mission in order to recover prized objects stolen from the gods. This sacred quest is reminiscent to that of Jason and the Argonauts for the Golden Fleece. Brigid was a pan-Celtic deity also known to the Brythonic tribes as Brigindo or Brigantia. Brian was also mentioned by the classical writers as Brennos. The names Iuchar and Iucharbha, are both linked to the yew tree<sup>32</sup>.

**OI, OIR, the Spindle tree.**

Oir, Feorusoir < uorosorios, “spindle tree;” and/or oiniia / uiniia, “vine;” and/or olloiacetos, “mistletoe;” Oinalio, “the Monad,” the divine entity as an abstract notion.

*Oi* is a true diphthong and it maintained this phonetic value in the later language. The Spindle tree grows as a small shrub. It can either be an evergreen, a vine, or any bush of the staff-tree family. In ancient symbolism, the spindle tree was the sacred tree of the central fire, the axis, if not the third-eye, sulis, literally meaning “the eye,” and saulios, “the sun.” *Oi*, the alternate value of this Θ/Ϝ for *Th* is associated with the spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*). Spindle wood, along with poplar, was used to form and twist yarn by hand during the spinning operation. The term spinster was given to a woman who was past the age to marry and who spent much time spinning yarn. Here we can recognize the fairytale witch or the banshee, a later version of the threefold goddess, the Fates or the Parcae of the Romans, who presided over the destinies of mortal beings. Spindle-wood was also used for smithing.

### **P, for Peith, Pethbol.**

Peith < \*petios, “guelder rose, snowball tree;” pethbol < \*petisiaballos, “little apple tree;” padis, pados < padinos, “pine tree;” and/or petteuroica, “bog berry bush;” when not periaros, “pear tree,” in the southern Gallic and Iberian zones; Parios, “cauldron;” pacris, “chakra, gland;” peisla, “thought.” Element: (p)idsca > isca > usce, “water;” also apia > àbh, “water.”

The runic letter perth was an equivalent of peith in the Ogham. A general tendency of Old Celtic was to drop the initial *P* in words such as pater to ater, for “father,” pidsca for idsca, isca / esca, “water,” and plugos to lugos, for “raven.” As an Ogham, letter *P* was only useful for noting Pictish names. The Roman name Patricius, became Pdraig when it was reintroduced in Ireland through English. The pine tree, much like the Yew, the Cypress, the Fir tree, was the symbol for life, a symbol for the eternity of life through the wintry death. Pine balm was used for making ointments to treat cuts and skin ailments. According to Pliny (HN XV. 36), the name raucelos derived from araucelos, literally for “stone-pine seeds.” He also mentions that pine kernels were cooked with honey and were successfully used as cough medicine. Indeed, araua, or arua, stood for pinus cembra, the stone pine, or Swiss pine, called arolle in French.

### **UI, Uilleann. Honeysuckle.**

Uilléan < Uillo, “honeysuckle, woodbine;” and/or uitu, “willow bush;” uegilia < ueilia, “nocturnal feast;” ueina < uenia, “troop, group;” uilia, “will, willingness, honesty;” uilos, “horse.”

Akin to the runic wunjô for *W*. Third of the four Ifins, honeysuckle is expressed by the diphthong *Ui*, for the syllable *Wi*, to set it apart, probably, from the previous *F* derived from *V*, from *U*. The Fern letter which could also be taken for fis, “knowledge. Let’s note that fis is from the old root uidstus, uedios for “acquired knowledge, information.” The honeysuckle bush was associated with goats and sheep because of the shape of its leaf which resembles the hoof of these animals.<sup>33</sup> The English name honeysuckle, also called woodbine, was given to it because of its showy-white flowers rich in nectar thus making it attractive to honey-bees. Its branches grow in a spiraling motion, intertwining much like with the Celtic graphic art of knotwork. In traditional agricultural reasoning, honeysuckle produces nectar which is then transformed by the bees into honey and is then transformed by the brewer into mead.

### **PH (< BH) Féa, Phogos, Beech tree.**

Ph, Féa, phogos < bagos, “beech;” phalion, “wayfaring-tree;” or/and phrinio, “plum-tree;” phindon, “end;” phruda > phroda, “cascading brook.” Element: uetos, “air, breath, wind, breeze;” auer > aur / athar, “air;” auella / auentos, “wind.”

The Ogham letter phogos was identical to the Greek phi. In the old language, the voice stop *B* has an aspirated form which translated as *Bh*. There exemplified by the mutation of bagos on to phogos via bhagos. At times, there was a tendency in Old Irish to devolve the *B* into a

harsher *P*. At the symbolical level, the beach tree is very much in relation with the severed head cult of the Celtic war heroes. The heads of Irish warriors cut off in battle were known as Macha's acorn crop. The Gauls had the custom of placing stone carvings in the shape of dead heroes at the foot of beach trees. The beech trees of Europe flower in spring at the onset of May, Beltaine in Ireland, and produce their nuts in October just before Samhain, that is Halloween. Therefore beech covered the ritual annual cycle. Beechnuts, although quite small, are edible. Much like birch and alder, beech is a tree of origins, a tree of foundations. As a tall tree, it is highly favored by carpenters for beechen, its white wood, which produces highly flexible and resistant planks.

### **IO, IA, Ifin, the Gooseberry.**

Ifin < Iphin < spidna / spina, "gooseberry;" and/or Iauga > iouga, "furze;" ialos, "glade;" iugon, "yoke;" cf. yoga.

*Ia* or *Io* is another diphthong close to *Ae*, *Ai*, and *Oi*. The fourth and true Ifin was taken to imply cath<sup>34</sup>, meaning "fight, combat, and strife." Cath was cosmographically situated in the northern realm in the land of Falias, the land from whence came the Fal lia.<sup>35</sup> In this context, the stone is the Tathlum,<sup>36</sup> a magic stone ball which Lugh threw into Balor's eye. This blow was fatal to Balor. It is interesting to note that when Lugh knocked out Balor's eye, he also killed twenty-eight Fomorii warriors who were unlucky enough to be within sight of it. At the old level, there was an interesting pun to be made with latios, "hero," and latis, "calendar day." The Gooseberry bush has acidic fruits of red, white, or green, which were traditionally used to make sauces to accompany fish dishes.

### **XS, Xi Mor**

#### **Xi mor / chi mor < ximaros "great x"**

\*Xslemos, from uxslemos, "mountain elm, wych-elm, scots elm;" xaimon, "homeland, ethnic mother-land;" xdonios, "chthonian, earthling, earthly human;" ximalos, "hop;" xrotta / xroea, "crowde, harp;" xsulsigiactos, "hypnotism." Element: Uxdulon, "high element, ether;" nemon > nemh / neam, "sky, ether;" athar, a late Gaelic borrowing from the Latin aether, literally: "subtle air," for ether.

This letter did not share the same phonetic value with the Latin *X* in that it was a sound cluster translating as *Ks*. This extra letter was designed to differentiate the chi from the exe. Therefore, this *X* translates a bi-consonant while the *Xi* is a syllable. This being that the cluster *Cs* for "*Ks*" was better rendered as *Xs*. This usage was noticed in both Gaulish and Gallo-Roman epigraphy. This same alphabetical notation can also be noticed in later Germanic writing where *Ks* is rendered as *Chs*. In the poem of Dunaire Fionn, Lugh has Balor's Head hung on a hazel of the White Hazel Mountain. The theme of Balor's head is akin to that of the Latin Medusa and Greek Cepheus, name Latinized from the Greek Képhéus. The Celts entertained a similar notion in that they called the constellation of Cepheus, the Beehive, and Camelopardalis, the flock of bees. It is of the same root as képhén, "the bumblebee," there punning with képhale, "head." The theme of the severed head Caput Medusa as a constellation is comparable to that of Balor's head dripping a poisonous substance.

### **AE, Aemhancoll**

Amancoll / aemancholl < uanocoslos, “wych-elm or scots elm;” uan-os/-a/-on, adj “week, feeble, impotent;” uan-os/-a/-on < auan-os/-a/-on, adj “lustrous, brilliant;” aedus, “fiery;” aella, “gust of wind;” aelliton, breeze;” Aedus, Aidus, the morning sun.

Finally, with *Ae*, we have the last of the forfedha diphthongs. In Roman and Gallo-Roman inscriptions, this syllable is amalgamated into one letter thus: *Æ*, *æ*. As a tree symbol, *Ae* expresses aemhancollis, and from the Old Celtic uanocoslos, literally for “feeble or worn out hazel,” that is wych hazel.” Eamhancoll, is not to be confuse with uindocoslos, “white hazel.” This tree symbol carried the esoterical meaning of weakness and impotence.

## **Annex**

### **Old Celtic Lexicon**



Drawing by the author.

Boutet\_73

Abon, Abona > Avon, “river, a large stream.”

Aeigio, neutral name for, “ocean.”

Albiio / albis, “an orb, the Universe, the Cosmos.”

Albiiorixs, “King of the Cosmos,” the Sky Ruler.”

Ambes, “a river that flows to the sea.”

Ambis, “the Dragon,” the constellation of Draco. The name dragon is also associated to the lunar nodes, Cauda and Caput Draconis.

Anagantios, Mins Anaganti, “inactive month,” February, connoting Anacantios, “calamitous.”

Angnatos Magosias, “The Stranger of the Plain” (of Macha), the star Canopus, a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of Argo. Is not visible north of the 37° latitude, can only be seen in Celtiberia, hence the term “stranger, unknown person.”

Anguinon, “the cosmic egg;” or serpent's egg, from which emerged the Cosmos; also Ogos Nadiras.

Andarta, the constellation of Ursa Major, the Great Bear, and The Great Dipper (also called Eburos in OClt).

\* Andecrundion, “counter-earth,” opposite earth behind the sun, a mystical and mythical plane seen as the earth's opposite and counted as a planet (Latin Anti-Terra, Greek, Antichthon)

Argantoreta, the constellation of Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown, word for word, “silver wheel,” also a lunar asterism.

Artaios, “the Bear Keeper,” the star Arcturus, in Bootes, from Artos, “the bear (a nickname of Arthur).” It is one of the spiritual realms sometimes counted as an extra planet by esotericists.

Artulla, “the little she-bear,” the constellation of Ursa Minor, one of the names of the Little Dipper.

Belca Uindas Boucas, “the track of the white cow,” the Galaxy, the Milky Way, from Boann / Boand / Bofind < Bo-Uinda, the Irish Cow goddess.

Belisama / Belesame, “brilliant;” the moon as a goddess.

Bledios, “the Wolf;” the constellation of Lupus, Brt.

Boudios, “the victorious,” also Boduos, “crow,” one of the alternate names of Lugus, Latin, Mercury, and a cognate of the Sanskrit Buddhi.

Cantlos, Mins Cantli, “month of buckling, or harvest songs, the pillar,” October, seen as a time for Thanksgiving celebration after the time of harvests. In connotation, it can be taken to stand for “cycle-settling,” hinting at: cantos, “ring.”

Carbantos / Carbantos Diuoni, “the Moon’s chariot,” it carries the moon over land during night time.

Carpantos / Carbantos Sonni, “the sun’s chariot,” it carries the Sun over land during the day time.

Carpidaros < Caibré / Cairpré, “the carpenter,” beta Leporis of the Lepus constellation; also referred to as Cattos Qendos / Pennos, “the cat’s head.”

Cattos, “the Cat,” the Hyades star group, a cluster of Taurus; Cattosira, the Cat-star, the alpha star of the Hyades.

Couocanton > Ceugant, “universe,” and punning with couiocaneto, “dimension of emptiness.”

\*Cnabetiosira or \*Cnabetica Sira, w. for w., “long-haired star,” comet.

Cnouai Uidias, “the nuts of knowledge,” a small cluster of bright stars found in the Milky Way by Sagittarius at the southern intersection of the ecliptic and not far from another bright region referred to as the “Well of Segais.”

Corsos Maqos / Mapos, “the dwarfish son,” the alpha Leporis star in the constellation of Lepus.

Coscorâdios > Cuscraid, “peace thinking one,” gamma Leporis in the Hare constellation.

Crundnion > Cruinne, “rotund, globe,” the globe, the world, the earth (astronomy).

Cunomarus, “the great dog,” or Cunocobarios, “the dog of assistance, helper dog,” Canis Major and the star Sirius.

Mins Cuti, Cutios, “the ram, fiery,” April, a constellation and an astral sign. From the Old Celtic root word \*qutios / \*putios, “ram.”

Danua < Danu, “of boons, gifts,” an old name for the constellation of Cassiopeia.

Diuon, the Moon's astronomical name, it stands for “luminary.”

Mins Dumanni, Dumannios, “darkening, dusky,” and connoting dumacos, “hazy, smoky, foggy,” December, the year’s darkest moment.

Dira / ðira, (see also sdira, sira), “star.”

Dirio / ðirio, “constellation.”

Dironos, adj. ðiron-os\ -a\ -on, (see also sdironos, sironos\ -a\ -on), “starry.”

Donnotaruos, “the tan bull;” the alpha star of Taurus, alpha Tauri, Aldebaran.

\*Dregia / Ðregia, lit., “tracing,” a meteor.

\*Druuios, “wren;” the Wren star, Alpha Draconis, the former Pole Star.

Eburos, “boar,” punning with “yew;” the Big Dipper.

Elembiuos, Mins Elembiui, “of arbitration, wailing, squalling,” and connotes “hot flux,” September). From the Old Celtic: Aedrinios and Aedurinios.

Epos Leruos, “horse of Lir;” a late British name for the constellation of Pegasus.

Equos, Mins Equi, “adjusted, equalized,” punning with Equos / Epos, “horse”, for July; from the Old Celtic Aequos.

Equos or Aecuos, the ecliptic, lit., “adjusted balance,” the ecliptic bisects Cancer evenly, therefore, Equos, the horse is taken as the symbol for the ecliptic.

Esus, “holy lord;” the star Vega.

Garanoi, “the cranes;” the Pleiades, a star cluster of Taurus.

Mins Giamoni, Giamonios < Giiemonios, “of sprouts, shoots,” May, occasionally placed after the Ciallosbuis April-May leap-month.

Giamos / giemos < gemos, “winter;” connoting “shoots,” for vegetative.

Giiemorotlio > geamhradh, “shoots-cycle;” dark half-year (autumn + winter-time) or vegetative period.

Grenna > Greina / Granna > grian, “beaming;” a feminine adjective used as a periphrasis in the Goidelic dialects to name the sun.

Greinatarostami, “Sun standing,” Gdl; summer solstice, the solstice in general.

Grisgaconai, “those as pebbles,” a Goidelic periphrasis for the Pleiades.

Iatus > àth, “ford;” in Old Celtic astronomy, was seen as a point on the equator where the ecliptic crosses.

Iatus Brassalios > hi Breasal, “the ford of the bulky;” the southern point of crossing on the ecliptic and equator; a mythical place called Land of Breasal < Brassalis, the King of the summer world, situated to the South.

Iatus Ualcias, “ford of the wolf;” the northern point marked by the bisection of the equator by the ecliptic; a mythical location of the Other-world or Underworld, ruled by wolves and evil.

In, ini, inis, abbreviations in the *Coligny Calendar* for innisma, inisma, “isolation;” a meteorological note meaning, “hazy, covered, cloudy screen.”

Iu-os/-a/-on, adj. “good, fine,” a meteorological note meaning “very distinct;” and punning with iuos, “yew.”

Labaron, “insignia, emblem, banner;” the zodiacal wheel, and a distinguishing mark of the druidic world order termed dema < dedma, “statute, customary rule.”

Laccuos, loccos, locuos, “lake.”

Lag., an abbreviation of Laget.

Laget, “it lowers, it sets down, it descends.”

Lagiato, “descent of a heavenly body, of a constellation, waning of the moon.”

Lat., an abbreviation of Lates.

Latis, “a nycthemera (night + day), a calendar day.”

Leucar-os/-a/-on, “very light emitting, lighteous;” NB: a Brythonic periphrasis for the moon, whence, \*logra < lloer in Welsh.

Lindos, “a small lake, a large pond.”

Lisson Danuas > Llys Don, “the palace of Danu;” the constellation of Cassiopeia.

Litauia, “continent;” Irish Gaelic Letha, Welsh, Llydaw, Old Welsh Lettau.

Lodex., an abbreviation of Loudextio.

Loud., abb. of Loudet.

Loudet, “raises, gets up.”

Loudextio, “ascending;” waxing of the moon, ascent of a constellation.

Lostos Ambios, “the dragon’s tail;” Cauda Draconis, the descending southern lunar node.

Lostos Crucas, “the scorpion’s tail;” the stars of the Scorpion’s stinger, sub-constellation of Scorpio, the stars Sco or Shaula, and Lesath.

Lostos Nadiras, “the serpent's tail;” Cauda Serpentis, a sub-constellation of Serpens Ophiucus.

\*Lucotios, “the mouse;” the present Pole Star, Polaris, the alpha star of Ursa Minor.

Luctos / Luxtos / Louxtos > luct, “war party, organized troop, military unit;” also Loucetios, Latinized as Loucetius, “light.” “lighteous, light emitting,” the planet Mercury.

\*Lugos, “bird, raven;” a probable name for planet Mercury.

Luxna, the moon's most usual name.

M., abb. of Mins / Mens, “month.”

Manutera > muintir, “household;” a zodiacal House.

Maron Nauson, “the great ship;” the Constellation of Argos or Navis.

Mat., abb. of Mata.

Mata, “good as complete,” code for even months.

Mat D., abb. for Matu Diuon.

Mat N., abb. for Matu Nabelcon.

Matu Diuon, “quite clear (light emitting),” as on the full moon.

Matu Nabelco, “quite cloudy, overcast.”

Matrai, “mothers;” the stars of Eridanus.

Matrona, “matron;” Achernar, the alpha star of Eridanus.

Medianoxs, “midnight.”

\*Medionemesos, “mid-heaven;” abbreviated as MC, for Medium coeli, in Latin.

Melno > meln, “sluggish, slow;” planet Saturn.

Mens / Mins, “month;” pl. nominative: menses, a lunar month as opposed to a solar month.

Mid Samonios, “middle of the November month;” the abbreviation MIDX Mens in dueix-tionu was followed by Samonios to indicate where the autumn embolismic month was intro-duced.

MIDX., abb. of Mens in dueixtionu for “month in duplication,” the name of the autumn leap-month.

\*Midiuon/Mediun, “half moon;” the quarter moon.

MM, abb. of Menses, the plural for mens, “month.”

Mogus Retas > Mog Ruith, “servant-boy of the wheel;” a mythological or legendary Irish master astrologer.

Mones, monio, “mountain.”

N., abb. of Nabelcos, for “cloudy.”

Namos / Nemos, “sky, heaven, ether;” singular genitive, nemesos, the sky in general, heaven's vault.

Nebelca, “nebulous;” Latin, Nebulae, nebulous star clusters.

Nebelcos, “nebulous;” an alias of Lugus as the god of Meteorology; the Celtic continental name of Manannan or Manawydan.

Neinon, “zenith;” the point of the celestial sphere that is directly opposite to the nadir and is vertically above the observer.

Nemetolatis, “holy day;” fifth or sixth day of the month after the full moon, starting the novena, nine-day period; a day of rest, gatherings and reunion.

Noiolatis, “novena;” a nine days period in the month.

Noxs / nouxs < noxts, pl. nominative, noctes, genitive, noxtos, “night.”

Nucturos Uosiros, “nocturnal and sluggish;” a periphrasis for Saturn seen as the loiterer of wandering stars; also Melnos.

Ociomu / Ogiomu, “clear visibility (of a constellation).”

Ogambios < Ogmios > Ogma (Gaelic) / Euydd (Welsh), Constellation of Hercules.

Ogos Nadiras, “the serpent's egg;” Scutum, Scutum Sobiescianum, Sobieski's Shield; also Anguinon.

Ogronios, Mins Ogroni, “of the cold, freezing, connoting cold-blooded animals such as fish and reptiles,” March.

Oxturotlio > oxturotio, “eight cycles;” the eight cycles of Venus.

Oxtureuiai, “eight phases;” the eight principle phases of the Moon.

Pennos / Qendos Ambios, “the dragon's head;” Caput Draconis, the ascending northern lunar node.

Pennos / Qendos Balori, “Balor's head;” Caput Medusa a sub-constellation of Perseus.

Pennos / Qendos Nadiras, “the serpent's head;” Caput Serpentis, a sub-constellation of Serpens Ophiucus.

Prennos, “tree;” for a cusp, a mathematical point marked by the House's ascendant; also uidus in Goidelic.

Prin., abb. of Prinnios.

Prinnios, “branching;” a zodiacal constellation, a zodiacal period.

Quimon, “luster;” a period of five days, from quinquimon an archaic word, Latin, quinquennium.

Ramaca Reta or Reta Ramacas, “rowing wheel” or “wheel of rowing;” a divining wheel; a periphrasis for the Zodiac.

Reiia / Riia > Rii, “free;” Venus as a planet.

Rendu, “star, a stellar body.”

Rendunemos > rindneam lit. “star heaven,” the constellations as a whole.

Rendureidsmen > rindreim > rianreim, lit. “star order, course,” a constellation.

Reta Greinas, “the sun wheel,” Gdl, the Zodiac.

Reta Sauelias, Reta Suléos, “the sun wheel,” the Zodiac.

Retios > Reith, Aries, the Ram stars.

Reui, “luminary;” usually the Moon (cf. Sanskrit “Ravi”).

Reuia, “lunation;” a period averaging 29 days, 12 hours, elapsing between two successive full moons.

Riuo > riodh, a ray, a beam of light.

Riuos, Mins Riuri, “frost,” January, from the Old Celtic reuos, riuos, “frost,” connoting riuo, “beam, and ray.”

Rotlio, “cycle;” the semestrial cycle.

Sagilias, Uabero or Rino Sagilias, “the well of generosity” or Uabero Conlanias, “the well of plenitude;” a very bright region of the Milky Way intersecting the ecliptic in the constellation of Sagittarius at the southern hemisphere; also, there is another area called Uabero

Sianas, “the well of binding”, which intersects the ecliptic in the north, at the boundary of Taurus and Gemini. This is where the star Aedus > Aedh is found.

Saitlon < setlon, “age;” a thirty years cycle; a solar cycle of thirty years.

Mins Samoni, Samonios, “of the sower, of the reunion, of the meeting,” November, and taken in connotation for Samoindon, “summer's end.”

Samos, “summer.”

Santara Mens / mins, “leap-month,” w. for w., “month set aside.”

Saueliamos, Suliamos, “sundial, gnomon.”

Sauelios, the Sun's most usual name.

Semiuisonios, Simiuisonios, Mins Semiuisoni, “of dashing breezes, seeding or sowing time,” June.

Segomos, “the vanquisher, the winner;” an alias of the Gallic Mars, Aries.

Sembros, “the trefoil, clover;” a three-star formation of Aquarius, see Uisumaros.

Semorotlio, “seeds cycle;” the clear half-year made up of springtime and summertime.

Sentio, “path;” orbit of a luminary, mainly of the sun from which Setantios > Setanta, or Cuculantios > Cuchulainn was named; see also, uxsentio.

Seruoretla or Seruonta Retla, “wandering star;” a planet.

\*Seruoretla Acmos, seruoretlacmos, “acme of a planet;” zenith of a planet's orbit.

Sexten Cosloi Uidias, “the seven hazels of knowledge;” a euphemism for the stars of Sagittarius found by the Milky Way.

Sextendirio, “the constellation of seven, the Septentrion;” the Little Bear or Little Dipper.

Sianas, Sionas, “the binding;” also called Uabero Sianas, “the well of binding;” a star cluster called M 35 in a sub-constellation of Gemini (Aedus OClI) intersecting the ecliptic in the north at the boundary of Taurus and Gemini.

Smertus, “the sword;” the star Deneb, alpha Cygni.

Sonnau-os/-a/-on, adj. “sunny;” aspect of the sun, solar.

Sonnocinxs, “the sun's march;” the solar year, the ecliptic (sing. genitive, sonnocingos, the Zodiac; pl. nominative, sonnocinges, the sun's course).

Sonna/sonnos, “the sun (in astronomy).”

Sonnauos mens/mins, “the solar month;” as opposed to a lunar month.

Sonnotarostami, “sun standing;” a euphemism for the summer solstice.

Suelcu Reuias, > Resholly, “bright period;” moonlight, the bright period around the full moon.

Sutrebos, “welfare;” beginning of autumn, a warm period of Fall similar to Indian summer; the solar month of October.

Tarabarra, “the wishing bars;” or Wheel of Fortune, the Zodiacal Wheel (Kalachakra in Sanskrit).

Tasgopeilas Reta, “performing thought wheel;” a divining wheel, the Zodiac.

Tectos > tect, “messenger, envoy;” planet Jupiter.

Trigenacos, “triangle;” the constellation of Triangulum, the “triangle” in Latin, also Tricoros, the Triskelion. The three stars of Trienacos were: Sulaxsus / Eulaxsos > Eolas, “knowledge,” Uesos > Fios / Fius, “knowing,” and Uocomarcos > Fochmarc, “inquiry.”

Tricoros, "three circles;" a triskelion, triskele; a symbol for the triune order, the Trinity or Trimurti, a druidical cosmic or stellar insignia.

Uasnia, "dawn;" the planet Venus as the Morning Star.

Uesara / uestnos / uesenteinon, "springtime."

Uidus / uidon, "tree;" a zodiacal cusp; also Prennos in Brythonic.

Uisumaros, "the trefoil, clover;" the trefoil formation of Aquarius; see Sembros.

Uindosenos > Fintan, "the white elder;" a mythical druid-seer, the Irish name given to Fomalhaut, the alpha star of Pisces Austrinus, the Southern Fish.

Uogemos, "autumn, fall;" please note that the Goidelic synonym was Cengiamos, w. for w., "sub-winter".

Uonidion, "setting;" setting of a luminary.

Uosutrebos, dog days, w. for w.: "lower welfare;" the solar month of July.

Uxellos > Ochill (Gaelic), "lofty, high, prominent;" the constellation of Aquila.

Uxsentio, "high path;" a heavenly body's highest orbit; the path of a heavenly body through the Milky Way.

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Correspondence address:

Michel-Gerald Boutet  
[boutios@cgocable.ca](mailto:boutios@cgocable.ca)