

## **Ancient Europe and America**

### **Part 7**

## **The Celtiberian Inscriptions of North-America**

### **The Bourne Stone**

The Bourne Stone was found at Komassakumkanit, Cape Cod, Massachusetts,

### **According to Eric Williams**

According to Bourne Historical Center records, the stone likely began its journey into notoriety as a doorstep of a Native American meetinghouse around 1680, then bounced through several owners, landing at the Aptuxet Trading Post in Bourne about 1930. The stone has been displayed at the historical center since 2003.

But beyond these sparse facts lies a spinning universe of conjecture, opinion and imagination sparked by the lines and shapes carved into the stone. Some of the greatest interpretive hits include:

The Hanno theory, courtesy of Howard Barraclough "Barry" Fell, the late Harvard University biology professor who gained widespread notoriety in the 1970s with his theories about pre-Columbus visits to the Americas by folks from the Old World. In Fell's book, "America B.C.," Fell

translated the Bourne Stone thusly: "A proclamation of annexation. Do not deface. By this Hanno takes possession."

The Hanno in question may have been a Carthaginian bigwig from around 500 B.C., which would give him a 2,100-year head start on the Pilgrims.

Could Vikings have left the Bourne Stone as a New World calling card? That is the most popular theory, said McAlister, because of its resemblance to rune stones. These inscribed hunks of rock are souvenirs of the Viking Age and have been found throughout Scandinavia and other parts of the world.

In the book "Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus," author Frederick Pohl reports that Norse language expert Olaf Strandwold offered a translation of the Bourne Stone earlier this century. According to Strandwold, the inscription reads, "Jesus amply provides for us here and in heaven," although "translations will vary somewhat," according to Pohl.

Chances are, this rocking piece of history will continue to intrigue and befuddle the world. Unless, said McAlister, there is someone out there waiting to shout, "Eureka!"

"We need a real, real good researcher that knows all of these things and can decide which one it really is," McAlister mused.

But how will you know whether they're right? McAlister was asked.

"We won't," she said with a laugh.

Williams, Eric. *Bourne Stone continues to baffle the experts*, Cape Cod Times, 2010; URL: <http://www.capecodonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101020/NEWS/10200327>



Redrawn from a photo in *New England's Ancient Mysteries* by Robert Ellis Cahill, p. 4.

↓	□	⊙	◻
N	Â/O	Ba/Pa	R
PΛΛ·Λ'VHH&			
Bi/Pi	L	N.	L
I	N	O	Ba/Pa
YX/P Y			
Di/Ti	Da/Ta	I	A
Ba/Pa		I/Ba/Pa	M
		I	E/H

NÂBAR – BILN. LINOBA – TITABA IMIE

Nâbar, from nabaros / neberos “downflow (of water)”, “misty, clouded, obscured”; as personal name Nabaros “Cloudy, Misty One”; punning wit



nobiaros “very holy, great holiness”; Basque nabar “spotted, variegated, speckled, wild, multicolored obscure” .

Biln, from bilon “ominous”, “holy”, “steadfast”, “sturdy”, “healthy”, “good”, “sure” and “certain”; Belon “bright”; Beloi > Beli “Bellicose”.

Linoba, from lino adj. “to accuse, to charge”, “zeal”; linô v. “to flood in, to flow in”; linoba, from linobos, dative / comitative case of lino “here, with lino”.

Titabai, from adj. tit(t)-a/-os/-on “revengeful”; f. dat. tit(t)aba pl. ai, “revengeful ones”; Titta / Tetta “tit”, “nipple”.

Imi, imi > mi “me”, “I am”; imie accusative of imi. Or again, Mi, “my” pl. of “me”; or possibly the abbreviation of Mi RE III, from mins Riur(os) III, “month of January III (three)”.

#### **Translation:**

“With me Nabar(os), the good, the sturdy, here the Titai flow in”.

This mention seems to commemorate a landing by the Titai led by a certain chief called Nabar. But who are the Titai?

According to roman author Appianus, the Titi and the Beli, along with other Celtiberian nations, lived at the citadel or city state of Segeda at the confluence of the Jalon and Aguasvivas rivers in the Ebro valley of eastern Celtiberia. Around 195 B.C., the roman commander Cato overpowered the Ebro valley cities and villas save Segeda (called Segestica in Latin) which maintained resistance. The Romans held their hold on the Ebro valley communities up until 188 B.C. Then in 179 B.C., the Roman general Sempronius Graccus took base at Gracchurris (now Alfaro, LaRioja) and imposed a truce on Segeda. The closest sea port is on the Mediterranean Sea at the Greek city Emporion.

Barry Fell, in *America B.C.*, was the first to recognize the inscription as “Celtic-Iberic” but not surprisingly gives it a Punic rendition. To the best of

my knowledge, a scrupulous transliteration of the text gives an all too different translation. According to Fell, the inscription reads thus: "Hanno takes possession of this place". He goes on to remind us that "Hanno was a noted explorer from Carthage who voyaged into the Atlantic in 425 B.C."

In order to achieve such a reading Fell, in his usual manner, leaves out the vowels thus giving a consonantal transliteration. This is a natural process for reading Semitic languages such as Punic but useless for Indo-European Celtic rich in vowels. Worst even, these Celtiberic logo syllabic symbols do give ample vowels!

## **The Pontotoc Stele, Oklahoma**

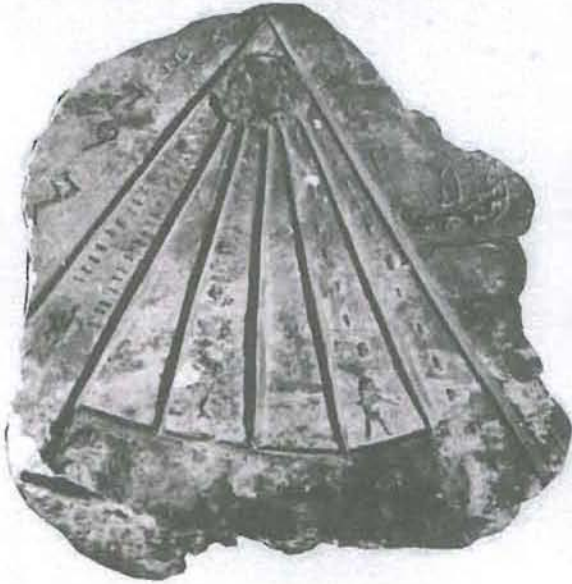
The Pontotoc Stone was found in 1976 in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, along the banks of the South Canadian River by Weldon W. Stout and Gloria Farley. It was Gloria Farley who brought it to Fell's attention. According to his appraisal, it contains two scripts, one in Punic Ogam and another in Iberian Punic. In *America B.C.*, p. 161, Fell explains in his usual manner that: "The Pontotoc Stele, found in Oklahoma, is apparently the work of an early Iberian colonist in America, as the script is that known otherwise only to the Cachaoda-Rapa region in northern Portugal. It depicts the life-giving rays of the sun descending upon the Earth beneath. To the left of the Iberian Punic letters spell "Start of dawn," to the right "Dusk", with the crescent ship of the moon. Two of the panels contain Ogam Punic, partly illegible, but sufficiently clear to disclose the phrases "When Baal-Ra rises in the east, the beasts are content, and (when he hides his face) they are displeased."

It is very doubtful that the Punic language was ever written in ogham or even more so that the Lusitanians ever wrote in Punic using their own alphabet. Needless to mention that his further comments are also very surprising:

"These identify the inscription as an extract from the Hymn to the and has identified it as containing part of the Hymn to the Aton by Pharaoh Akhnaton, here translated into Iberian Punic. Further study of this remarkable stele is still in progress. Although Akhnaton's hymn dates from



the thirteenth century B.C., this American version can scarcely be older than about 800 B.C. The engraver was interrupted, covered over his work with soil, and never returned to complete the blank panels.” (Barry Fell, *America B.C.*, p. 161.) Fell first dated the Pontotoc Stele to 800 BCE judging from iconographic data in relation to Akhenaton and Punic oceanic navigational reports. At the end of his article in ESOP entitled *A Revised Date for the Pontotoc Stele*, he writes: “My revised estimate of the date of the Pontotoc inscription is that it belongs to about the first century B.C., although its religious content appears to be more appropriate for a much earlier era.” Nothing in the two Iberian lines hint to Akhenaton. The Egyptian-style artwork could therefore be from a Ptolemaic influence. And the marks that Fell calls ogham, these could be tally marks along with graphic representations of sun rays.



Drawing from Barry Fell, *America B.C.*, p. 162.

Left side		Right side	
✱	Ca/Ga	Ǝ	Di/Ti
4	U	4	Ca/Ge
9	R	0	O
7	I		

After a rubbing by Barry Fell from his ESOP article on the dating of the Pontotoc Stele, p. 62.

**Cauri / Gauri – Digeo / Tigeo**

**Translation**

Cauri < gentive of cauros “north wind”;

Gauri < gaurios adj. "precious, noble";

Digeo < Digios, personal name in relation to Digos / Degos / Dagos "good, brave", name of a Celtic god; also Digenes, companions of Digos (cf. Philistine Dagon, Irish Dagda < Dagodeuos); connoting degis "burning sensation";

Tigeo < Tigios, personal name, in relation to: tigos "chief, chieftain", tigos roof, house"; connoting: v. tigô "to travel overland".

Gauri Tigeo "Noble Chief"; Gauri Digeo "Precious Digos".

However, in the ESOP paper, a photo clearly shows that the last glyph in the right line is barred in the middle. This detail changes the meaning to a certain degree.



Photograph of the plaster cast by Peter Garfall, ESOP, vol. 19, p. 61.

Left side

Ca/Ga  
U  
R  
I

Ca/Ga

U

R

I

Right side

DI/TI  
Ca/Ga  
De/Te

DI/TI

Ca/Ga

De/Te

From top to bottom,

Line 1: CAURI / GAURI; line 2: DIGEDE / TICETE

From bottom to top,

Line 1: IRUCA ; Line 2: DEGEDI / TECETI

## **Translation**

Iruca < irucca / rucca < rudca "contumely, abuse, scorn, disdain";

Degede < Dege deue, vocative of Degos deuos "good god".

## **Comment on the inscription**

The Egyptianizing graphic style of the Pontotoc Stele shows an undeniable Ptolemaic Greek influence. The Egyptian influence in Iberia was felt from around the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE along the coastal Punic and Greek settlements and was mainly due to the influence of the Mauritanian kingdom under the reign Juba II. King Juba (25 BCE – 32 CE) had minted coins to the effigy of Egyptian gods. From the start of the first century, the Punic city of Carthago Nova emitted a few series of coins dedicated to the Isiac cult. Although Hellenic culture was present in the peninsula from 580 BCE with the founding of the city of Emporion. The Greek Ptolemaic period in Egypt lasted from 305 to 30 BCE. The Iberian script was in known use from around the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE. The Pontotoc Stela therefore has to date from prior or around the time of the Roman conquest by generals Gnaeus and Publius Scipio. The Roman occupation of Iberia started from the cities of Emporion and Tarraco and lasted from 218 BCE to 409 CE when Hispania was overtaken by the Germanic tribes which included the Wisigoths and Vandals.

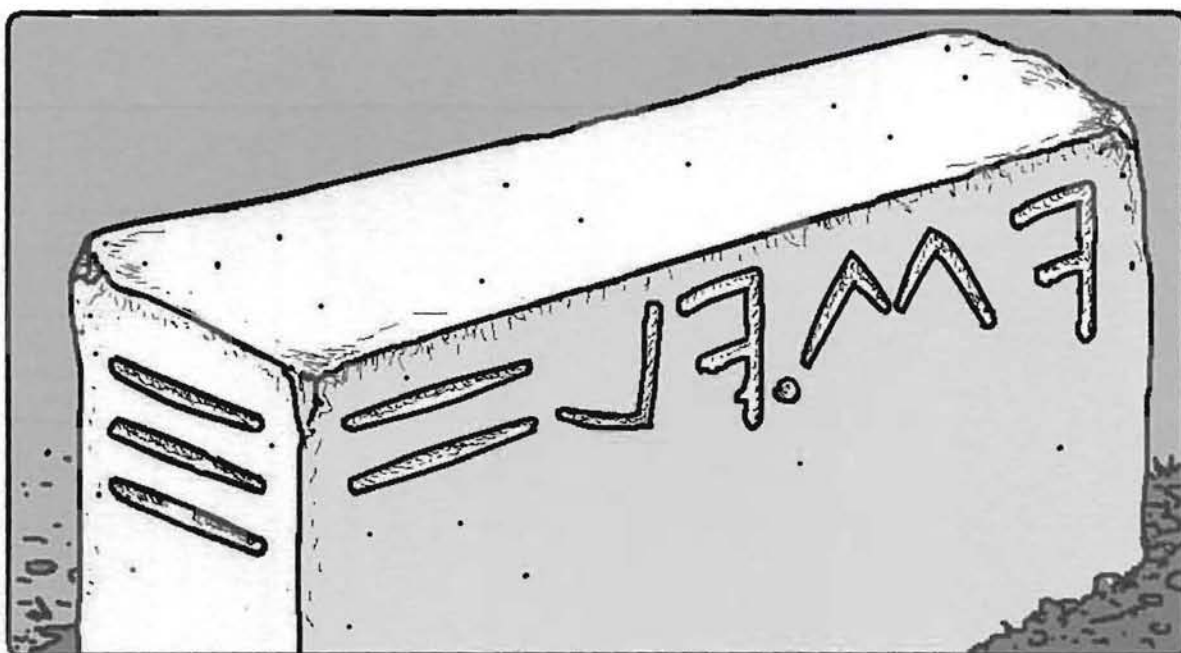
The iconography serves to illustrate a mythic cosmology involving Dagede (from Degodeuos / Dagodeuos) the Celtic god of heat and day akin to Jupiter, the Roman Thunder god. Dagos "good" or Digios "burning one" was represented sending lightning bolts from the sky. One of his totem animals was the Bull "of days". On this tablet, the Sun disk emits seven light beams. The graphic notion of the seven rays was a general and common concept within Indoeuropean cosmology. It was found not only in Greek mythology but also in the Vedic and Puric texts of India. In Egyptian representations of Akhenaton, the pharaoh is variably shown bating in a number of rays ranging



from 16 to 21 as for the Indoeuropean representations, it is invariably seven. In Greek myths, Helios is often depicted on a chariot wearing a spiked crown. As guardian of oaths and giver of sight, the titan god was said to reside in a golden palace by the the mythic river of Okeanos in the eastern quarters of the Earth. He travels around the Earth in one day and retires in the Hesperides for the night. A great golden bowl then carries him back to Okeanos in his sleep.

	<p>Bust of Helios wearing the chlamys shoulder cape and coiffe radiating seven rays beaming as with long hair. This bronze sculpture was discovered in Tripoli and thought to be a portrait of Alexander the Great. The Gaulish Abellio or Belenos, the Roman Apollo and the Persian Mithra were among the other gods depicted wearing this septenarian solar crown. This iconographic detail also appears on the deity at the Anubis Cave, Oklahoma, site. Louvre Museum collection, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, Paris. Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen 2014 (public domain, Wikimedia commons).</p>
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## The Bache Stone, Oklahoma



Redrawn by the author after a photo from Barry Fell in *America B.C.*, p. 161.

'NCU	OG						
≡	=	√	ƒ	.	∧	∧	ƒ
E/H	E	N	E	.	Sh (LL)		E
Ogham reading: 'NCU OG Iberic reading: ENESE							

'Ncu "death, fatality", Og > Ogios "youth"; Enese accusative of Enesos / Anesos; Anesia > 'Nese people of Anesia / Enesia Anesiates people of Anesia (place name in the Aquitanian region of the Pyrenese mountains?).

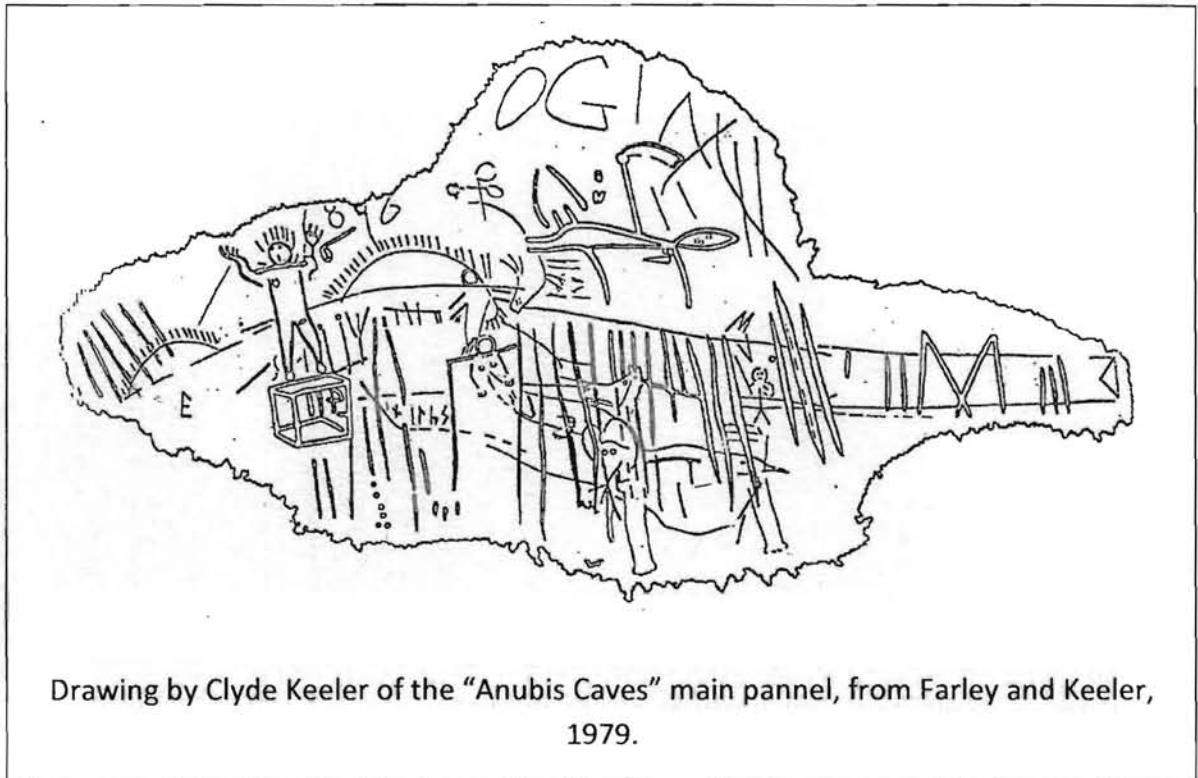
I'm forced to conclude that the Bache stone is very likely a Celtiberian grave marker commemorating a certain Anesos.

## The « Anubis Caves » petroglyphs of Oklahoma

The Tom Ogima graffiti

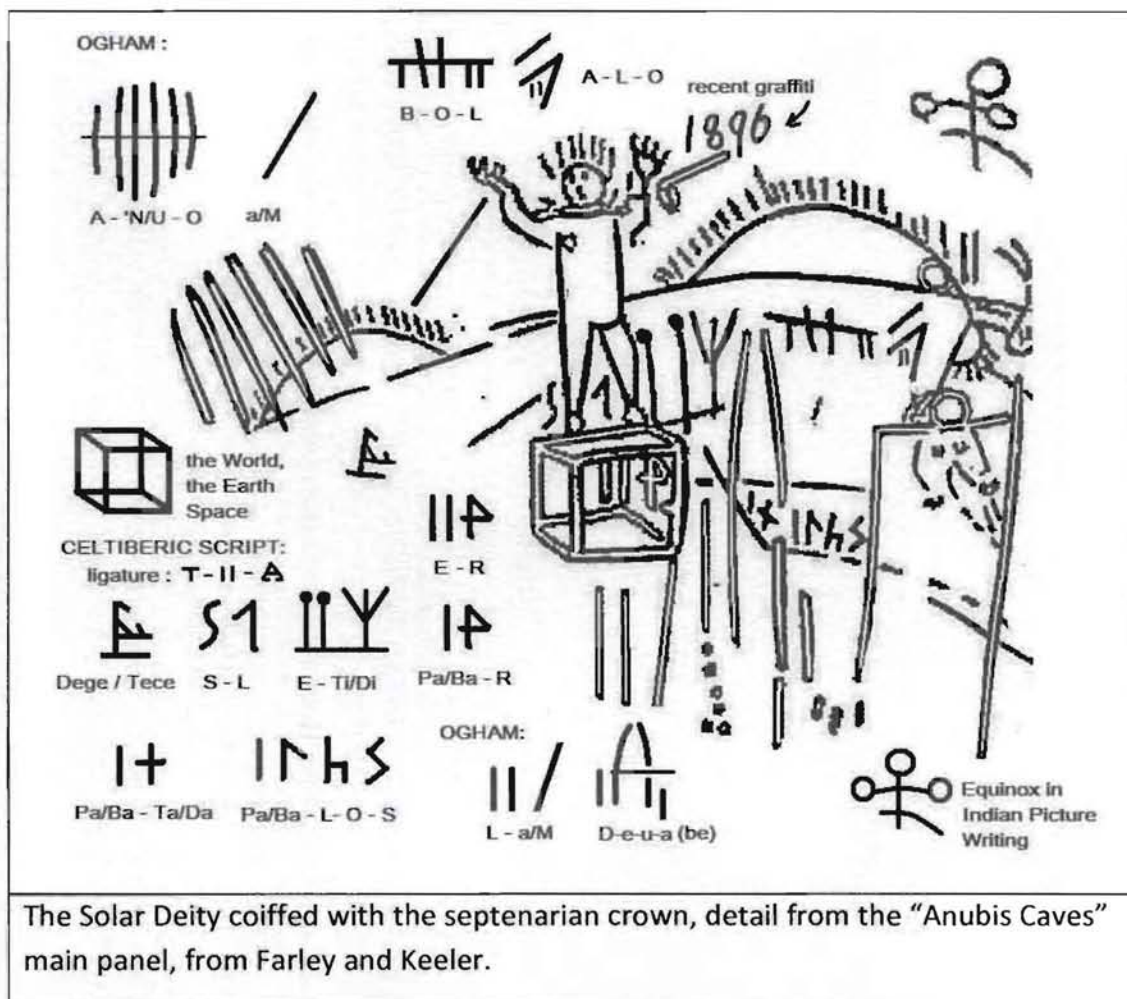
Many scholars, because of the recent graffiti, tend to interpret the "Anubis Caves" petroglyphs as historical Indian picture writing while others see them as proof for the ancient Celts in America. In 1896, the Anishinabek Ojibwa Tom Ogima thought it important to leave his signature on what was regarded by the natives as very hallowed grounds. This sacred site was at the crossroads of the path borrowed by their ancient seers and mystic tribes. The Anishinabek took this old Anishinabe pathway (also called the Mullan road) to flee the federals onwards west on their flight to Washington. Legend had it that after the *Seven Fires Prophecy* was made, more than a 1,000 years ago, was created the old Anishinabe road. With many of the Anishinabek chiefs in federal jail, Ogima Joseph and the remaining Anishinabek tribes in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, were relocated to Oklahoma where they stayed for nearly a decade. In 1885, through negotiations, Ogima Joseph persuaded the United States officials to allow him and his faithful followers to return to their original homeland in Montana. Tom Ogima wasn't your run of the mill pistol shooting cowboy leaving his othograph where ever he set his saddle. Ogima Thomas could have acted as chief to the remaining Oklahoma Anishinabek. Ogima which is name from a Native American origin means 'chief'. This name is commonly used as a male name in the Ojibwa tribe and the name has a derivative form called Ogyma. The name is however rare to find and is mostly found used in America. The name Ogima is from the Old Algonquian root \*sakimawa "chief", literally meaning "he goes forth" and a cognate of the Abenaki sangman, Delaware sakima, Micmac sakumow, Penobscot sagumo and Narragansett sachem from which also comes the English term sachem.





Drawing by Clyde Keeler of the "Anubis Caves" main pannel, from Farley and Keeler, 1979.

## Transliteration



## Translation

A'NuO < anuo "unevenness, inequality, disballance";

Dege / Tece < degos, "good"; tecos, "cover, roof, house";

aM < am, astronomival abrevitation for ammania "time lapse, duration"; or amb., ambo, astronomical term for "both (luminairies) in conjunction;

SL < astronomical abbreviation for sul < saualis, saulos, saulios, sauelios "sun"; cf. Latin sol, Greek helios;

Edi < geographical suffix -edi < -edia, -etia "land, land of";

S<sup>o</sup>LEDI < sule-di < sulī-diēs “day of the Sun”; Sulideuos “Sun god”; the Suleai were Celtiberian solar goddesses akin to the Gaulish Sulisma, “the glance”, the “eye of the sun”;

S<sup>o</sup>LETI < suletis “curiosity, yearn to know”;

BOL(a) < bola “orb, roundness, ball, bowl”; in Greek mythology, the golden bowl of the Sun was found in the fabled land of the Heperides and was believed to carry Helios, the Sun god back to his palace of the East at Okeanos;

ALO < alô v. “to walk, to march, to go”;

SLEdi < suledi < sauledi(a) “land of the sun”;

ER < er- < eros “eagle”;



BaR < bar, astronomical abbreviation of baregos “morning”; possibly punning with Ptolemaic Hebrew Bar-Ptolemaios “son of Ptolemy”?

LaM(a) < lama “hand”;

DeUaBe < deuobi locative case of deuoi “gods”, deuobi “pertaining to the gods or in the gods”.

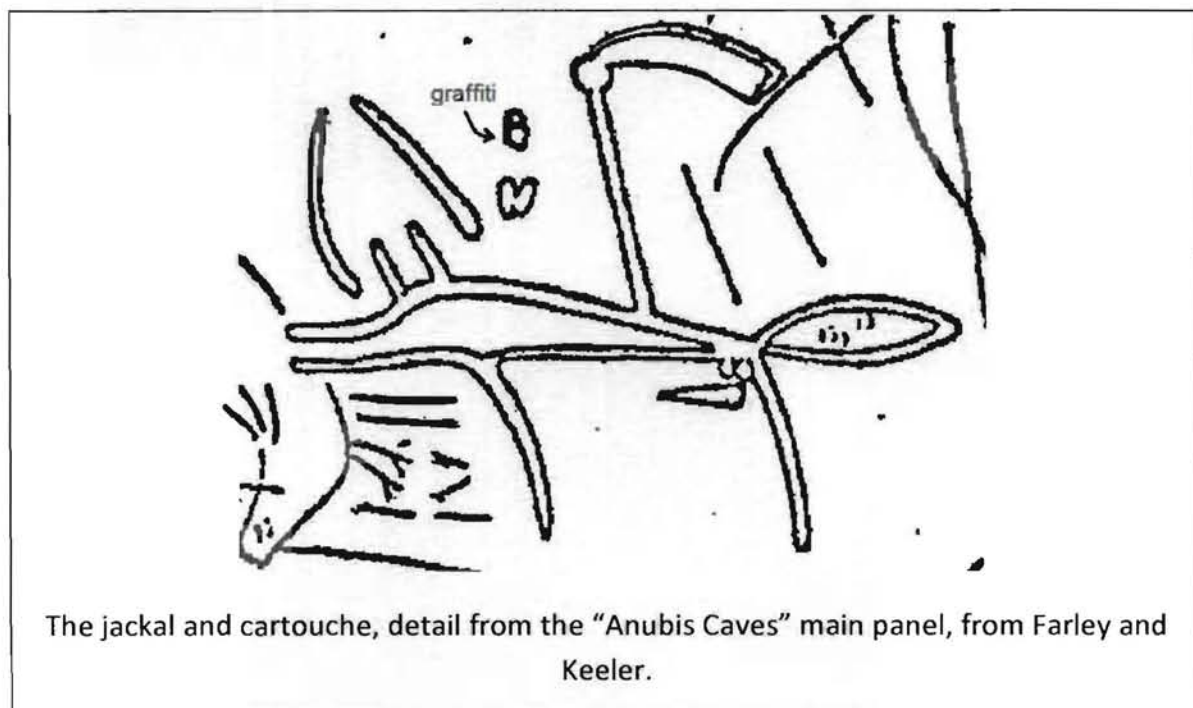
## **Celtiberian Ligature and Line**



 Ce/Ge Do/To  Ba/Pa Da/Ta Ba/Pa L O S	<p>CeDo &lt; cedos "fast, swift";</p> <p>Gedô v. "to pray"; gedont "they pray";</p> <p>BaDa &lt; bada "rope, rope-tie, rope link";</p> <p>BaTa &lt; bata "boat, battle, fight, fencer";</p> <p>PaDa &lt; pada "pine-wood"; Pada, name of a Celtic forest divinity;</p> <p>PaTa &lt; pata "doe »;</p> <p>BaLOS &lt; balos "whitely"; Belos "clear, bright", name of the Celtic Sun God.</p>
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### Translation in Indian picture writing

### The Anubis jackal cartouche caption



### Transliteration

	<p>Animal in the jackal's jaws rebus: GA'N &lt; ganna "fatality; gannô v. "to contain".</p> <p>Cartouche: Left to right: B(e)LLN(o)G &lt; Bellinocos "glaring one, the warlike" or Bellinacos "Dazzling one, pertaining to the Sun God"; Bellinos / Belinos, "the dazzling one", name of the deified Sun.</p> <p>Right to left: G(o)LLB(e)N &lt; Gallobenos "the renowned striker" or Gollobenos "the refined striker".</p>
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### Long ogham line

	<p>Detail of the "Anubis Caves" long ogham line with animals (dog, cow and elephant), from Farley and Keeler.</p>
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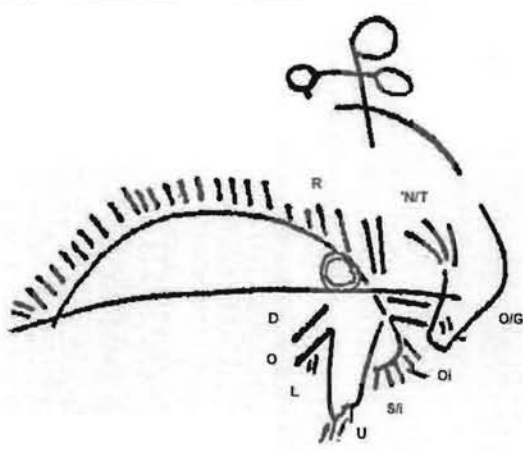
## Transliteration

	<p>L(a)MD(a)T(o)U(a)Th &lt; Lam-dato-uath</p> <p>Lam &lt; lama "hand" and dato "hue, colour"; lama-dato "hand coloured";</p> <p>Uath &lt; uatos "prediction, prognostic, prophecy, poetry".</p>
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	<p>Đ(e)'NOX U'NX(o)-DCT Th</p> <p>Đe-, sde- &lt; se- demonstrative prefix "this" and nox &lt; noxs "night"; se-noxs "this night";</p> <p>U'NX(o) &lt; uncô v. "to perceive"; DCT &lt; decta "to gether, in common";</p> <p>Th/oi &lt; toin, to-in "in, within".</p>
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## The Snake Bearer Rebus

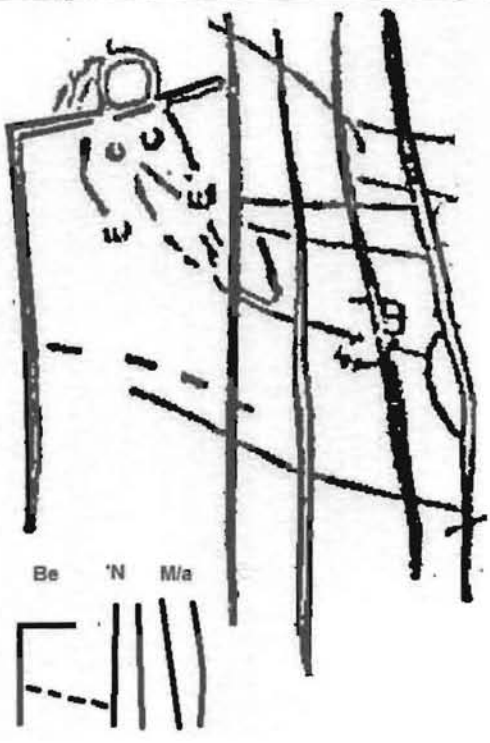


	<p>'NTRO &lt; natro "snake, serpent";</p> <p>DOLU &lt; dolu "bend, bow, loop";</p> <p>OGloS &lt; ogios "youth", Deuos Ogios, the young Sun God;</p>
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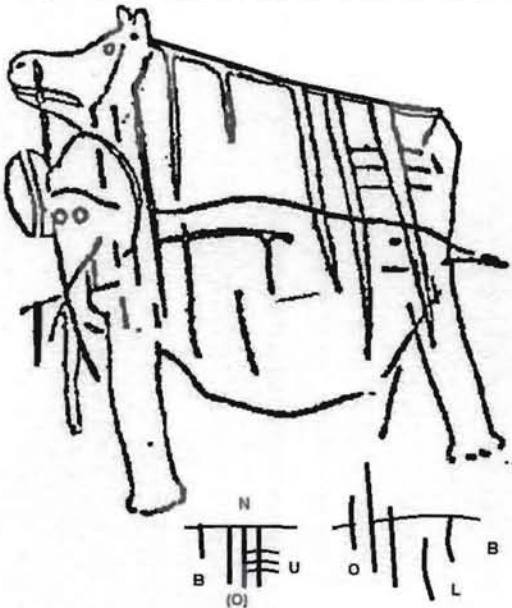
### The Dog Rebus

 <p>Celtiberian reading:</p> <p>S N Ba/Pa D/T O</p>	<p>TG(o) X (u)'N – CL(a)M-O/G</p> <p>TeGo</p> <p>X(u)'N &lt; xun &lt; cunos "dog", Sirius, the Dog Star;</p> <p>CL(a)M &lt; clama "hill";</p> <p>Vo &lt; uo "under";</p> <p>OG &lt; ogios "youth"; Note the large girdle and stick held in the stick figurer's right hand;</p> <p>Ago &lt; agô v. "to lead, to set forth, to get going";</p> <p>Pun:</p> <p>C &lt; abbreviation for Cantli "month of September/October";</p> <p>La &lt; latis "calendar day".</p> <p>SN BaTO &lt; sin batô "there, that strikes, thrashes".</p>
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## The Goddess Rebus

	<p>Be'Na &lt; bena / bana woman; connoting Benna mountain and Benmen march, walk, displacement, attack, offensive.</p> <p>Be'NaM &lt; Benama "Great Woman"; name of the Goddess.</p>
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## The Cow and Elephant Rebuses

	<p>BUN(o) &lt; buna "cow"; Banobuna or Bouinda the "White Cow", one of the celtic names for the Milky Way;</p> <p>OLB &lt; Olbios "the orb", name of the sky god; connoting Ollouetsis (gaelic Ollphéist "great beast") lit. "great sow", "elephant". Eburo, the "sow, boar sow" was one of the Celtic names for the Great Dipper, a circumpolar constellation. The elephant is positioned under the Milky Way so it can't be the Dipper.</p>
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### General Translation

Anuo getô am sul-edi bol(a) alô er bata

Belos deuobi Belinog

Natro dolu Ogie

Benam lama-dato uath

Ðe-nox unxo-dect thoi

Xun clama (uo ago) Og sin-batô

Buno ac Olb.

"Disballance, pray (fast), duration (sun-moon conjunction), Land of the Sun, goes (the) eagle boat.

Belos (Sun God) in the gods, Belinacos, the glaring one.

Snake loops, bends the youth (Ogios the youthful Sun God).



The Great Woman (dawn and dusk goddess) hand-coloured poetry (prophecy).

This night together in common.

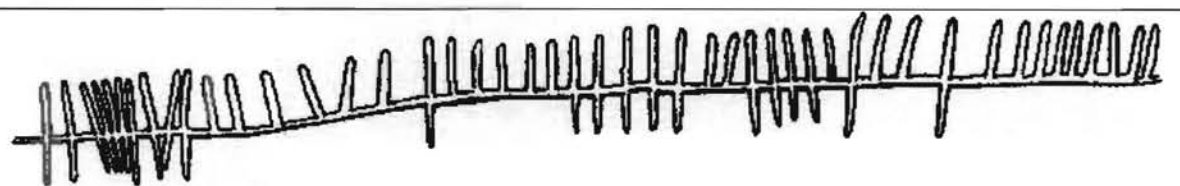
Dog (Sirius), Og (Sun God) set forth under the hill, there strikes (thrashes).

The Cow (the Milky Way) and the Elephant (the celestial equator or Monoceros?).”

### The “Six Months” Ogham Line

When analysing the ogham line from cave 4, I noticed that there were seven strokes bunched together and not six. My impression it that Fell concluded to a six months count was because he noted the oghamic abbreviation for month, mens or mins in celtic, marked ‘m’ or ‘mn’ / ‘m’n’. Since ‘m’ should logically precede the count, he abandoned his Indian pseudo-ogham appraisal.

Gloria Farley in *Plain Truth*, chapter 4, describes in detail how Fell came to translate the inscription which he labelled “the Six Months inscription”. At first, “Fell said that he thought that the writing was “pseudo-Ogam, probably made by Indians who were trying to imitate the genuine Ogam script present in the area. His reasoning appeared valid, for the inscription contained six straight marks jutting up in a group from the horizontal stemline.”



Drawing by Syversen for B. Fell and G. Farley.

GR'N C D M/aQRDE/ÐX(h)M/aDM/a VII D

## Transliteration

GR'N < greina > grena, cf. Irish grian, the astronomical name of the Sun "sunny, luminous", masculine greinos; akin Gaulish solar deity Grannos "beaming", punning with "bearded";

C(e)D < ceda "fast, swift"; cadis "holy";

MaQ < maqos "son", pl. maqoi;

R(i)DEĐ < reideđ < reidetes, mythological or ethnic name of a group of riders or racers who come in groups of seven;

XhMa < xsma < uxsama "dominating, on the open sea, out at sea";

D(e)Ma < dema < dedma "institution, customs, habit, regular order or ritual law"; cf. Sanskrit dharma;

VII : numeral seven, above the stem = "seven above";

D(e) < dé < deu-os/-a < deiuos "god, goddess", pl. deuoi.

## Translation

Gr'n (ced) cad maq rideđ xhma Dema(s) VII dé.

"Greina, the swift Sun, the holy Riders of Dema, the seven gods!"

The seven Riders were the Celtic counterpart of the Roman Septemtriones and Vedic Saptarishis called the sextendīrioi (lit. "Constellation of the Seven") and who were placed in the seven stars of the constellation of the Little Dipper. From the septemtrion, the north sky, they would burst forth in a cavalcade riding the northwind down upon the earthly plain. As for Dema, apart from being the ritual law or dharma of the ancient Celts, was called Grannos-Uindonnos (cf. Irish Deime or Demna otherwise called Fionn Mac Cumail). Grannos and Suliuia were the solar couple and together they regulated the world through the institution of Dema.

*Bartholomaios*

## Gods of the Near East Run Amuck!?

William McGlone et al., in *Ancient American Inscriptions: Plow Marks or History*, (pp. 169-170) believed that the Anubis Caves iconography showed proof of the presence of syncretic religion. Or that according to Merkelbach (1985), "Because the pagan mysteries had no official creed, each congregation of initiates was free to construct a theology of its own and to change it again". They also cited Mead from 1960 who theorized that religion from the Near East influenced the Celts and that the cult of Mithras had penetrated Celtic religion. Unfortunately all of this shows a poor understanding of the overall picture. In truth these oriental faiths were hardly practiced in Celtdom and had no special unity outside of the speculation of Christian Roman apologists. The fact of the matter is that the Celts practiced their own brand of "Aryan" or Indoeuropean religion. And as Julius Caesar mentions in *The Gallic Wars*, Book VI, 13, "That the Druids are a priestly caste. They regulate public and private sacrifices and decide religious questions." And goes on to add that the Druids have an "unwillingness to publicize their teaching". The druidical institution was highly organized and hermetic thus making it hardly permeable to outside influence.

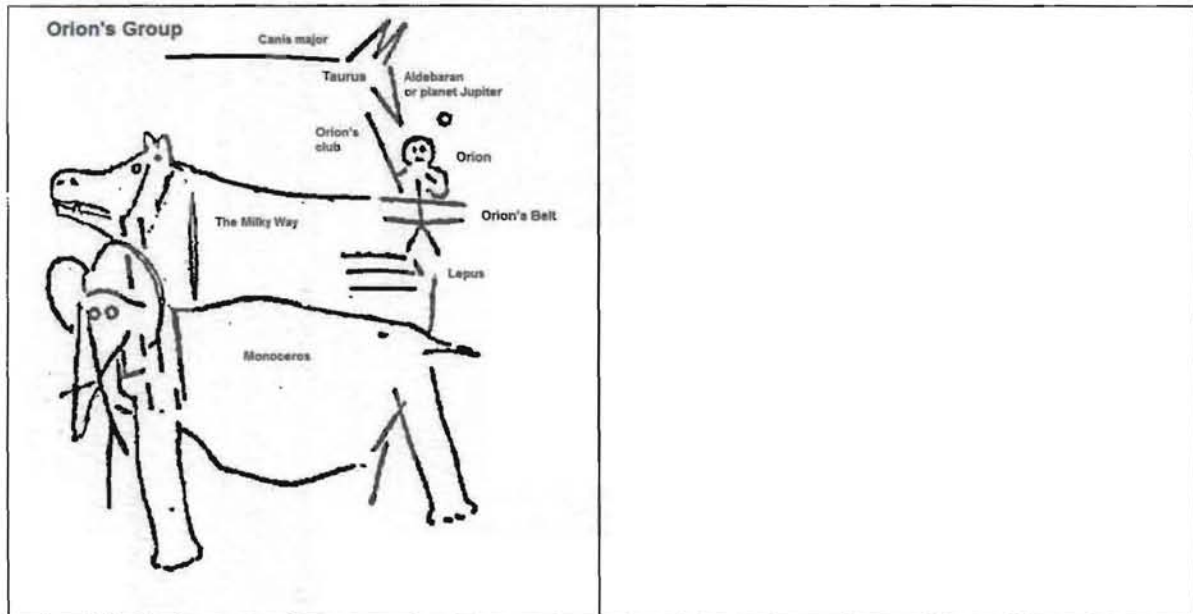
The image of the stick bearing stickman thrashing a cow is not enough to conclude for the presence of mythraic worshipers at the "Anubis Cave".

Some might argue that the elephant was unknown to the Celts but this is untrue. The elephant was not only a totemic reminder of the Gallic-Punic Hannibal campaign but was also anciently known even before the Phoenicians and Philistines popularized it.

The elephant could have been the Celtiberic name for Monoceros, the Unicorn. Monoceros was not named along with Camelopardalis by the ancient Greek but by the Dutch cartographer and astronomer Petrus Plancius in 1612. This constellation fills an important space in the Milky Way between Orion and Hydra. Part of the Orion family it is found on the celestial equator in the company of Canis Major and minor and Lepus. But



then again, as it is placed under the Milky Way cow, it more likely represents the celestial equator.



### The Gundestrup Cauldron elephants



Detail from the gundestrup Cauldron dating from about 300 to 100 BCE. Starting in Libra, the solar chariot is driven by the goddess Belisama with Lupus below. The two griffos symbolize the easterly and westerly winds which give impulse to the seasons at the equinoxes. Note the two elephants placed on the ecliptic or celestial equator at the equinoxes.



The institutional cult to Belos, the Bull of Days, was at the heart of pan-Celtic religion. As we have seen, Belos was the Mithra of the Danubian peoples on to the Celts. Belos is found mentioned many times at the Anubis Caves site Mithra is not once mentioned. This confusion is explainable only because most scholars have very little knowledge and understanding of Celtic religion. If the Romans readily assimilated the religions of those they conquered, the same was not that all true for the conquered peoples. As long as the Druids were active and teaching, their philosophy, science and religion was kept intact. The ministry of the Druids was called *Druidiaxto* in the ancient language. "The Druids were the Brahmins of the West", more than an aphorism this is a statement of fact. First, the etymology, *Druid* stems from the Celtic root *Dru-Uides* (pl. of *Dru-Uis*) for "firm knowers". Same as with the Celtic words *uidia* / *uido* / *uidta* / *uidtu* all variants for "science, knowledge, understanding", a cognate of the Sanskrit *Veda*. As for the Egyptian-styled Anubis dog, this too is explainable. Cults to Isis and Osiris were only performed in Gaul and Britain at the height of the Roman occupation. During early Celtic independence, foreign cults were highly contained and controlled by the elite of the druidical orders. If a contingent of Celts made it to Oklahoma and left their imprint on rock, then it was certainly the work of Druid initiates. Nothing here recorded shows proof of a multifaith syncretic religion. The New Age movement was not yet invented.

### **Ptolemaic influence in the Celtic Lands**

The Nilotic cult, known as *Aegyptiaca* to the Romans and probably *Isidiacto* (based on Latin dedications in Gaul) to the Romanised Celts, was introduced into Iberia and Gaul by the Phoenicians and Greeks of Naucratis at a very early date (ca. IIIrd c. BCE). Considering the time it took to be diffused in the Roman peninsula from Sicily to Pompeii is in itself remarkable. In Italy, outside the Latium, Campania and the Northeast (Venetia, Emilia), penetration of the Nilotic cults remains superficial while

in the South (Lucania, Bruttium, Calabria, Picenum) it is hardly found at all. Excepting Egypt and Mauritania maybe, outside of Rome and the great sea ports, the cult was hardly noticed since it was mostly an urban phenomenon.

In the Iberian Peninsula, the Mediterranean ports and the great river valleys facilitated the migration of people and beliefs. Emporium (Ampurias) communicated with Marseilles (Massalia) in Gaul and Alexandria in Egypt. A temple from the Republican period was discovered there. The adyton was flanked by lateral stairs in a yard bordered by a portico similar to the Iseum of Pompeii. On the coastal road along the Pyrenean Mountains on way to Gades, Tarraco, Sagunto, Valencia are found many reminders of the Isis cult. In Sagunto, a devotee could celebrate the sea goddess Pelagia. In Sagunto, an association of slaves also celebrated the goddess. Between Ampurias and Tarraco the thermal springs of Aquae Calidae (Caldas de Monbuy) attracted pilgrims seeking divine grace and healing. In Beotica to the South, along the valleys of the Guadalquivir and Guadiana rivers, Aegiptiaca sites are found in numbers. And again in Sevilla, Italica, Cordova, and further in Beja, Badajoz, Merida and Santa Amalia. One of the most ancient dated sites is the camp of Metellus near Caceres (Norba Caesarina), where pious merchants, from Alexandria, maybe Mauritania, held their devotions. This is inferred from the style of a ceramic pillar erected in their sanctuary around 79 BCE. Robert Turcan explains the great number of Betican finds by the activity of the Iberian ports trading with Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean. The Ptolemaic cults penetrated deep into the Iberian heartland through the Ebro flowing from the Cantabrian Mountains East-South-East into the Mediterranean Sea and by way of Legio (Leon) and Asturica Augusta to the Atlantic by Bracara Augusta (Braga). The Aegiptiaca thus penetrated deep into the Tarraconian territory of the Northwest. Traces of homages paid to Isis and Serapis were found by Clunia, Valladolid, Aquae Flaviae (Chaves), and another highly sought thermal spring. The Tarraconian grounds yielded many more rich artefacts, for example, a beautiful statue of Isis bearing



dozens of precious stones in Acci (Guadix near Grenada at the foot of the Sierra Nevada) and an inscription labelled puellaris, the Maiden. An inscription of the XIVth century BCE found in Abydos, Egypt, had already had her saying "I am the Great Virgin".

In Iberia as in North Africa, diffusion of the Nilotic (Nile related) cults far exceeded the Roman ports and their surroundings. In fact, they penetrated much deeper into the countryside where they were integrated into the local native cults as distinct disciplic affiliations. Even though this diffusion was the work of a minority of Graeco-Egyptian initiates, they evidently had the charisma to gain a following and have Isis and Serapis integrated into the local pantheon. The Celtic kingdoms, not unlike the other circum Mediterranean peoples, had by now grown accustomed to the Alexandrian Hellenic customs through trade and cohabitation. Nevertheless, we must refrain from concluding to a massive conversion from the national cults as it was later found with the proselytist messianic Christian cults. The best comparison would be that of the present day oriental sects which operate on a personal basis from guru to disciple.

The Ptolemaic cult also had a great following in Gaul where it fell under the supervision of the Druids.

The Nilotic cults entered Gaul from the Gulf du Lion in the Rhodanian delta, and the Atlantic on the English Channel. Cult centres are found all along the important trade routes along the Rhône and Rhine through the Saône and the road from Langres to Trèves. The trade of papyrus paper flourished along the Marseille Lyon trade route. Lugdunum (Lyon) had its chapel consecrated to the goddess Isis-Ceres. Effigies of Isis-Ceres and Serapis-Helios decorated the sides of a jar offered in March on the occasion of the Rhône and Saône boatman's vow taking ceremony. In 1858, lead seals and tokens were found in the bed of the Saône river right by the old river port showing that the metropolis of the Gauls had a direct link to Alexandria. Here the cult to Isis, was integrated into the local Matron cults found at the famous thermal springs, but was unable to dethrone these in the Gaulish

pantheon. From Lyon, the Egyptian cults went west to the land of the Arvenoi in Auvergne and to the Loire (Liger) at Vichy, still famous for its waters. The people of Vichy were very drawn by the exotic oriental qualities of the Aegyptiaca. As in Iberia, the first wave of influence came with the Graeco-oriental merchants and then was followed by Roman negotiatores and officials and families who were already impregnated by the Alexandrian devotions in Campania Italy. The Roman oriental influence in Gaul remained for quite some time superficial since it only attained the aristocratic city populations. The Ptolemaists were most active in South-western Gaul across the Iberian border in the area of the Narbonnaise around Narbonne and Toulouse. This shows the importance of the Iberian connection in that the Garonne basin, or Gaulish isthmus as it is called, was open to Atlantic trade. From the ruins of the famous villa of Montmaurin (rebuilt around the IV<sup>th</sup> CE), a beautiful bronze bust of Serapis-Helios was found. It seems to have been identified with Jupiter who was honoured in the Gaulish polygonal temple. That it was found in the entrance, in the court of honour, proves that he was associated to a local divinity.

The Egyptian funerary tradition of the "guarantors" or *oushabtis* as they were called, became so popular that counterfeit tablets with mock hieroglyphs were produced in great numbers to imitate the ones imported from Egypt. These writings are completely incomprehensible to an Egyptian hieroglyph reader. Many of these were found all around Avignon, d'Orange and Caderouse. In Iberia, Isis was just as much invoked and represented as was Serapis, but in Gaul, it was Osiris, protector of the dead who had the better part. This largely because Osiris could be equated with the Celtic Esus, the sacrificed god. In the Burrows Cave tablets, a death mask carries the inscription "Esus Ecuos". Britain was also very rich in Ptolemaic finds. The finds were mainly concentrated around London, Londinium (which had its Isian temple from the 1st c. CE), and at the mouth of the Thames river.

There was also a temple consecrated to Serapis from the time of Lucius Septimus Severus, emperor from 193 to 211 CE. Further North, an altar to this Alexandrian god was found in the Roman fort of Brauoniacum (Kirby



Thore). But then, along the Adrian Wall, no signs of the Ptolemaist cult were found. This because the legionnaires were mainly Mithraists (Mithriaca) or initiates of the Danubian Cavaliers' cult similar to the Kshatryas' caste of India. The Nilotic cults were professed by the Graeco-roman merchants who followed the Roman troops into Britain. This made it very suspicious to the British who had suffered the destruction of their druidic shrines in 60 CE. In short, in a first phase, the Ptolemaic cult gained the Celtic trading posts from the Greek colonies of Spain and Gaul where it was assimilated as a sectarian movement within druidry. In a second phase, it gained deeper into the heartland as the hellenised Roman merchants moved in after the troops. In the first phase, the cults were syncretised with the Celtic faith and in the second, the Roman interpretation was enforced. In this form, Isis-Fortuna patronised merchants, navigators and civil servants, or soldiers stationed in the colonies. Serapis looked over crops, healing and death while Dionysos-Harpocrates incarnated the pleasures of life and the vine. This Roman version of Alexandrian Serapism also included the other aspects such as the rituals and sacred banquets.

It is not very well known if the Nilotic cult ever reached Ireland but the medieval Irish texts do hint at it. The texts all testify to a Christian rewriting, so it is very difficult to describe the state of affairs for the pre-Christian period. Guyonvarc'h and Le Roux have none the less proposed that certain Ptolemaic influences were felt in Ireland from the example of the name Partholon. The name is thought to have punned with the Graeco-aramaic Bartholomaios "Son of Talmai punning with Bar Ptolemaios for "Son of Ptolemy". But then again, the name Partholon could simply be a misspelling or an overgloss of Bardolon from the Old Celtic root Bardulonos "noisy". As we have seen in previous chapters, the pharaoh Nectanebus also makes it into Irish myths by virtue of the fact that his daughter Scotta (< Scotta "flower") was married to the Iberian king Milesius (latinisation of Miletos). This could have been a mythic reminder by VI<sup>th</sup> monks of Iberian Philistine past origins thus confusing Ptolemaist cult and druidism.

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