

THE CELTIC CONNECTION REVISITED

Old World Diffusion

by Michel-Gérald Boutet, Québec, Canada, august 2014

Chapter I

The Danubian Proto-Indo-European Culture



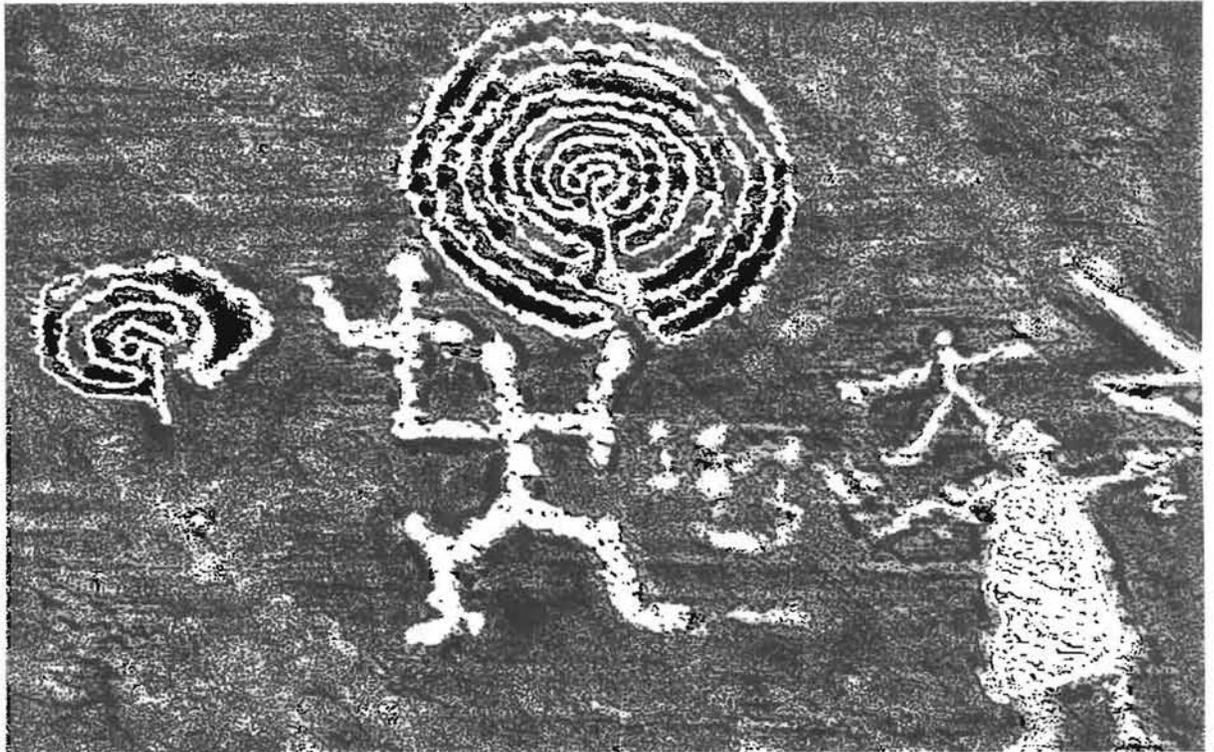
Map of Europe after Strabo. Old text book engraving by Fphilibert (public domain).

The Danubian Culture was most likely the mother culture of the Hittite (1700 to 1200 BC) and Mycenaean, Achaean (1600 to 1100 BC) cultures. By the fifth millennium BC, the Danubians had reached a high level of sophistication which included a unified priesthood, political organisations and farming practices. Archaeologists who had uncovered many ancient sites in the Lower Danube of Serbia, Rumania and Bulgaria

(*Lepensky Vir, Vinča, Tartaria and Varna*) have now discovered its northern extension in Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. The northern sites, where more than 150 temples involving large-scale earthworks were unearthed, date from between 4800 to 4600 BCE. These were constructed of earth embankments and wooden palisades and stretched for up to a half mile. The temple sites were built by a highly religious people who lived in communal long-houses that were about 50 meters long grouping sizeable villages. One of these highly organised village and temple complexes at *Aythra*, near Leipzig, covers an area of 25 hectares. Also uncovered were two hundred communal long-houses. The population was estimated at over 300 people living in buildings grouped 15 to 20. Their economy and lifestyle were based on husbandry raising cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. After a 200 years period of growth and consolidation, these pan-tribal mini-states collapsed and dispersed. Their artisans manufactured pots, toys, weapons and tools made of stone, wood and bone and ceramics. They decorated their pottery with geometric designs and carved statues in animal and human shapes. The Danubian nations probably dispersed at a time when they became familiar with copper work since **ayes-* is the main common term to designate metal along with bronze, gold and silver. The bronze tools, parts of harnesses, chariots were fired and fitted from mountain hardwood. This activity furnished words that embraced the smelting of metals. On the other hand, lithic work is also very present at the common level as testified by the many derivatives of root **ak-* = "stone" and also "acuteness". Terminology for wheeled and nautical transport is abundant in the proto-language. There are words for "wheel" (**rotho-*), "axle" (**hakhs-*), "yoke" (**iak'om*) and associated gear for harnessing and ploughing. They domesticated the horse, **ekwos-*, as shown by the term **ekwo-wiros* = "horse-man", "cavalier". Other animals included **gwous*, cattle, **tauros* = "bull", *su-* = "pig", **porko-* = "hog", **peku-* = "sheep", **kapros* = "goat", **pholo* = "fowl", **ghans-* = "goose" and **anHt-* = "duck". Cereals included: *yava-* = "wheat", *zeiai* = "barley" and *kerā* = "oat". The landscape described by the proto-language is that of wooded valleys, mountainous ranges with lakes and quick flowing rivers from snowy sources. The IE had no original common word for "ocean" but had many words for "sea», **mar-*, "moorland", **ag'her-* and "lake", **lakw-*. The great waterways were better known: **dh[e]n(w)-* or **ap-*, the "river" since they had boats: **nāw-*, "nave" and **dul-*, "ship", "vessel". At the time, the Ocean was probably ice locked. This explains the many terms pertaining to ice cover: **lad(h)-/e-* = "ice", **eig'-* = "ice flow", "glacier", **g(')lak(')-*, *-g(')-* = "ice", "ice cover", "frozen surface", "ice shelf", **preus-* = «frost.

The Greek word *thalassa* was borrowed from Pelagian, a non-Indo-European language, showing that the notion was not known to them before they reached the Mediterranean Sea. The Black Sea level before 5000 BC was much lower than it is at the present and was a large fresh water lake. The most catastrophic event of the VIth millenium was the flooding of this great lake turning it into the salty Black Sea. So around 5550 BC, within two years, 20,000 square miles of prime Ukrainian lowlands were flooded under 510 feet deep undrinkable sea water. This event displaced lake populations up the river valley highlands and into the Danubian basin. It coincides with new cultural artefacts and North Danube cultural expansion. The root **lak-* for "lake", Germanic, *lox*, echoed by Sanskrit *lak-* for lacquer, a salmon-pink colour, also denotes "fish" in many of the IE languages of Europe, as well as in the Celto-Italic dialect of Central-Asia known as Tocharian. Indeed, the root **mori* in the Celto-Italic and Germanic branches stood for: "great body of water", "great lake". Hence derived are the Celtic *mori*, Latin *mare*, German, *meer* and Slavonic, *moje*. In fact, the Celtic name for the Black sea was *Moria* and this shows that they were at an early period acquainted with the Black Sea north-shore. Salmon was at a time common in the post Ice-Age Rivers of Europe and one species, *Salmo trutta*, is still found in the streams of the Caucasus. The landscape was also dominated by the beach tree along with the oak and vine (**woi-no* / **wei-no*; Hittite **wiiana*; Celtic **uiniia*) in the valleys spreading further north of the Black Sea as the climate became warmer at the turn of the fourth and third millennium BC. Migrations of the northern Danubian peoples after 4600 BC into the Baltic and northern Eurasian areas gave rise to a hybridisation with the Finno-Ugric and Altaic shamanistic cultures. Words borrowed from Finno-Ugric languages attest an IE presence in the northern hinterland of the Baltic and Eurasia.

Chronology of the Danubian civilisation
Lepenski Vir artefacts (Serbia) from 6500 to 5500 BCE. Vinča artefacts and inscriptions (Serbia) from 5000 to 4000 BCE. Tartaria artefacts and inscriptions (Rumania) 5300 BCE to 2700 BCE. Varna artefacts (Bulgaria) 4400 BCE to 4100 BCE.



Val Camonica Rock Art, redrawn from a photo from UNESCO.

Indo-European religion

The French scholar Georges Dumézil, in *Naissance de Rome (Jupiter Mars Quirinus, II)*, was the first to expose the underlying structure of IE myth and religion. He found that the original Roman religion was based on an archaic pre-Capitoline triad composed of Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus. Each of these god figures played a role in the sacred cosmic play. Jupiter, the priest, looked over spiritual matters, Mars, the warlord, maintained political and legal order, and Quirinus represented agrarian and manufacturing society. For each these, Dumézil proposed a function: 1. flamines, religion, 2. equites, war and 3. the plebe, society.

IE religion was essentially cosmic in accord with the cycles of nature ordered and maintained by divine agents but nevertheless having man, the free man, at its center.

Another French scholar, Émile Bénéviste (1902-1976), clarified Dumézil's notion of tripartition describing the role of dualism in IE thought. The divine is qualified by light, is positively charged, and all that which is not, is disorderly and destructive, therefore unproductive, unholy, unhealthy and death inducing. This sacred godly order, although non-dogmatic, is organized by a legal and moral code called *dedma (Gaulish dema, Old Irish deim)« statute » or *dherma / *dhrēma “to hold, to bear, to keep” thus yielding:

Old Greek thrēskéuō, Old Persian dārayeiti, Sanskrit dharma, Latin firmus, Old Baltic darna or derna and Old Slavic dārītī. This is what was termed “Law of Manu” in the Vedas. A Latin pun played on *vir* “man”, *ver*, spring (*ver sacrum* “wish to consecrate to the gods everything to come”) and *veritas* “truth”, all that is truthful, sincere, honest and true to life, that is reality”. This ethic is also found in *Meditations*, the stoic philosophical work of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121 – 180 CE):

“Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.”

The Cosmos was divided into three regions: the upper world, the middle world and the lower world. And, for each of these constituents of the *multiverse*, a quality of divine light was attributed:

***Dyew-**, “white”: day, daylight, the upper world;

***Reg^wos-**, “red”: shady, dawn and dusk, the aurora, the middle world;

***Temó-**, “dark, somber” or ***Dhūw-**, “black”: night, light-less, the lower world or underworld.

In turn, these three worlds were re-divided into three other realms or regions. Thus, the nine levels separating the median level of the sky and the underworld in which the cosmic tree takes root. The cosmic tree is a representation of the axis mundi (the earth’s pole) supporting the sky’s vault or firmament. For the Hittites, this concept was represented by nine scale ladder. Apart from light and dark, the world is conditioned by two other states: plenty and void. These concepts were fully debated in Antiquity by the Greek philosophers, among others. In Epicurus’ letter to Pythocles, only the principle of light can truly traverse these two states.

“A world is a circumscribed portion of the universe, which contains stars and earth and all other visible things, cut off from the infinite, and terminating in an exterior which may either revolve or be at rest, and be round or triangular or of any other shape whatever. All these alternatives are possible: they are contradicted by none of the facts in this world, in which an extremity can nowhere be discerned. That there is an infinite number of such worlds can be perceived, and that such a world may arise in a world or in one of the intermundia (by which term we mean the spaces between worlds) in a tolerably empty space and not, as some maintain, in a vast space perfectly clear and void. It arises when certain suitable seeds rush in from a single world or intermundium, or from several, and undergo gradual

additions or articulations or changes of place, it may be, and waterings from appropriate sources, until they are matured and firmly settled in so far as the foundations laid can receive them. For it is not enough that there should be an aggregation or a vortex in the empty space in which a world may arise, as the necessitarians hold, and may grow until it collide with another, as one of the so-called physicists says. For this is in conflict with facts."

Although the gods share character traits with fleshy mortals, their beings are mainly constituted of light. This is expressed by the IE root *dei- "light (of day)" yielding Latin *dies*, Gaelic *dia*, Thracian *dios*, Lithuanian *diena* and modern English *day*. Or again, the same root expanded into *deiw- for "shine" gave *deiwòs "god". This etymology is found in many IE languages such as:

Celtic *déuos*, Latin *divus* or *deus*, Sanskrit *deva* or *dyaus*, Greek, *zeus*, *dios* and *theos*, Hittite *šiu-na-* and Louvite *tiwaz*. Daytime is expressed by the root syllables *a^h- («day», «duration») and *ayer- for « morning ». The names were reconstructed such: *deiwos "god", *deiwa "goddess", neutral *deiwom or *deiwon and plural *deiwoi. In the Philistine tablets, god is spelled diu-, nominative dius. The IE sky god at the head of the pantheon was *Dyêus P^{at}ér "Day light Father" or *Déiwos Patér, "God Father". The name is attested in the related daughter cultures as: Vedic Indian *Dyaus pitar*, Greek *Zeus patér*, Illyrian *Deipaturos* and Roman *Iupiter*, Umbrian *Iupater* (both from *Diespiter). This notion of a "Sky Father" is also found in a Luwite epithet *tiwaz tatiš*, a Latvian theonym *Debess tévs* and Kalasha *Dizau*. He was also called *Dagodeuos (> Dagda "Good God") in Goidelic and probably *Dagonos (> Dagon "Good one") in Old Philistine and early Hittite. The Sky God also had a female companion called *Diwyâ "Clear Sky" attested by the names *Devî* in Sanskrit, *Dezalik* in Kalasha, *Deua* in Gaulish and *Dé* in Irish.



The Mother Goose or Swan Queen chariot, Danubian culture.



Philistine Pottery shard showing swan motif. Tel Miqne-Ekron, publications, Albright Institute and Hebrew University Institute of Archaeology, Directors S. Gitin and T. Dothan.

The primordial ancestral couple of Indo-European Gods and humans

The ancestral mythic couple who begat the gods, demi-gods and mortals of Indo-Europeans have been restituted as **B^helos Manus* «brilliant man» and **Deua D^henwa* «goddess impetuous», the celestial waters in godly form. These reconstructed forms were obtained through comparative studies; for example a compound of the name of the Indo-European Adam is found in the Kalasha theonym Balomain and the name for the goddess is found in the Vedic and Celtic Danu. Her other cultural names were **Dg^hem-Māter* « Earth mother » and **Dēmos Māter* « Mother of the people» evolving into the Attic Greek *Dēmétér* or Doric *Dâmâtér*. She was seen as the patroness of agriculture, fertility and prosperity and referred to as «mother of storms». The Old Russians called her *Mat' syra zemlja* «Mother of the Earth». As **Maiia* (> Maya), «whimsical, bewitching», the fairy queen of the Pleiades, she initiates the spring celebrations of May.

Otherwise, she was simply called *Māter* in Greek, *Matra* in Celtic and *Ma* in Phrygian, all for «Mother».

As *Medua* (Irish *Medb*, Vedic *Maduva*), «Intoxication through mead», or Greek *Melissa* (μέλισσα), "honey bee", she is the queen bee who couples with the bumble-bee god **B^helos B^hemb^hos* (also Vedic *Soma*, Irish *Aillil*, Welsh *Gwion Bach*). *Melissa* was the nymph who nurses the god *Zeus*. The Mother Goddess couples with **Deiwos*, the Sky God. In Hittite myth, she gives birth to natural phenomena and living beings with the

god *Dagan-zipas* who also fathers humans.

Etymologies for the primordial couple Belos and Danua

*B^helos > Belos « bright, clear » cf.: Gaulish, Belos ; Greek, Belos ; Latin, Belus ; Welsh, Beli ; Irish, Bilé.

*Dh[e]n(w)-a > Danua « mighty flow, torrential, impetuous ». Son Danaüs, ancestor of the humans (the Danan race). Danaüs is from the Indo-European root *Dh[e]n^a(w)-os “the gifted, skilled”.

The founding ancestral twin gods

The primordial twins or *Dioscuri* as the Greeks called them were juvenile sky gods. One represents the morning sun while the other the afternoon sun. As sun of **Danua*, they are the first **Danauoi* (Sanskrit **Danavas*), the sons of the celestial goddess. This sets them apart from **Manos* (Germanic *Mannus*, Gaulish *Manos*, Sanskrit *Manu*), «man, human», whose offspring are referred to as the **Manauoi* / **Manawoi* (Sanskrit *Manavas*). The PIE root **dg'hem-* gave the Latin names *humus* «earth» and *homo* «man». Thus, humans were drawn from the humus of the earth and given breath by their bright celestial ancestors. Of these demi-gods, were the *Manauoi* originating from the Septentrion, the seven stars of the Great Wain or Dipper.

The PIE root word **Yémos* « twin » (pl. **yémoi*) yields Sanskrit, *Yama* and Celtic *Emnos*. Philistine *Yamir* and Germanic *Ymir* are both from a probable PIE root **yemiros* / **gemiros*, Proto-Germanic root **ymyros*, for «twinly». In Indo-European myths, the *Dioscuri* or Twins are always associated to chivalry and horses.

According to Greek mythology, the *Danaoi* originated from the land of *Argos*.

Belus was the father of *Danaüs*, great-grandfather of *Danae* and the ancestor of the *Danaiids* (Δαναΐδες). The *Danaiids*, numbering fifty, were the daughters of *Danaus* who married the sons of *Aegyptus*. On their wedding night, the *Danaiid* maidens murdered each of their husbands except for one. *Hypermnestra* therefore had spared *Lynceus* because he had respected her virginity. For their crimes, the forty-nine maidens were sent to the Underworld where they were condemned to endlessly fill leaky jars.

Therefore, all of the Indo-European pantheons claim to descend from the prime mother **Danua*, from whom the Danube River was named. And this included other great

courses such as the Don, the Dniepr and the Donets.

For the Hibernians, the ancestral couple was *Danu* or *Anu* and *Bilé* and for the British it was *Dôn* and *Beli*. The Greeks remembered them as *Danae* and *Belos* (Latinised as *Belus*) while the Indian Aryans knew them as *Dânu* and *Danayu*. *Danayu* is most likely akin to *Danaos*. The Greek *Danaos*, meaning «Judge», was the son of *Belos* and *Anchimhoe* and grandson of *Poseidon*. This sets the entire dynasty as sea or water divinities. He is said to have reigned fifty years on the kingdom of *Argolid* after having taken the throne from king *Gelanor*. *Argolid* or *Argolis*, once peopled by the Pelasgians, is a peninsula of Greece and a seven city state comprised of: *Argos*, *Mykenes*, *Tirynta*, *Nafplio*, *Troezen*, *Ermionida* and *Epidaurus*.

The ancient Ionians of Peloponnesia referred to themselves as *Danaeans* that is, *Danaoi* or *Danawoi*. According to the *Rig Veda*, the dragon god *Ahi-Vritra*, son of the goddess *Danu*, withheld the celestial waters from the high mountains by blocking them in the meanders of the vast plain. His brother Indra opposed and slayed him thus undamming the torrential waters which rushed to the sea.

This myth, no doubt, reminisces the great deluge which filled the inland Black Sea (Pont-Euxinus) soft water lake with sea water around 5500 BCE. This cataclysmic event marked forever the peoples who then were forced upon another in exile. Most of the early myths of these peoples bear the memory of this event, be it the Sumerian cycles of *Gilgamesh* or the Biblical flood accounts.

And according to the *Puranas*, *Kasyapa*, the eponym of the Caspian Sea or Hyrcanian Sea, Sea of Wolves», as it was prosaically called, was not only the ancestral father of the *Danavas* but also of the *Devas* (gods), the *Asuras* (Titans) and *Nagas* (serpent demons).

Kasyapa, as it is proposed by Vedic scholars, is from the Sanskrit *kacchapa*, «marsh dweller», from which is also derived *Kaccha*, the Caspian Sea, literally, «of vast shores». But then, Indo-European etymology hints at another root altogether for the name: *Kassi* < **kas-* «grey», therefore «tin»; akin to Greek *Kassiteros* (Κασσιτερος), Gaulish *Cassiteron*, «cassiterite, tin mineral». The Greek name *Kassiteros*, quoted from Homer, was traditionally taken to mean «metal from the land of the Kassi», that is, the *Casseterides*.

This Greek and Philistine *Belos*, therefore confused with the Phoenician *Ba'al*, was the

son of Poseidon and father of *Danaos*.

The story surrounding the myth maintains that *Dryops*, «Oak face», was the son of the river god *Sperkheios* and the nymph *Polydora*, a daughter of *Danaos*. *Druops* reigned over the country of *Oita* and had an only daughter called *Drypa* who kept her father's sheep. The *Hamadryad* nymphs took much liking for *Drypa* and took her as a godly playmate teaching her sacred song and dance. *Apollo* caught sight of her as she stood in the midst of a joyous chorus of nymphs and desired to take her. In order to lure her, he took the shape of a turtle. *Drypa* took the turtle as play thing and put it against her breast. Then he shape shifted again and took the shape of a snake. This frightened the nymphs who left *Drypa* alone with it. Then *Apollo* took again his godly aspect and made love to her. (A.L. Mét., XXXII, 1 – 3., citation from Bernard Sergent in *Le livre des dieux celtes et Grecs* p. 232.)

The Celts also knew the myths surrounding the goddess *Danu* and the Danube River but it is not known, however, if they remembered the stories concerning the Caspian Sea.



An androgenous Cycladean oath-taking devotee or priest wearing the sacred knotted ribbon or cordon from the island



A fish-lipped figure called the “water fairie” by archaeologists bearing scale-like markings and knotted cords. The anthropomorphic fish is thought to represent a male deity. Lepenski Vir site, Serbia, drawing by the author after a

of Syros. Note the delta sign on the solar plexus for deiwos "god". Old Cycladean culture dated from 2700 to 2400 BCE, Goulan Museum, Athens. Redrawn after a photo by G. Nimatallah / IGDA.

photo from the National Museum in Belgrade.

On The European Origins of Alphabets

According to current accepted theory, the 24 letters alphabet was devised from a stylisation of an evolved version of the Egyptian hieroglyphs called Demotic (= "popular" in Greek). The alphabet was then introduced from Egypt to Gebal in the Sinai, where it was passed on to the miners of Serabit El-Kheden. Then in 1000 B.C., the proto-alphabet was brought to Byblos, Phoenicia, where it was found engraved on a sarcophagus belonging to king Ahiiram. Phoenician sea merchants then, in the VIIIth century, made it known to the Grecian Cretans at Knossos who, in turn, passed it on to the continental Greeks who then passed it on to the Etruscans of Italy, whence the Roman alphabet. So for the academics, this is the general itinerary for the diffusion of the alphabet from Egypt to Europe via Canaan and Phoenicia. Using this scenario, experts can then date the other known alphabets from the Roman, Tartesian, Celtiberic, Venetic, Runic and Gothic, plus other miscellaneous dead alphabets, on to the Irish Oghams. The problem with this theory is that the Demotic cursive script was in use at a time in Egypt from only about the VIIth century BC to the Vth century AD. Another problem with the theory is that, looking back in time, one should expect to find a fixed prototype for the oldest original alphabet. That is, as time elapses, variant forms are developed and tend to be more numerous. In contradiction, this is not the case for the alphabet. For example, the many variants of alphabets originally used in Greece became standardised only at a much later date, around 403 BC. So if, according to one of the origin myths for the Greek alphabet, it was Cadmus the Phoenician who first introduced it to the Greeks, what then of the much older Cretan scripts, Linear A and B dating back into the XIVth century B.C.? The reason for this is that the pre-historians and archaeologists are only starting to suspect the meaning of the importance of the Danubian civilisation which appeared in Europe starting from around 6000 B.C.

In late Neolithic inscriptions, Danubian Lepenski Vir, Vinča culture (dated from 5000 to 3800 BC) are found both alphabet-like and ogham-like symbols, sometimes side by side. The Danubian Neolithic culture, stretching through the valleys from Bulgaria to Germany via Hungary, Slovakia and Austria, ranges from around circa 6000 to 3500 BC. Undoubtedly, one of the world's oldest civilisations pre-dates the Sumerian (3500 to 2300 BC) by 2500 years, the Egyptian (3100 to 30 BC) by 2900 years, and the Canaanite (3200 to 2200 BC) by 2800 years and the Minoan (2400 to 1500 BC) civilisation by 3600 years.



Deity (female?) from Lepenski Vir. Drawing by the author after a photo from the National Museum in Belgrade.

↑ = U < úderos "uter, uterus"



Sheela na Gig, Kilpeck, Herefordshire, England.

Alphabet-like and Ogham-like inscriptions in Neolithic Art

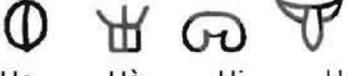
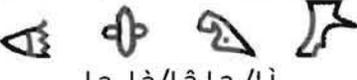
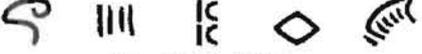
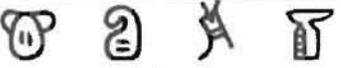
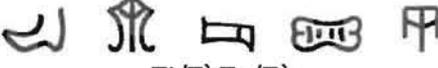
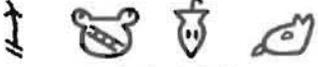
Similar marks are also found at a number of sites in Central and Western Europe, ranging from Danubian valley to the British Isles. Rock Art of the Azilian (Mas d'Azil, France) type has been found in all parts of France, Italy, Spain, Rumania and as far north as Scotland.

Two other sites bearing striking similarities to the Danubian inscriptions are the Seine

River valley (France) and Windmill Hill site (England) petroglyphs. The Windmill Hill site dates older than 2200 BCE when carbon-14 adjustments are made. Surprisingly, many of the alphabet-like symbols are close matches to the Mycenaean hieroglyphs and syllabic signs found at Knossos or on Linear B tablets from Pylos and which have been translated from archaic Greek in 1953 by Michael Ventris with the help of linguist John Chadwick. The Pylos inscriptions of south-western Peloponnese date from the XIIIth century BCE. Prior to this, the archaic Greeks were in the area of the lower Danube north to the Black Sea in the Pontic area. A bilingual cuneiform tablet found in the Hattusas archives records the mythological tale of a hunter in the then already dead Hurrian language along with a translation into Hittite.

The Anatolian Luwian Script

Trial

 Â A	 I Î
 U	 Ha Hà Hi Hu
 Ka Ki Ku	 La Là/Lâ La/Lì
 Ma/Mi/Mì/Mu	 Na/Nà /Ni/Nì Nu/Nù
 Pa/Pà Pi/Pu	 Ra/Ri Ru/Rù
 Sa/Sà	 Ta/Tà
 Si/Sì Su/Sù	 Ti/Tì Tu/Tù
 Wa/Wi Wà/Wì	 Za/Zá Zà/Zâ
	 Zi/Zì Zí Zu

Decipherment of the Danube Culture Inscriptions

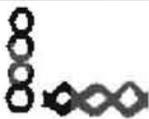
The Danubian Script (Vinča / Târtâria)

Radiocarbon dating on the *Târtâria* and *Vinča* artefacts place them around 5500 BCE. These sites contemporaneous with the first *Eridu* phase of the Sumerian civilization. Pre-cuneiform Sumerian writing was based on pictograms and therefore does not qualify as a sound transcription system. The universal representation of a corn sheaf bears the meaning of corn but not the sound of the name as expressed in different languages. Therefore, the inscriptions could not have derived from this early Mesopotamian culture. The orderly repetition and arrangement of set symbols

are indicative of a form of writing. The Danubian inscriptions predate Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian Hieroglyphs, thus making them the oldest known writing.

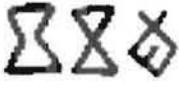
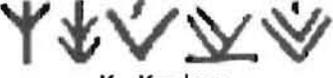
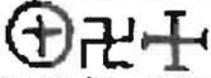
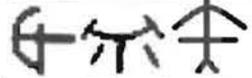
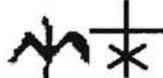
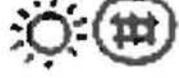
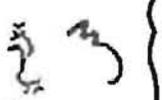
Due to the great number of symbols found in the Balkan, *Vinča*, *Lepenski Vir* (Serbia) and *Tartaria* (Rumania) inscriptions, it can be surmised, much like Linear B and Anatolian, that they constituted a syllabary cipher. But then again, considering the little we know on the origins of alphabets, it cannot be ruled out that this script was alphabetical. The following table is but a trial decipherment of the old Danubian script using the early Greek sound attributions and possible Indo-European names. The sound and letter rankings were obtained by comparing Linear B, Luwian and Philistine cyphers.

Vowels and semivowels

 <p>A - Agh- "animal that bears young"</p>	 <p>É - Esos "house master"</p>	 <p>Ê/H - Edh- "fence of stakes"</p>
 <p>E - Ent- "weave"</p>	 <p>O - Oqos "eye"</p>	 <p>Ô - Ôwiom "egg"</p>
 <p>Û - ùdhros "udder"</p>	 <p>W - wísogā "club"</p>	 <p>I - ieugôm "yoke"</p>

Consonants

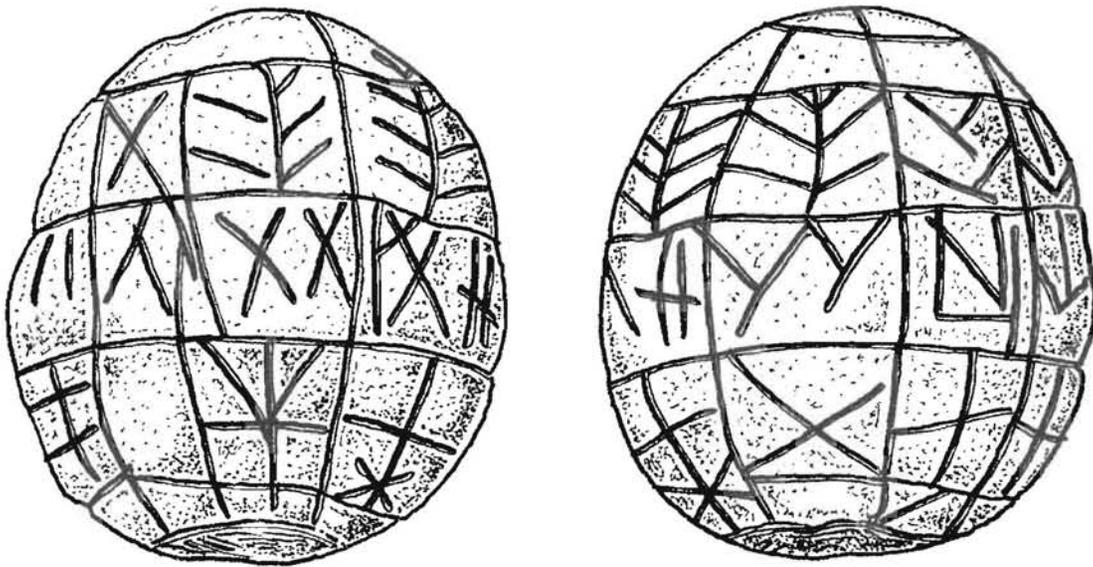
	 <p>P - Pods</p>	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>B - Bheug- "refuge, shelter"</p>	<p>"foot" Pet "crooked"</p>	<p>(s)P > Φ / Ph (s)Per- "rafter, pole, spear" Speros "sparus, fish"</p>
 <p>Q - qasjos "basket" Qorjom "cauldron"</p>	 <p>K/C- Kam- / kem- "pole, stick, horn"</p>	 <p>K - Kankus "branch"</p>
 <p>X > Kh / Ch - Krūtis "dome, vault"</p>	 <p>G - Ghaisom "stick"</p>	 <p>(s)T > Θ / Th - *sTeuko- > Teukos > Tougos "bow"</p>
 <p>T - Tormos "bolt"</p>	  <p>D - Dānus "river"</p>	 <p>Đ / Dh - Dhōnā "cereal"</p>
 <p>L - Lendhā "spring, fountain"</p>	  <p>M - Men- / menth- "mount, mountain"</p>	 <p>N - Natriks «serpent, snake» Niktis "corn"</p>
 <p>R - Regs "king"</p>	 <p>S - Sāweljos "sun"</p>	 <p>Š / Sq - Sqijā "thorn" sqalos "large fish"</p>

Lepenski Vir

The oracular spherical stone

Harald Haarmann in *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe*, wrote that the *Lepenski Vir* round stone is no doubt the oldest example of the use of writing for oracular purposes. Although he could only speculate on the stone's use, Haarmann was certainly right about its relation to magic. A Proto-Indo-European reading using the Danubian cypher does indeed suggest that this stone ball was used for mystical purposes.

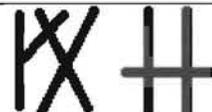
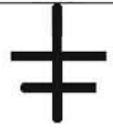
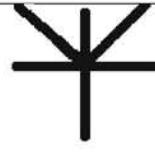
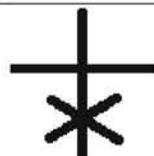


Afer a drawing by Winn (1981).

Transliteration

1	2	3	4	5
			X	
			T	
				
W W	0	M	E	sT/Th

 Na	 O	 E / EÑ	 G	
 T I	 T	 T	 T	

6	7  E	8	9  O	10
	 T	 Dh	 Dh	 Dh
 E	 A	 TT	 WTO	
 O		 I	 T	 T

Translation

1. Wwnati < wunati < PIE root *udén- or *wédŋ- "to wet", cf. sankrit àunat < unàtti, pl. undànti "to soak, to water, to sprout, to run", Luwian wida-, Latin unda, Slavic voda, PIE root *wed-o-, *wed-os-.

2. Uut < wut < PIE wed-, wod- “wet”, Proto-Germanic *wētaz “wet, moist”.

3. Meth / Ment < menth-, meth- “to mix up, stir”.

4. Tegt < (s)teg-t “to cover”; cf. Latin tegō “cover”, tēctum “roof, Celtic tegos “roof”.

5. Th(o) < to-, tā-, țio- demonstrative “that, he”.

Wwnati uut me(n)t tegt th(o). “To water, wet, mix up, cover that.”

6. Eo < *ehem, eheu, eho* (*eĝh-), interjection, an exclamation of joyful surprise, “yay, hey, ho!”; cf. Vedic áha!, Latin eh!

7. Eta < et(e)n “seed; corn”; cf. Celtic itos “cereal, corn (in general)”, ita “hence”.

8. Dhhti < dhītī “devotion, prayer”.

9. Ūdwtom < *ûd-ųi-ti-om; ûd- “out, away, upwards”, wtom < ųi-ti-om “curve”; compare with Latin vitium “fault, error”.

10. Dht < diht dē-t- : dā-t- and dēi-t-, dī-t- “to bind”; cf. Old Indian participle ditá- “bound”.

Eo eta dhhti ūdwtom dht. “Ho! The corn prayer upwards curves, binds.”

What can be understood from these inscriptions is that the ball was used for the grinding of corn in the making of ritual bread or beer. Interestingly, the name *Eta* is akin to the Irish *Etain* (Old Celtic *Etana*). She was a fertility corn goddess, a daughter of the medicine god *Dian Cécht* and wife of *Midir*, the mead god. Therefore, the formula there inscribed is a testimony to the antiquity of fermented drink in Indo-European culture.

Tărtăria (Rumania) tablets

The clay Amulet

This clay inscribed object which is thought to be an amulet was discovered by archaeologist Nicolae Vlassa in 1961 at a dig near the town of *Tărtăria* in the Alba region of Rumania. A carbon 14 test showed that it was 6, 500 years old. Vlassa thought that the tablet depicted a mythological hunting scene and interpreted some of symbols as pictograms similar to Sumerian. Others saw it as an early sky chart. Judging from the reading one gets in Proto-Indoeuropean the sky chart thesis seems right on.



Clay amulet (dated c. 5500 to 5300 BCE) discovered in 1961 at the Tărtăria site by archaeologist Nicolae Vlassa.

ÊR < er-, or- "eagle" cf. Celtic eros, Germanic aro-, aru- Hittite aran-

sTkkO < (s)teuko- "bow", from PIE root (s)teuk- "to swell", coalescing with *(s)teg- stick, pole, shaft; *(s)teig-"to stick; pointed"; root of Celtic tougos "bow"

TRROG < trogos "pig, boar"; root of Gaulish trogia "sow, female of the pig"

Deiwk < deiwik- “punish, avenge”; root of Gaulish diuicô v. “to punish”, diuica, diuicos, c.n. “punisher, avenger”

Deiwa < deiwâ “goddess”; root of Celtic déua, Sanskrit devi, Latin diva

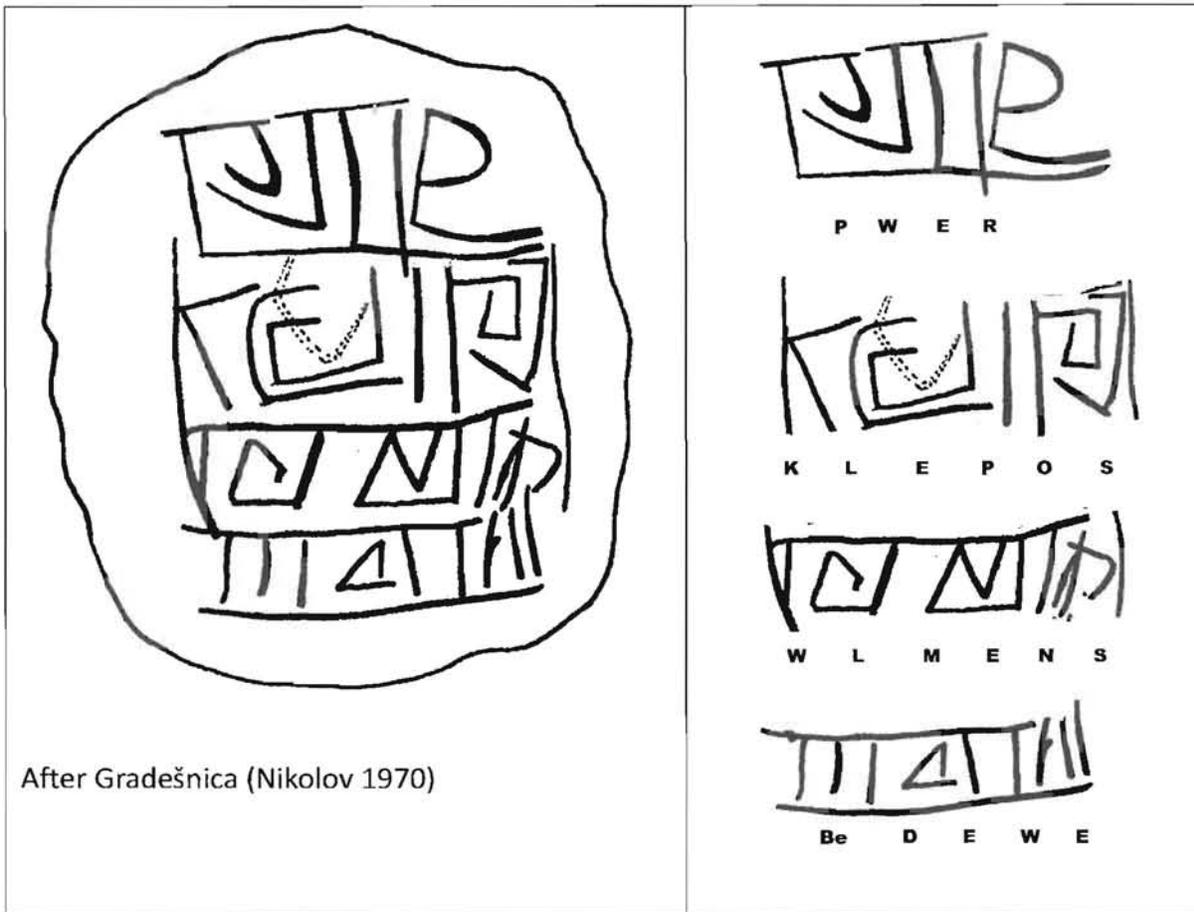
Translation and Interpretation

Each of these quarters seems to represent a section of the night sky starting with Êr “Aquila”, Teuko “Sagitta”, Trog “Boar” (Ursa Major), Deiwik “Avenger” (Hercules?), Deiwa (Hera?).

In Greek astro-mythology, **Sagitta** represents the arrow with which Hercules slew the eagle (Aquila) that fed upon the liver of Prometheus. In Greek astro-mythology, the Boar star was akin to the Great Bear (Ursa Major) and identified to the god *Khrysaor*. *Khrysaor* was later moved to the Sword of Orion sub-constellation while Ursa Major assumed the name of *Kallisto*, “bear”. These stars which never set below the horizon are described as immortal. The constellation of Hercules was originally called *Engonasin* “the Kneeler” by the Greeks. The hero *Engonasin* was depicted on his knees, holding a club and slaying a dragon. The dragon called *Ladon* was described as a hundred headed beast guarding the Garden of the Hesperides. *Hera*, “Lady”, was the queen of the heavens and was the goddess who put the stars in place.

The Gradešnica Tablet

This Tablet, along with many other objects, was discovered by B. Nikolov, V. Mikov and Georgiev at Gradešnica, a small town of *Vratsa* county, and kept at the *Museum of History of Vratsa*. At the start of the 70s, Nikolov, Georgiev and Mikov were the first to propose that the *Gradešnica* inscriptions were not only the oldest European script but probably also the world’s oldest. Judging from this inscription, the text refers to a child’s grave. It could therefore have served as a grave marker or for a funerary ritual.



Transliteration

Line one

Pwer < *puūero- “child, knave, boy, girl”; cf. Latin puer, “child”, puella “girl”; proto-indo-european root: pōu-, pāu-, pū-, “child”

Line two

Klepos < k̑lepos “to cover, conceal, steal” PIE root: k̑lep- (s̑k̑lep-ō); cf. lat. *clepō*, -ere “clandestine”, Greek, κλέπτω < *-kl̑ptós “steal”, κλώψ, κλοπός, κλοπεύς “thief”, κλοπή “theft”.

Line three

Wlmen < *wélmen “wrapping”, wolmos “roll”; cf. Latin tegmen “wrapping”.

Line four

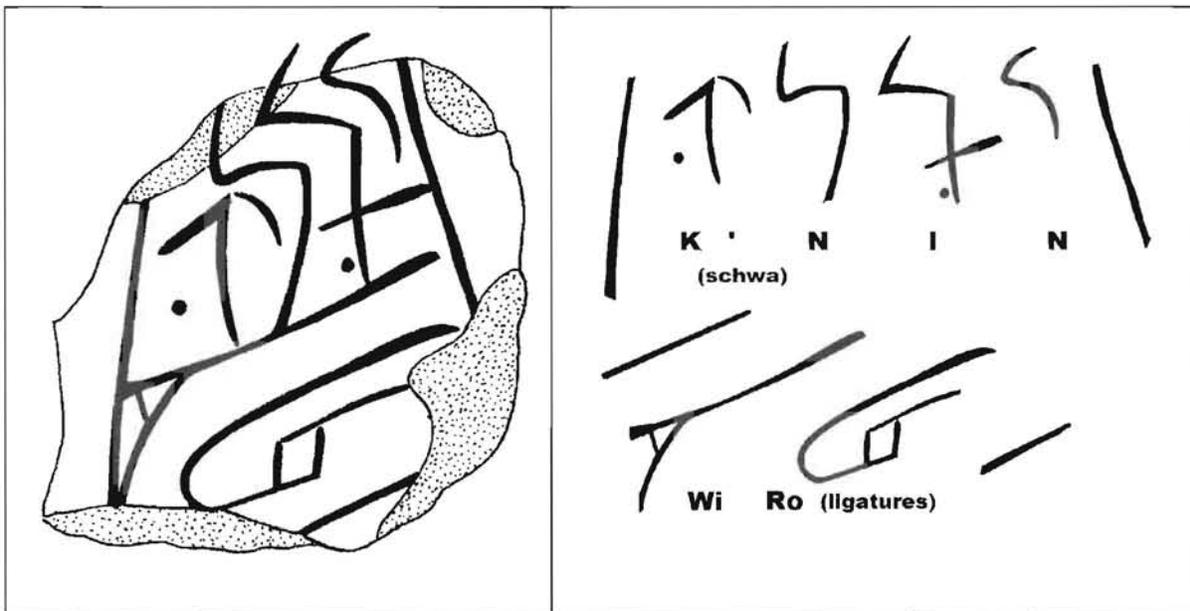
B(e)dewe < *bhed-u-i, locative case “in grave, pit”; c.f. Celtic *bedo*, *bedu* “pit, grave”.

Translation

Pwer klepas wlmén bedewe: “Child covered, wrapped, in grave”.

The Chitila-Ferma Fragment

Chitila-Ferma is an archaeological site not far from Bucarest, Rumania.



Transliteration

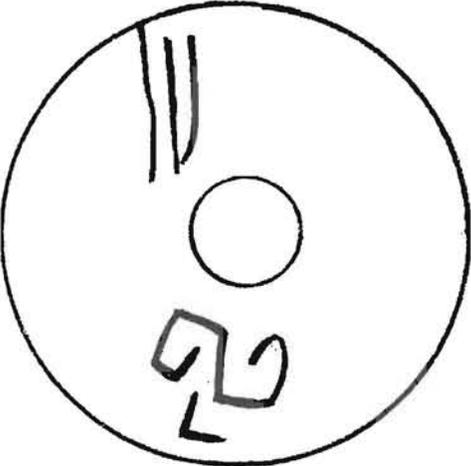
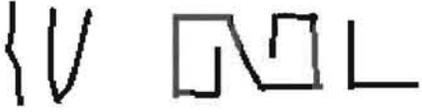
K'nin < *keni-n, PIE root *ken-* “to appear, be born, to begin, young”; cf. Old Indian *kañña-* “young”, Avestic *kaine*, *kainī-*, *kainīn-*, greek *καίνος* “new, fresh, undreamt, incredible”, Celtic *cenetla*, *cenetlon* “ethnic community, race, tribe, offspring, generation”.

WiRo < *ũiro-s* (**suĩro-*) “man, warrior”; c.f. Old Indian *vīrá-*, Avestic *vīra-* “man”, Lithuanian *výras* < *vīro-*, Umbrian *ueiro*, Latin *vir* “man”, Germanic *wer* “man”, Celtic *uiros* “man”, Tocharian *wir* “young”.

K'nin wiro (...): “Young man or warrior”

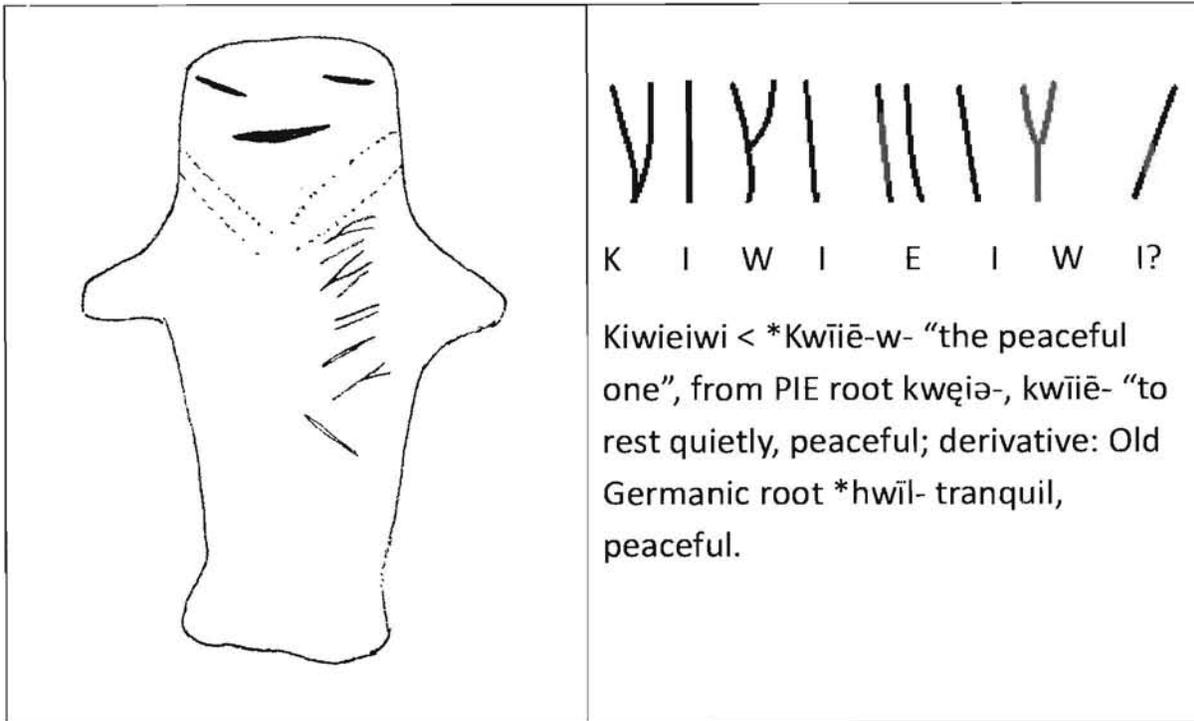
The Turdaş spindle Whorl

This artifact was finely crafted out of brown clay and bears but four symbols. *Turdaş* is a village near the town of *Deva*, on the Mures River, in Transilvania, Romania. *Turdaş* is also synonymous with the *Vinča* culture.

 <p>Spindle whorl with markings</p>	 <p>Š K Đ/Dh L</p> <p>Šk < sĕk- "to cut"; c.f. Latin <i>secō</i> "cut, clip"</p> <p>Dhl > del- "to shake, whirl"; derivatives: Old Indian <i>dulā</i> "the wavering", <i>dōlayatē</i> "swings, sways", <i>dōlita-</i> "fluctuating, moves by oscillating, c.f. English tilt.</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The Vinča Inscribed Idol

This idol was found, with many others, at *Vinča*. Émilie Masson suspected that these idols depict the Mother Goddess. They may also represent a number of different divinities identified by their individual names.



Early Indoeuropean cultural diffusion

The Proto-Indo-European civilisation, which probably originally originated circa 8, 000 to 7, 500 BCE around the Black Sea Danube River Delta and the Balkan mountains, spread into the neighbouring territories thus giving rise to daughter civilisations such as early Bronze Age Anatolian, Kurgan, Minoan, Mycenaean and Upper Danubian, etc. River boats adapted to open water navigation played a large role in early diffusion before horse taming and chariots improved long distance movement. Thus, from this Danube River homeland, from around 5, 000 to 4, 000 BCE, they moved into Europe, Asia and into the coastal and insular eastern Mediterranean Sea area.

References:

Babaev, Cyril. *Proto-Indo-European Language and Religion.*
<http://indoeuro.bizland.com/archive/article5.html>).

Boutet, Michel-Gerald, et al. *The Celtic Connection.* Stonehenge Viewpoint, Santa Barbara, Ca. 1996.

Christian, Nicholas. Finds point to far earlier European civilisation.
 Scotland on Sunday, Sunday, 12th June 2005.

Danube Virtual Museum, The Magic Touch of the Danube Project, Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia; URL : <http://virtuelnimuzejdunava.rs/serbia/cultural-heritage/archaeological-map-of-the-danube/lepenki-vir.350.html>

Haarmann, H. *Early Civilization and Literacy in Europe. An Inquiry Into Cultural Continuity in the Mediterranean World*, Berlino, New York, 1995.

Haudry, Jean. *La Religion cosmique des Indo-Européens*. Milano / Paris : Archè ; Les Belles Lettres; collection Études Indo-Européennes (dirigée par Jean Varenne), 1987.

Masson, Émilie. *Une ébauche de graphisme dans les civilisations néolithiques du Bassin danubien central*, Dossiers d'Archéologie no 220.

Monard, Joseph. *Dictionnaire de Celtique Ancien*. Keltia Publications, Edimbourg, Écosse, 2000.

O'Flaherty, Wendy. *Hindu Myths*. Penguin Books, New York, 1975.

Pennick, Nigel. *The Secret Lore of Runes*, Rider, London UK 1991.

Pokorny, J. *Indo-European Etymological Dictionary, Etymologisches Woerterbuch*, online editor George Starostin, URL (<http://dnghu.org/indoeuropean.html>).

Sterckx, Claude. *Manuel élémentaire pour servir à l'étude de la civilisation celtique*, Université Libre de Bruxelles.

The Global Prehistory Consortium site, URL (<http://www.prehistory.it>).

Tyldesley, J.A. and Bahn, P.G. *Use of Plants in the European Palaeolithic: A Review of the Evidence*, 1983 Quaternary Science Review. 2:53-81
(http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/history/lecture02/r_2-2.html).

Winn, Shan M.M. *The Old European Script, Further evidence*, The Global Prehistory Consortium at Euro Innovanet, URL (<http://www.prehistory.it/ftp/winn4.htm>).

E-mail: boutios@cgocable.ca
