

On Ancient Celtic Astrology and Naked Eye Astronomy – The Gundestrup Cauldron

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The Gundestrup Cauldron, digital drawing after a photo from the National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.

Abstract

The Gundestrup Cauldron has remained enigmatic since the day it was discovered in a Danish peat bog near Borremosebog in May of 1891. Many have wondered and pondered over the mysterious imagery and have tried to give it an interpretation. Some have proposed a Scythian or Vedic Indian origin to it, while others have recognized the clear connection to Celtic mythological themes and motifs. The following article is but a brief and detailed interpretative iconographical analysis of what is in truth a star chart such as those formerly conceived and maintained by the Celtic Druids of the La Tène cultural period.

Our understanding of zodiacal stellar symbolism is but a “cultural construct.” For instance, when one looks at the vastness of the night sky, all one sees is an infinity of pin

point specks of light. Connecting the bright dots into a recognizable pattern is truly an exercise of imagination. This is what is meant by a cultural construct. For example, when looking at the spots on the moon, the Chinese and Native Americans or Amerindians see a hare, while the Europeans see a face prosaically referred to as “the old man in the Moon.” Same ink spot, but different interpretations. The same can be said for name attribution of star pattern designations. In the ancient past, when looking at the stars of the Septentrion, particularly the circumpolar stars in the region of the Big Dipper, some imagined these as a long tailed bear while during the agricultural age they were seen alternately either as a pouring pot, a wain, or a plow. In time and space, each culture had its distinctive interpretation. This defining concept is what can be defined as a “cultural signature.”

Therefore, the way stars and planets are grouped and charted is a strong cultural indicator on how the world is viewed and explained. It was long thought that the Sumerian or Chaldean charts were the oldest models for the western and eastern ones such as those of Greece, Persia, and India. Again, as it turns out, this is but another misconception. It is also true that some of the Classical Mediterranean and Sanskrit names for the stars and constellations were borrowed from the Chaldean chart. But then again, this was not the case for the more archaic charts of the Hittites, early Greeks, and Celts. Nomenclature for astral bodies and star clusters varies not only with time and age but also from one linguistic culture to another. Henceforth, it is possible to date and rank constellations by their mythological themes and motifs.

There is a quote on Claudius Ptolemaeus by Jim Tester that very well describes the competence of a good astrologer: “The astrologer, said Ptolemy, should so understand the movements of the heavenly bodies that he can know ‘the place of any configuration’...”¹

The Zodiac consists of a definite number of star clusters grouped in a band girdling the Earth’s center along the ecliptic. The early zodiacal models had 8 or 10 constellations while others counted not more than 12 or 13. Certain constellations such as Libra and Scorpio comprised of many asterisms which included Ophiuchus the Snake-Bearer. Moon based astrology used the 27 or 28 day-night circadian rhythms (nychthemeron) of the month. Certainly, the Almanac is lunar and the Zodiac, solar, but of course, these are two different systems, the first relying on the yearly lunar cycle (354.3 days) of approximately 12 lunations and the second, on the solar cycle (365.6 days). An important reminder is that the moon visits the zodiacal constellations in but one month while the sun takes a full year to complete the same course. Worse still, the authors often fail to give their sources, making it impossible to verify them. In short, we can only conjecture on who started it in the first place. And in this case, most evidently, all paths lead to Robert Graves.

Robert Graves, seeing the impossibility of the Zodiac being a “perpetual calendar,” erroneously thought that the Beth-Luis-Nion letter sequence of the insular Ogham could not reconcile the equinoxes and solstices with the twelve zodiacal constellations. He believed that the Zodiac emerged from the thirteen-month lunar calendar and he suspected that the

dual Gemini signs were fused into one in order to harmonize the lunar-solar cycles. Graves has the tree order start on Christmas Eve in December on the 24th; this is an impossibility since the Celtic lunar-solar year commenced in mid-fall around the October-November moon. Also impossible are his fixed dates, we now know from archaeological data collected on the Coligny plates excavated in a small town near Lyon France, in 1897, that the Druids had reconciled in a most ingenious way the discrepancies of the two cycles. Monthly dates followed the Moon phases with the Zodiacal months overlapping. Corrections were made by indexing the shorter lunar cycle with the longer solar cycle by adding an extra month every two and three years following a five years turn-around. Therefore, there were no fixed dates in the druidical scheme, just floating ones!

It is very unlikely that the Celtic Druids' system of astrology would diverge to the point expressed in the reconstructed models of Graves and followers such as Carol Carnac and Helena Paterson in their *Celtic Astrology*, or again, in the *Astrologie Gauloise* of Edgar Bliss. Did not Cassidorus say that the Celtic led Dacian Getae knew of **twelve** zodiacal signs? The name of the charioteer may change from culture to culture but the vehicle, the sun-chariot, remains firmly on the sun path. A close scrutiny of the Irish manuscripts reveals a system halfway between the Hindu and Greek systems. This being that western astrology had its origins in the old Indo-European cosmological mindset. Also, the twelve signs of the Zodiac were already envisioned at the time of the *Rig Veda* hymns (composition dated circa 2000 B.C.E in the Bronze Age).

Astrological imagery can be likened to a movie screen which sets the visual representations of the Zodiac in a very loose and narrow band. The Greek poets called it Eurydice's belt. Eurydice (Eurudikè) was Orpheus' wife. Orpheus almost succeeds in bringing her back from Hades, the Underworld, and back to the Land of the Living. The same myth is found in the Celtic tradition. It was said that the first thing written in Ogham was the birch tree sign written seven times to prevent Dechtirè,² Lugh's wife, from being abducted into the Otherworld. She was thus saved in order to give Lugh a son called Setanta,³ "He of the Path." This sets the motion of the Sun's path through the zodiacal signs.

The signs are always 12 to a number and measure at a 30° angle. The sun moves at about one degree per day and it takes roughly 30 days, a little more than one lunar month, to move from one sign to another. Therefore, each morning the sun rises at a different point on the horizon. In one year the sun will have covered 360° taking 365.2422 days (365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 49.6 seconds) to return to the vernal point where it began its cycle. This value is almost the same as 2000 years ago (the Sonnocinx took than 354.2423 days).

-Why is the tropical year longer than the zodiacal degrees? ... For three reasons mainly:

- 1* Because the circle-division into 360° is an arbitrary mathematical convention having been inspired by its approximation against the estimated duration of the year in a number of days, and worked out in order to be divisible into twelve integers.
- 2* Because the time taken by the Earth's revolution around the sun is not an integer multiple of its own rotation.

- 3* Also, because its orbit is slightly elliptic thus resulting in a non-constant revolution speed, and because the estimated breath of the zodiacal constellations is inaccurate (or approximate in conceptual measure). Tradition has it that certain asterisms (stellar archipelagos) or star clusters were so dense and others so sparse, that large constellations would take over the two bordering signs while the smaller ones lost part of their astrological houses. Certain constellations also overlap during the part of certain months. To wit, in the period of Capricorn, the sun rises in the stars belonging to Aquarius.

Let's face it, Druids, as were the other sages of Antiquity such as the Mathematici, the Rishis, the Chaldeans, and the Magi, were certainly not "lunatics." That they should confuse the 13 monthly lunar cycle with the 12 months solar zodiacal cycle, speaks more of the state of confusion of these contemporary enthusiasts than on the state of true astral-science in Antiquity. As fine observers of the skies, the Druid-astronomers worked within the limits of "naked eye" astronomy. In light of this, they could only speculate on the observable planets moving within and without the constellations, they cyclically visited. To name more than the five anciently known planets, including the two luminaries, is stretching things a bit much. This being said, Uranus was at times perceived and known to a few astronomers. Again, the two luminaries were considered as planets since they moved accordingly. Let's be honest, Neptune and Pluto were unknown to the ancients. To include these newly discovered planets in a reconstructed Celtic Zodiac is downright dishonest!

The idea of a Zodiac was already very ancient when Hipparchus of Nicaea had cataloged the positions of some 1022 stars and 49 constellations. By this time, the ancients were already in possession of a well-documented sky chart. They also believed that their ancestral homeland was situated in the stars of the northern skies. That is, they truly saw themselves as "star children." This explains why the study of stars was important to them.

Zodiacal constellations, as we know them, were a thing long familiar to the seers of Antiquity. When in 174 BCE Hipparchus identified a new star in the constellation of Scorpio, he was very eager to chart all the other visible stars he could observe. He had correctly suspected that the skies were not eternal. Hipparchus made himself famous by discovering the Earth's precession caused by the oscillation of the rotational axis every 25 600 years. This oscillation affects the position of the celestial poles by causing a slow shift of the equinoxes. Around 280 BCE, another Greek, Aratus of Soles, gave, in *Phenomenons and Prognostics*, a very precise description of the skies for the practical use of navigators and farmers. Aratus, who was born in Cilicia, Asia Minor, sometime around 320 BCE, was drawing his information from the work of Eudoxus (circa 370 BCE). This study was the first true scientific work on astronomy. The old constellations identified by the ancients were just those that run along the ecliptic, those referred to as the Zodiac, and which serve to mark the passing of seasonal time. They also identified the circumpolar stars of Ursa Major, then called the Great Wain, along with alpha Draconis as the Pole Star. That occurred just before 2500 BCE. Therefore, from the names hinted at in the Zodiac, i.e. Orion and his dog

(Sirius), we are quick to grasp the general underlying pastoral theme. Most authors believe that the oldest proofs for the antiquity of Western Astrology are to be found in the *Denderah planisphere* artifact, dated before 1800 BCE and kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris. It was observed that the uncharted skies without zodiacal representations run along the 36 degrees latitude. The center of the band coincides with the position of the southern pole in 2500 BCE. This astrological tradition is contemporaneous with that of India, there indicating a scientific and cultural continuum from the Danube to the Indus valleys.

The Vedic scholar and astrologer, David Frawley, has found through an exegesis of the *Brahmanas*, the *Yajur*, and *Atharva Vedas*, that the vernal equinox was in the Kritikas (the Pleiades, early Taurus) and that the summer solstice (Ayana) was in Magha (early Leo), thus yielding a date of around 2500 BCE for the Vedic model. Therefore, this proves that the Vedic system was contemporaneous with that of the Indus Harappan culture.

Furthermore, as David Frawley observed, the oldest Zodiacs dividing the sun's path into twelve equal signs were clearly Indo-European. This dividing of the zodiacal belt into twelve celestial zones is not universal and its conception can be traced back to 2500 BCE in a region of the world well above the 36th parallel corresponding to that of the Pontic Kurgan culture.

Most the astrologers of Antiquity, such as the Greeks, Alexandrian Greco-Egyptians, and Persians, initiated time cycles at the vernal point on the advent of the spring equinox. However, with the earlier parent Indo-European system, time cycles began in autumn after the fall equinox. This tradition was also carried on by the Celts and Vedic Aryans.

Peter Berresford Ellis had noticed, thanks to his understanding of details found in the various Celtic corpuses, that Celtic cosmology paralleled Vedic cosmology. He there noticed that the ancient Celtic astrologers used similar systems as those of India. This system was based on the twenty-seven lunar mansions called Nakshatras in Sanskrit. His main argument was found in the mythological theme of King Ailill's circular palace which had twenty-seven windows through which he could observe the equally numbered "star maidens." Berresford Ellis also observed that Ailill had similar traits to the Hindu Soma king. This should not come as a surprise since Ailill's queen was none other than Medba, the Irish equivalent of the Vedic mead goddess Madhavi.



The horned seated god, Cernunnos, as serpent bearer representing the constellation of Ophiucus while the serpent represents the Serpens sub-constellation.

Indeed, as Joseph Monard remarked, the celestial region of Virgo was the most logical area to buckle the cycle since that it is the largest constellation on the zodiacal belt. The other constellations range in this order: Aquarius, Leo, Pisces, Sagittarius, Taurus, Libra, Gemini, Cancer, Scorpius, Aries, and finally Capricorn. The early Celtic name for Virgo was the Sidos, "the deer," and fittingly, Libra was called Antosclo, "the antler." This constellation was abbreviated as Ind. in the *Book of Ballymote*. The constellation following the Maiden was termed the Serpent bearer along with the snake, later replaced by Scorpio. Sagittarius was originally presented by a cavalier or mounted archer. The Wolf was the old Gaelic name for Aquarius and is well represented on the *Gundestrup Cauldron*. Then came the usual names for the zodiacal signs: the Goat for Capricorn, the Fish for Pisces, the Ram for Aries, the Bull for Taurus, and the Twins for Gemini. The Crab along with the Asses were later denominations, there replacing Ekwos, the constellation of the Horse, also represented by a winged horse. Ecu Prinnios, "constellation of the horse," was the old Gallic name for this constellation. While Leo was seen as an asterism of the Deer constellation and hence designated as Elembos, "the fawn." Monard then came to the conclusion that the prototype for the twelve sign Zodiac of the second millennium was comprised of eight loosely distant groupings.

The *Gundestrup Cauldron* comprises of thirteen individual panels, seven on the outside, five on the inner side, and one at the bottom. The five inner panels each seemingly depict a region of the night sky while the one on the bottom describes the asterisms of the greater constellation of Taurus. Whilst, the seven outer plates illustrate the planets or wandering stars. What is important to retain is that the mythological imagery depicted on the *Gundestrup Cauldron* is of a cosmological order. Let's assume that the *Gundestrup Cauldron* is a star chart and a reminder of the macrocosm.

The flamboyantly decorated *Gundestrup Cauldron* is a unique example of the La Tène period silver work. It was most likely crafted at around 200 BCE in Thracia for a Dalmatian Celtic client as a sacred religious object and ended up in Danemark as a Cimbrian war prize. History shows that these Germanic tribes sacked the Scordician kingdom in 118 BCE.⁴

Fittingly, according to Irish mythology, one of the four ritual objects of the godly Tuatha Dé Danann was brought from Murias (Land of the Black Sea?). If we are to extract any astronomical information from the Celtic cultural database, the way to go is through an in depth analysis and exegesis of their art, specifically that of numismatics and that of the *Gundestrup Cauldron*.

As for most Indo-European texts and iconographical depictions, the correct reading order is from left to right and top to bottom, or in earlier times, boustrophedon, as the ox plows, from a left to right and a right to left motion.



Gallic coinage of the Triviri depicting the ecliptic, sun, solar wheel, stars, planets and three cosmic rays.

The Gundestrup Cauldron Astronomical Plates - Iconography

Inner Panel One



1. A bull representing the “heat of the day,” and Samoinndon, “summer’s end.”
2. The Stag for Sidos, “deer,” the fall constellations of Virgo and Libra. The torque necklace in the sitting horned-gods right hand for Cantos, “ring,” represents Cantli prinnios, the constellation of Libra, literally meaning: “arborescence, or constellation, of the circle, of buckling, of the song, of the commemoration pillar.”
3. The horned seated figure, Cernunnos, with the deer antlers for Libra, Scales, holding the serpent (the sub constellations of Serpens caput and cauda) for Scorpio.
4. A lion or leopard atop a wolf for the winter solstice period of twelve days. Dumanni Prinnios, the constellation of Sagittarius, literally standing for “arborescence of darkening.”
5. A boy riding a sturgeon or a dolphin for Capricorn.
6. Two opposing lions for the vernal point, or spring equinox. A bull representing the return of warm days.
7. In the background, trefoil plants for the threefold aspects of nature; plants ending their annual growth cycle for Giamos / giemos < gemos, “winter,” connoting

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

Inner Panel Two – The Sun Goddess Driving the Solar Chariot along the Sun’s Path



1. Two elephants flanking the sky goddess Belisama, or Brigantia / Brigindo, riding the solar chariot (with sun wheels). The opposing elephants represent festivals, moon fests, the lunar aspects of the goddess who bears the new sun. The elephants in Celtic: Oillpheist < Ollouetsis, “whole, entire, all encompassing, animal,” with the implied meaning of “big beast.” Uetsis means a yearling in wordplay with uestis, “festivity session,” in general.
2. Below are two opposing griffons for the North West and North East winds and a wolf for Ambiuolcaia, “lustrations,” punning with “Lupercalia.” Ambiuolcaia, or Imbiuolcaia (> Imbolc) in Goidelic, literally means “surrounding, all around, the wolf bitch.”

Inner Panel Three – The Chronocrator regulating the Wheel of Time



1. Taranis, the thundering night sky god of the Great Cosmic Wheel (called Swastika in Sanskrit and Ramaca Reta in Goidelic) or Sextandiriones, the stars of the Septentrion, is flanked to his right by Mogus Retios (> Mogh Ruith) with a bull-horned helmet.
2. Two leopards for winter or two brindled wolves; the Gaelic January month of wolves, an Faoilleach < *Uailiaca (from Irish, faol, "wolf," ualos "bad," and uailos "howler").
3. Three Griffins and the ram-headed serpent: the late winter and early winds blow towards April, the month of Cutios, meaning both: "of rams" and "stormy, windy." A third westbound wind griffon hints at the warm spring winds of Simiuisionios, "of the "flighty breeze," (Irish, gaoth deas, "south wind") in June.

Inner Panel Four – The Taurine Acme of Days



1. Three wild cats jumping over bulls with sword yielding warriors accompanied by dogs. The tripling effect is indicative of the Beltaine < Belotennia, "fires of Belos," celebrations in May.
2. The cats represent the three main stars of Hyades, Catosdirai, "Cat stars."
3. The three bulls are the stars of Giamoni Prinnios, the constellation of sprouts," punning with gammos, "ox." Taruos, "the Bull," also called Donnotaruos, the Dun Bull."
4. The Warriors, latios, pl. latioi, puns with latis, pl. lateies, "nychthemeron, and calendar days." The sword, Smertus, was the old Celtic name for Deneb, the alpha star of Cygnus, the Swan constellation.
5. The dogs, Cunes, are the stars of Canis Major (Cumaros), Sirius, and Canis Minor (Cubeccos), Canicula, also for "dog days."

Inner Panel Five – The Cosmic March of the Astral Rulers

And the Battle of Trees

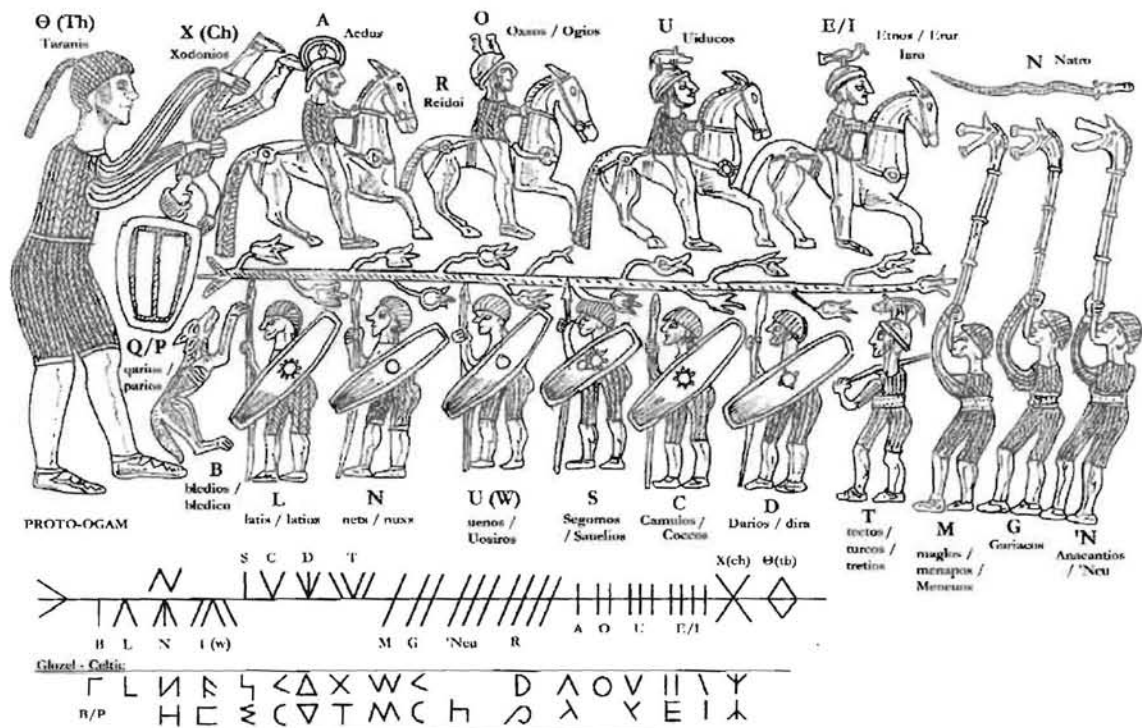
Prennos, “tree;” for a cusp, a mathematical point marked by the House's ascendant; also uidus in Goidelic. A Coligny Calendar notation: prin., abb. of prinnios. prinnion, “branching;” a zodiacal constellation, a zodiacal period.



This plate, no doubt, epitomizes the cosmological mythic battle of trees as exemplified in Livy and in the Welsh Cat Godeu attributed to Taliesin.

Livy's description of the Cisalpine Gaulish tree alphabet called Litana Uidua (Broad Forest) in Book XXIII, 24:

"After the election of the magistrates, the dictator returned to his army, which was in winter quarters at Teanum, leaving his master of the horse at Rome, to take the sense of the fathers relative to the armies to be enlisted and embodied for the service of the year, as he was about to enter upon the magistracy after a few days. While busily occupied with these matters, intelligence arrived of a fresh disaster —fortune crowding into this year one calamity after another —that Lucius Posthumius, consul elect, himself with all his army was destroyed in Gaul. He was to march his troops through a vast wood, which the Gauls called Litana.⁴ On the right and left of his route, the natives had sawed the trees in such a manner that they continued standing upright, but would fall when impelled by a slight force. Posthumius had with him two Roman legions, and besides had levied so great a number of allies along the Adriatic Sea, that he led into the enemy's country twenty-five thousand men. As soon as this army entered the wood, the Gauls, who were posted around its extreme skirts, pushed down the outermost of the sawn trees, which falling on those next them, and these again on others, which of themselves stood tottering and scarcely maintained their position, crushed arms, men, and horses in an indiscriminate manner, so that scarcely ten men escaped. For most of them being killed by the trunks and broken boughs of trees, the Gauls, who beset the wood on all sides in arms, killed the rest, panic-struck by so unexpected a disaster. A very small number, who attempted to escape by a bridge, were taken prisoners, being intercepted by the enemy who had taken possession of it before them. Here Posthumius fell, fighting with all his might to prevent his being taken. The Boii, having cut off his head, carried it and the spoils they stripped off his body, in triumph into the most sacred temple they had. Afterward, they cleaned the head according to their custom, and having covered the skull with chased gold, used it as a cup for libations in their solemn festivals, and a drinking cup for their high priests and other ministers of the temple. The spoils taken by the Gauls were not less than the victory. For though great numbers of the beasts were crushed by the falling trees, yet as nothing was scattered by flight, everything else was found strewn along the whole line of the prostrate band."



The order of astral cusps according to the fabled battle of trees found on the *Gundestrup Cauldron*.

Inner Panel Six (Bottom Plate) – The Bull of Days



1. Top of the disc plate: the hero of days (latios "hero," punning with latis, "calendar day") jumping with the sword of the northern skies (Cygnus) accompanied by Sirius, the dog days star, chasing Cat Palug < Cattos Pallucos, the defective or customary cat," of Hyades.
2. The bull of the constellation of Taurus (horns were broken and missing from this plate) with the Triskelion star of Aldebaran on his forehead.
3. The cat star, the devourer of days, falling below Taurus after it was attacked by the dog and finished off by the hero's sword.
4. Out branching vine like plants covering the ground for Giamonios < Giemonios, "of sprouts, shoots," moon of April/May, from April (or of early May, if after the Ciallosbuis leap-month).

The Outer Plates – The Planets or Wandering Stars

Outer Panel One – Planet Mercury

Luctos / Luxtos "bright, assembly, gathering, troop, party, burden;" **Luxstos** "wanderer," for, "bright wandering (star)"



1. Middle section: god figure with a druidic tonsure holding twin heroes (Gemini) handling a boar piglet (Ursa Minor) and a boar-sow (Ursa Major). The Boar constellation, Ebueros was one of the Gallic names for the Bears of Ursa Major and Minor.
2. On the God's right shoulder, a dog (Sirius), or maybe a wolf (Lupus), and on his left shoulder a winged horse (Cancer or probably Pegasus). Note that Sirius, the alpha star of Canis Major is found in the vicinity of Gemini and Cancer.

3. The planetary ruler for Mercury was the god-king Lugus, “luminous” / Lugios, “desired” > Irish Lugh / Welsh Lleu.

Outer panel two – Planet Saturn

Nucturos Uosiros, “nocturnal loiterer” / Melnos, “sluggish”



1. A god figure wearing a torque and a druidic tonsure grasping twin dragons, the northern and southern lunar nodes.
2. Twin heroes devoured by a double boar-headed serpent representing the ecliptic.
3. The planetary ruler for Saturn was the god Samonios / Semonios, “sower” > Samhain, a brother of Cian and Goibniu in the Irish myths.
4. The Celtic year placed at the autumnal equinox began on the advent of the Samonios moon in November thus initiating the sequence of the signs of the Zodiac. The end of the season was marked by the time of darkening at Samoidon, which literally stands for “summery end.” It occurred just before the moon of Samonios, for “of the sower, of the gathering.” The day of the Celtic year

corresponded to our All-Saints day. The Eve of Samonios was formerly called Uegilia Samoni and was the beginning of the festivities that lasted three weeks. Samonios is a clever pun as only the Druids could make. In fact, *samon* / *semon*, for "seed," hints at *samos* "summer." Therefore Samonios has several meanings including all things pertaining to the growing season and summer's fall. At this moment, a portal opened between the two worlds, that of the souls of the deceased and that of the living mortals. During this event were commemorated the gods, the fallen heroes, and the ancestral spirits.

Outer Panel Three – Mars

Coccidios, "the red"



1. Bearded god with a torque and tonsure accompanied by a boxer and a gymnast. The "red rider" on the left no doubt represents the constellation of Sagittarius.
2. On the right shoulder, Durnacos, a pugilist.
3. On the left shoulder, Lingu, a jumper gymnast.

4. One of the ancient Goidelic names for Scorpio was Lingonis, “jumper, dancer or fetcher.” Abbreviated as Ling. in the *Book of Ballymote*. The other old Celtic denominations were Siltarios and Samonios, “the sower;” Samoni Prinnios, “constellation of the gathering, of the sower.”
5. The planetary ruler for Mars was Ogmios, “the champion, the notcher” > Ogma.

Outer Panel Four - Jupiter, the Chronocrator, Cosmic Ruler of Time

Tectos, “messenger, envoy, emissary, wanderer”



1. Bearded god figure holding two stags by the hind legs.
2. The Stags represent the joining of the zodiacal belt in Virgo and Libra called Ecu "livestock," and Sidos, "the deer." Ecu is called Ech in the Book of Ballymote and could either be taken for "horse, livestock" and ecu-os/-a/-on < aecu-os/-a/-on "balanced, adjusted, equalized."
3. The planetary ruler for Jupiter was the god Taranis, "Thunderer" < Toueranos "from above;" Irish Dagda < Dagodeuos "good god."

Outer Panel Five – The Moon

Luxna < Luan, "lighteous" / Leucara < Lugra "bright light"



1. The silver torqued goddess holding one of her breasts.
2. To her right, the moon god Toutatis Medurinis, "the folk father of flowing mead."
3. To her left, their Selene foster son, Camulos Uiromanduos "dynamic horseman," punning with Manduuos "mindful;" Irish: Etarcumul < Eteros "bird" + camulos "dynamic;" Welsh: Menw Meneuos "mindful."
4. The moon goddess was Belisama, "the luminous," Medua < Medb, "intoxication."

Outer Panel Six – Planet Venus, the Morning and Night Star

Riia / Reia / Reia, the old common Celtic name for the planet, connoting, “free star, or lofty star,” which is the same as for the Germanic Freya.



1. The Dawn goddess raises her right arm lifting Druuios, the pole star wren, as twin eagles or ravens fly to the apex.
2. One of the fates sitting on her left shoulder in the guise of a throne.
3. The god Mercury, Lugus, the long armed, is but a child at her breast.
4. To her left, another Fate fairy does her plaits.
5. A puppy, Canis Minor, lies on his back by her right breast.
6. A big cat, Hyades, jumps to catch the bird.
7. The Celtic Dawn goddess Uosris, “Aurora;” Brigantia > Brigid is one aspect of the triple Goddess, the other two being among other Magosia > Macha “the Elysian Fields,” and Bodua > Bodb “crow-hen.” In short, the Triple Goddess, besides being the Muse Arts, is the Fairy of Fate.

Outer Panel Seven – The Sun

Greina < Grian, “Beaming”



1. Amidst a ring of fire, the golden torqued Sun Queen is flanked by her twin heroes. In devotional gesture, her hands crossed over her breasts form the sun grid sign.
2. On her right shoulder, one combatting the monstrous cat who attacked the bull of days, and to her left, Maponos Belenos, the young solar god emerges from the Underworld. The sun god was called Grannos, “bearded, radiant, bright, and sunny one,” Belinos, the deified Sun, “the Morning Sun.”
3. The sun goddess was also called Suliuia, “the well-colored,” and Sulis, the “eye.”

To conclude, The Gudestrup Cauldron is a visual representation of the annual cycle and the skies depicting and charting the major constellations, stars, and planets, known to the Celts in early Antiquity. Truly, it is a compendium of the astronomical science of the Celtic Druids. This can be further corroborated by the study of imagery and symbolism displayed on Celtic coinage. Again, the cauldron's iconography perfectly agrees with linguistic data recovered from the Gallic *Coligny Calendar* and Irish *Book of Ballymote*. And, as Jean Haudry exposed in an article entitled *General Characteristics of Indo-European Religion*, the Indo-European ideological mindset was basically cosmological.⁷

End Notes

1. Jim Tester in *History of Western Astrology*, p. 10.
2. Dechtirè, from the Old Celtic root Dextsiutera, "the dextrous, right handed."
3. **Setanta** < Sentonos "He that goes, goes roaming;" footpath, driveway, path, way;" sentio / sintio, "path way;" Setantoi, "distant," a small tribe of the Brigantes Nation in what is now Merseyside Lancashire.
4. For more historical details see *A History of Rome* by Walter Wybergh How and Henry Devenish Leigh, p. 375.
5. Litana Silua in Latinised Cisalpine Gallo-Roman, or Litana Uidua in Gaul meaning "the broad forest" (J. Monard 1994).
6. Titus Livius (Livy), *The History of Rome*, Book 23, D. Spillan, A.M., M.D., Cyrus Evans, Ed.
7. A cultural and historical society review which continues the Antaios Journal founded in 1959 by Mircea Eliade & Ernst Jünger. Quoted from: Centro Studi La Runa, Archivio di istoria, letteratura, tradizione, filosofia; URL: <http://www.centrostudilaruna.it/haudryreligion.html>.

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Gundestrup Cauldron, inner panels, galvano-plastic copies, for the Musée de Bibracte, Cité des Sciences exhibit of Paris, "*Les Gaulois, une expo renversante*."

All photos digitally redrawn by the author.

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