

Theonymic Gender and Number Variation as a Characteristic of Old Celtic Religion*

PATRIZIA DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL

"An analysis of how and where Irish mythology diverges from what we might call the Indo-European norm has yet to be made"
(EÓIN MAC WHITE, ZcPh 25, 1956: 23).

1. "Traditional" couples of gods

It is very well known that in the Continental Celtic and Gallo-Roman inscriptions many a divine couple is venerated in which a feminine parhedros appears associated to a masculine god. As to their function, they can be unrelated to each other like *SUCELLOS & NANTOSUELTA* and *UCUETIS & BERGUSIA* or somewhat related as in the case of *BORVO & DAMONA* in the free nature, of *APOLLO GRANNOS & DIRONA* in the sky or of the "providers" *MERCURIUS & ROSMERTA*¹. To the last couple applies Maier's remark:

"Wo nur eine der beiden Gottheiten ihren keltischen Namen behält, ist dies in aller Regel die Göttin, während ihr Begleiter häufig einen römischen Namen zusätzlich zu oder anstelle der einheimischen keltischen Bezeichnung annimmt. [...] Dabei diente die unterschiedliche Behandlung der Namen möglicherweise dazu, die Unterordnung der einheimischen Göttin unter den fremden römischen Gott zum Ausdruck zu bringen"
(MAIER 2001: 77).

Both types represent what we may call the "traditional" divine couples, as opposed to those discussed in § 2.

1.1. The terrine *RIG-L-67* from Lezoux

One more example of such a traditional pair might be found in the Gallo-Latin inscription

Eso ieuri rigani Rosmerti-ac

if we take the first word as the *o*-stem dative singular of the Latinized theonym *Esus*, originally *AISOS*², which appears also in *RIG-*L-8*,

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¹ On the theonyms in this paragraph cf. SERGENT in this same volume, ZEIDLER 2003, DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2003=2004 and 2003/i.p.a with bibliography; on Gallo-Roman theonymic couples SPICKERMANN 2003/i.p.

² "unmittelbar mit dem kernitalischen thematischen Maskulinum *aisos* 'Gott' verwandt: aus der Personifizierung des *o*-stämmigen Nomen *actionis* idg. **dis-o-s* 'die Verehrung' zur Verbalwurzel *²*ais-* 'ehrfürchtig sein, verehren'" (DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2005, a: § 3).

A[pr..] / ie[uru] / Eso

“Apr[onius] ded[icated] to Esus”³

and preserves in Noricum the older Celtic dative singular *Esui*⁴. As a result, the Lezoux inscription would read

“to *Esus* I dedicated, and to the Queen *Rosmerta*”,

which is particularly plausible if we recall (i.) that *MERCURIUS* was sometimes called *ESUNERTUS* (“having the strength of Esus”) and (ii.) that *MERCURIUS* and the queenly *ROSMERTA* also form a traditional couple. Moreover, the modernized *Eso* is paralleled by the younger ending of dative singular shown by the *ā*-stems *RIGANA* and *ROSMERTA*, i.e. *-i* as opposed to older Gaulish *-ai*. The form with final vowel *-u* seems to be preserved as *Esu* in CIL XIII 3199 (*Esu/Mopa/soC/nusticus/v.s.l.m.*) and also as *Aesu* on Old Brittonic coin legends (DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 1991: 46f.)

2. “Homonymic” theonymic couples

Less attention has been paid – if any – to such pairs in which the two gods are lexically or at least semantically linked, i.e. where the venerated deity is actually just one, though appearing in the votives both as god or gods and as goddess or goddesses. I call them “homonymic” theonymic couples. Truly, they only seldom appear in one and the same inscription, as in the dedication *Glanis et Glanicabus* “to *GLANIS* and the *GLANICAE*” from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence (in the materials collected by Ralph Häußler, cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2003/i.p.a), which is probably the reason for not having received up to now the attention they deserved.

2.1. A gender and number model

We shall now proceed to a systematic screening of the theonymical corpus known from the Keltiké⁵ for homonymic couples where one and the same divine concept is split into different genders and numbers.

It will eventually be possible to arrange a selection of the homonymic theonyms in the following scheme

MASC.SING.	divine concept	FEM.SING.
MASC.PLUR.		FEM.PLUR.

so that the splitting seems to have been more or less regular.

³ Note that the case for the traditionally assumed Gaulish demonstrative pronoun ***eso* “this” is very weak, resting as it is exclusively on the quite obscure *Jtamo eso aricani margo* of RIG-L-35.3. In the lamina from Baudecet even the readings <*eso*> and <*esana*> have been discarded in favour of completely different ones (RIG-*L-109).

⁴ On the Norican and a similar Camunic attestation cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2005, a: § 3; on Gaulish declension eadem 1998/i.p.

⁵ In addition to JUFER – LUGINBÜHL 2001, I have used the collections of the international project *Fontes epigraphici religionum Celticarum antiquarum* of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

3. Theonymic formulas

We first need to know how a native and possibly Celtic deity was identified by his/her devotees. From the systematic analysis of votive texts from the Keltiké the following theonymic formula emerges⁶:

1st	2nd	3rd	4th & ff.
± category	± Native theonym	± <i>identificatio Romana vel indigena</i>	± ≥1 Epiklesis
		± <i>translatio Latina</i>	
	± Classical theonym	± <i>translatio Celtica</i>	

Please note (i.) that the explicit presence of any of the components is facultative and (ii.) that the order presented here is just orientative. I use the general term “category” for mostly, though not exclusively, Latin specifications by means of common nouns such as *deus/dea, genius, lares, matres, matronae, nymphae*, which we may find at the beginning of the formula; examples of Celtic categorizations are *MAGLOS* “prince(ly)”, *RIGANA* “queen(ly)”, and *SADOS* “benign and holy”.

The theonym, if native (e.g. the torques-god of justice *SINATIS* or the yew-god *IVAVOS / IVERIX*), may be followed or even elliptically substituted by what, generally termed *interpretatio Romana*, I prefer to call *identificatio Romana vel indigena*, meaning by it the equation of a Celtic divine principle with an existing Classical deity, cf. *MARS NODONS* or *VICTORIA BRIGANTIA*⁷.

Alternatively, we may just find the indigenous theonym translated into Latin, which I propose to call *translatio Latina*⁸: cf. dedications like *Callirio Silvano* (“Celtice to the wood-god, *id est Latine* to the wood-god”) in Britain or also – with reversed order – *Fonti Beleno* (“*Latine* to the spring-god, *id est Celtice* to the spring-god”) in Aquileia.

The third possible alternative is to find a Classical theonym followed or elliptically substituted by a gloss illustrating a relevant quality of the foreign deity to the indigenous population and therefore in Celtic language, a procedure I propose to call *translatio Celtica*: cf. the case of the dionysiatically “mead-begotten” *dei Fauni Medugenii/Medigeni* from Britain.

The last position is occupied by one or more epikleseis; among them we find (i.) polyvalent epikleseis, meaning unspecific attributes like *MOGETIOS* “mighty”, *MAR(O)MOGIOS* “big and mighty” or *ROMOGILLOS* “very mighty”; (ii.) functional epikleseis, i.e. appositions and attributes like *ALBIORIX* “ruling over the world” and *ANEXTLOMAROS* “big at protection”, mostly the product of what we have termed *translatio Celtica* (cf. e.g. the latter epitheton of Apollo with the Ἀπόλλων προστατέριος or προστάτης); (iii.) epikleseis of appurtenance, such as (α) general local attributes (*TOUTATIS* “of the tribe/town”⁹, *CISSONIOS* “of the market [baskets]”), (β₁) detoponymic attributes (*BRIXIENUS, NAMAUSICAE*), (γ₁) deethnonymic attributes (*ARSACAE, BRITTAE*), (δ) attributes derived from the very same theonyms which they substitute (*CARVONIA, MATONIOS* instead of **Carvona, Matonos*), and also (β₂) genitives (singular) of toponyms (*TUROBRIGAE* “of Turobriga” in dedications to *Ataecina Turobrigae*) and (γ₂) genitives (plural) of ethnonyms (e.g. in *matres Gesationum* “of the Gaesates”)¹⁰.

⁶ On the individual theonyms in this paragraph cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002/2005 (a & b), 2003/i.p.(a & b), and DE BERNARDO STEMPFL – GARCÍA QUINTELA (i.p.).

⁷ The *interpretatio* does of course not involve detoponymic deities like e.g. *BRIXIA* and *VINTIUS*.

⁸ For more details on both *translatio* procedures cf. my contribution to the 6th International F.E.R.C.A.N.

⁹ Workshop in London (2005/ i.p.), and now also DE BERNARDO STEMPFL – HAINZMANN (i.p.).

¹⁰ Said of various deities insofar as they are “guardian of the tribe or town”.

¹⁰ On the problematics of the epikleseis cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002/2005a, 2003, and 2005/i.p.

4. Gender and number variation in adjectival epikleseis

It goes without saying that gender and number variation is normal in all kind of attributes, meaning by it all kind of adjectival epikleseis (i, ii, iii.a/β₁/γ₁/δ), be they used together with or instead of the theonym proper (in the latter case we may speak of “secondary theonyms”, for they were originally epitheta).

Accordingly, to the “mighty” *deo mounti* corresponds in the plural *dis mountibus*. The attribute belonging to the deus *MARS* glossed as *OCELOS* “of the peak[-town]”, i.e. *OCELAECOS* < **Okel-āk-yo-s*, is attested also in the feminine *OCELAECA* (**Okel-āk-yā*)¹¹. The same applies to *deo Marti segomoni*, representing a *translatio Celtica* of *Mars invictus* (lit. *victor*) and from which the feminine *SEGOMANNA* is built¹². *DUNISIA*, albeit with a different suffix, seems to correspond to the *MARS* glossed as *DUNATIS* “belonging to the *dunum*”, and the *RUDIOR* in the dedication *Aug() Rudioho(s) to deo Marti Aug() ruidano*, the “bloody” *MARS*. Cf. also the masculine singular *MAGALOS* “great” vs. feminine plural (Germanicized) *MAHAL/INEAE* and feminine singular – from a synonymous lexeme – *MARICA*¹³; from the short form *MAGLOS* “prince” is built the (Germanicized) feminine plural *MAHLINEHAE*. The feminine plural corresponding to the *MARS* glossed as *MAGIANOS* seems to be attested in the dedication *Matris mageis*, known by *translatio Latina* as *MATRES CAMPESTRES*.

5. Gender and number variation in proper theonyms

5.1. From feminine singular to feminine plural

That a corresponding plural is formed from the feminine singular of detoponymic theonyms can also be considered a more or less normal procedure, cf.¹⁴ *BRITANNIA* ⇒ *MATRES BRITANNAE*, *dea RATIS* ⇒ *MATRONAE RATHEIHAE* (again with Germanic sound-shift) or the *MATRONAE VESUNNAE* and the (Germanicized) *VESUNIAHENAE* from the Aquitanian town and goddess *VESUNNA* with its secondary, originally attributive variant *VESUNNIA*.

In addition, we find that number variation in the feminine is also quite common with all other types of theonyms, cf. the dedications *Eponab(us)* and *Neihalenninis* from the original *EPONA* and *NEHALENIA*; it is indeed the most common type among the gender and number variations of Celtic theonyms and as such it has been occasionally mentioned (RÜGER 1987: 3). The same type of variation is found between the Gallo-Greek Ροκλοισται and the lexically related though not identical *CLUTOIDA* with its Germanicized theonymic synonym *HLUDANA*. This feminine number variation can also be expressed by means of *translatio*, cf. the Latin singular *NUTRIX* matching Old Celtic *ALOUNAE*, i.e. *NUTRICES*, and also the Old Celtic *SENTONA* vs. the Latin plural *SEMITAE*.

¹¹ Derived by means of two suffixes, whereas the non-theonymic detoponymic attribute *Okel-ākā* shows only the first, the forms in -aeco/-a need not have been originally confined to the west of the Iberian Peninsula (cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002: 98ff. vs. JORDÁN CÓLERA 2004: 312).

¹² Through **segomána* < **segómon-ā*. The same origin may have had *Segeta*, though we cannot tell.

¹³ The sanctuary of the goddess *MARICA* together with a few place names and the mythical figure of *Remos* (“prince” in Gaulish) suggest the presence of a few Celtic speakers mingled with the Etruscans in early Latium (DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002/i.p.).

¹⁴ On the various theonyms in this paragraph cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002/2003=2004, 2002/2005 (a & b), and 2004.

5.2. From masculine singular to masculine plural

With the exception of cases in which the name of the god was originally an attribute, as e.g. with *MARS RUDIANOS* and the plural *RUDIOI* in § 4 above, the number variation in the masculine gender, although undoubtedly existing, is by far not as frequent as in the feminine. Examples of it are the *ARIOUNI* matching *deo Aironi* < **Aryoni* in western Spain¹⁵, *dii CASSES* vs. *deo Casio*, and the dedication *Sexarboribus* replacing *Sexarbori deo*, even if in the latter dedications the singular was already expressing a plural concept¹⁶.

5.3. From masculine singular to feminine plural

We then find a variation between a masculine singular and a feminine plural that is quite widespread among detoponymic theonyms: cf., in addition to *GLANIS* above in § 2 with the already Gallo-Greek *GLANICAE*, also *ALISANOS* ⇒ *ALASIAGAE*, *ALAESIAGAE* and the dedications *deo Nemauso* vs. ματρεβο Ναμαυσικαβο.

That this is the second most frequent variation in which Celtic theonyms are involved is at least surprising, given that this type implies not only variation in number, but also a change of gender. Examples are¹⁷: *CERNUNNOS* ⇒ *CERNUNNAE*; *BAGINOS* (and *BAGINATIS*) ⇒ *BAGINAHAE*; *GESACUS* ⇒ *MATRONAE GESAHENAE*; *EXP(E)RCENNIO*S ⇒ *NYMPHAE PERCERNIAE*; *CALLIRIUS* ⇒ *VACALLINEHAE*.

A shortening seems to have taken place in *MATRONAE LANEHIAE* ⇌ *LANOVALOS* or *SUCAE* ⇌ *SUCELLOS*, and a certain amount of lexical variation permitted in *UROBROGIAE* vs. *URILOUCUS*.

The Germanicized dedication *deabus Magisenis* goes back to the masculine **MOGI-SENOS* “the mighty old [lad]” although this was originally not an independent theonym, but just a *translatio Celtica*, i.e. a Celtic gloss describing *HERCULES* to the indigenous population; afterwards **Mogisenos* became **Mogusénos*, whose progressive Germanicization led to the well known *MAGUSÉ(;)NOS*, *MAGUSÁNOS*, and finally *MACUSANOS*.

We also have the *ELITIVAE* matching the originally Classical *Ele deo* < **Elyō deō*¹⁸.

5.4. From masculine singular to feminine singular

Many are also the cases where gender variation or splitting of the theonym takes place without changing its number. In the following examples, the original theonym seems to have been the masculine one¹⁹: cf. *ALBIORICA* with respect to *MARS ALBIORIX* and *ALBIORIGIUS* (*ALBIOS* for short?); *BORMANA* vs. *BORMANOS* (because of the lenited pronunciation [borðanos] also written *Borbanos*) and the secondary *BORMANICUS*, all from *BORMO* (also written *Borvo* since it was pronounced [borþo]); Gallo-Brittonic *BRIGANTIA* (more

¹⁵ On these two PRÓSPER 2002: 206ff. and LORRIO – SÁNCHEZ DE PRADO 2002. The former is possibly to be seen also in the Lepontic dedication *Ariuonebos* from Prestino, and for the latter there is no evidence supporting the restitution by Lorrio and Sánchez de Prado of a nominative ***Aironis* instead of *AIRU* (genitive *Aironos* etc.: “the lord” or sim.) nor an interpretation as water deity, if not just as a dehydronymic one (i.e. after a water stream originally called **Aryō* “the lordly one”).

¹⁶ Something similar is to be found in Etruscan, where “La personnification de *Axviser* et de *Eθausva* comporte [...] un processus de lexicalisation au singulier d’un pluriel” and “Le phénomène n’est pas limité à ces deux noms” (CRISTOFANI 1997: 215f.).

¹⁷ On the theonymes discussed in this paragraph cf. SERGENT in this volume, together with DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2005b and 2003/i.p. (a & b).

¹⁸ On the isogloss {unstressed *yo* > *e*} in various territories of the Keltiké cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2004/2006.

¹⁹ The theonymes in this paragraph are discussed – with references – in DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2003=2004, 2002/2005 (a & b), 2003/i.p. (a & b), 2005/i.p.

archaic is Old Irish *Brigit* < **b^hrg^hnt-i* matching the *BRIGANS* attested in the dedication *deo Bregantī*²⁰ as well as the vocative *Bregan* in Marcellus' magic spell VIII:170, and also related to *BRIGANTOS* in the dedication *Brixantū*²¹. *IBOSOS* mirrors a different dialectal isogloss than the feminine *IBOITA*²², but allows us to reconstruct a probably dionysiac *(P)ibotyos “drinking-god” from which *(P)ibotyā would have been derived.

In *VERCANA* vs. *UXSACANOS* the prefix is expressed by lexical variation (*ver-* < **uper-* vs. synonymous **upsi-/e-* with pretonic assimilation in *uxsacámos* ‘high-singer’²³), while *COBBA* seems to have been shortened with respect to the Celtic “smith-god” attested in the dedications *deo Cobanno*, older *deo Xuban(o)* [deo yubano] and Τοβάνο²⁴. In *ANEXTLOMARA* from *APOLLO ANEXTLOMAROS* – itself a loan-translation of his Greek epitheton προστ-άτης/-ατέριος as seen above in § 3 – we see, once more, that the creation of a feminine theonym takes place even when the original masculine form is not a component of the native Celtic pantheon but just a gloss explaining by *translatio Celtica* the nature of a Classical god to his new indigenous worshippers, thus indicating that the Classical deities under their translated names had become completely integrated into the increased Gallo-Roman provincial pantheons.

The same is true for *NARIA* with respect to *FAUNUS NARIUS* “the manly, boar-like Faunus” (cf. Διόνυσος βουγενής). *EXOMNA* with respect to the “fearless” *MARS* attested with epenthesis as *EXSOBINOS*, and for *CAMLORIGA*²⁵ vs. *CAMULORIX*, *MARS CAMULOS* for short, the *MARS* “ruling the slaves”²⁶.

This applies also to *ATESMERTA*, matching Mercury’s epitheta (by *translatio Celtica* of χαριδώτης “giver of boons”²⁷) *ATESMERTIOS* and *ATESMERIOS*, *ADSMERIOS*, and *ROSMERT(I)A* beside *SMERTOS*, *SMERTULITANOS*, *SMERTRIOS*, *SMERTRONNOS*²⁸, at the same time revealing the divine pair *MERCURIUS* & *ROSMERTA* (above in § 1) to be just one more of what we termed “homonymic theonymic couples” (§ 2 above).

²⁰ With regular *i* > *e* after *r* and before -á-.

²¹ One of the cases where Gaulish <χ> represents lenited *g* [γ].

²² I.e. *-tyo->-so-, mostly in Aquitanian territories, vs. *-otyo->-oito-, mostly in Celtiberia and western Hispanic territories.

²³ The bird discussed by MARCO SIMÓN in this very volume?

²⁴ Aquitanian *GUBANOS* (DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2002/2003: 49f. = 2004: 205f.) must be added to STÜBER 2005, together with the clarifying new etymology by BLÁZEK (i.p.); IE **gʷʰob-*>Celt. *gob-* related to Italic **gʷʰob-ro-*s in Latin *faber* as well as to Lithuanian *gabija/gubija*, mod. *gabė/gubė* ‘fire’. With respect to word formation, though, the various Celtic lexemes for “fire-ruler” or sim. can only continue the agentive formations **gob-et-s* (dat.pl. *gobedbi* in Alesia), **gob-yo-s*, and **gob-ano-s*.

²⁵ While epenthesis is usually caused by the original accent of a word (*EXSOBINOS* < **Exóbnos*), the syncope of the second syllable to be seen i.a. in *CAMLORIGA* is the result of the later, Gallo-Brittonic paenultimate accentuation (**Camuloriga* > *CAMLORIGA*, and also **Expercénios* > *EXPRCENNOS* below in § 3.9).

²⁶ *ALAUNAI ALAUINA*, on the contrary, is not necessarily derived from the *MERCURIUS VIATOR*, *ALAUNIOS* by *translatio Celtica*, but could also indicate the ethnic appurtenance (DELAMARRE 2004: 126f.) of the deity (cf. also *ALAUNINOS* in the Gallo-greek dedication Αλανί[νοι]νεινού, R.I.G.-G-206). As for *LUCENA*, it is not sure to have been derived from *LEUCETIOS* > *LOUCETIOS* as an epitheton of *MARS* (*VELOX*?), and it could even represent a former **Lugena* (cf. below in § 4).

²⁷ Cf. also his epiklesis as αὐξηδημος “increasing of people”.

²⁸ Perhaps related to “the divine son, the provider” in ll. 1–2 of the inscription of Chamalières: *diiuion [...] mapon arveriatin*, cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2001 (note that the quotation by ZIMMER 2004: 87 is not accurate).

5.5. From feminine singular to masculine singular

The reverse procedure generated *BELISAMAROS* from *BELISAMA*, *BELISTOS* from **BELISTA*²⁹, *ARECURIOS* from *AERECURA* (originally *HER(E)CURA* < **pérk*"u-rā), and – given that the substitution of *l* for original *d* was not unknown in Latin environments – also *BOLUINNOS* from *BODUA*. In *MAIURROS* from the Mediterranean *MAIA* we see once more that the variation does not spare non-Celtic theonyms whenever they are attested in a Celtic milieu.

5.6. From masculine plural to feminine plural

This last type of gender variation, as e.g. in *dis Mairis* ⇒ *deabus/dis Mairabus*, is difficult to detect because the respective dative-plural endings, i.e. of the case usually attested in votive inscriptions, do not usually differ.

Moreover, the interchange between the comparatively rare masculine plural and the feminine plural is mostly attested in connection to at least one type of number variation, as it can be seen below from the tables in §§ 5 and 6.

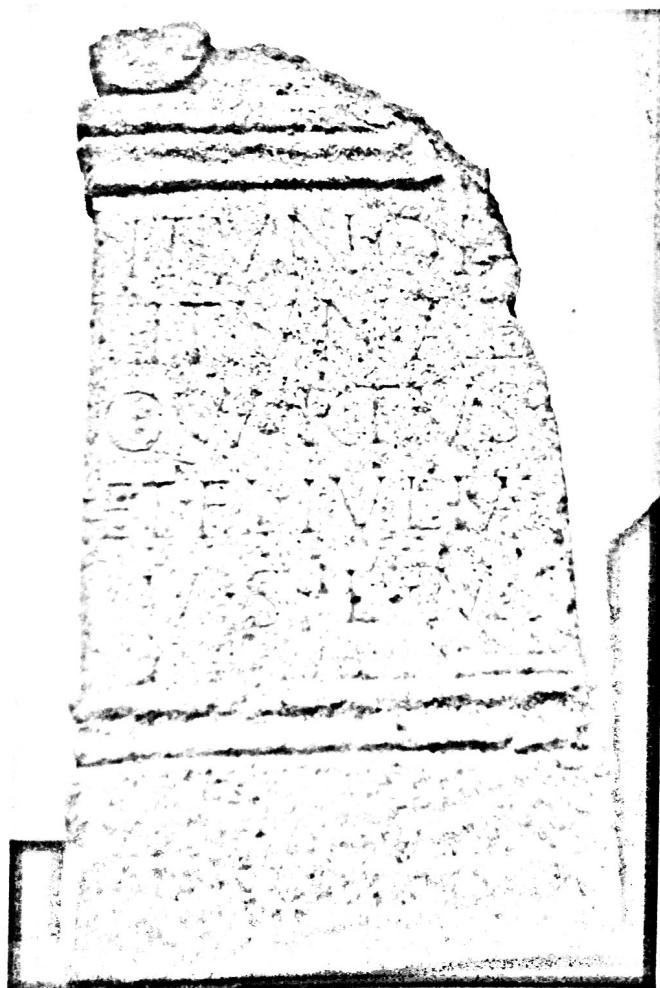


Fig. 1. ITUNOS and ITUNA on an altar in the Lapidarium of the Savaria Museum
(Szombathely 2003; photograph by courtesy of Dr J.A. Arenas Esteban).

²⁹ Later *BELESTIS*?

5.7. Which gender came first?

To determine the direction of the gender variation, i.e. to detect which was the original gender of the deity, is often very difficult, e.g. in the case of *AXIMOS* and *AXIMA*, both from the territory of the *Ceutrones*³⁰. A help, though, comes from word-formation analysis and, last not least, from the insular Celtic comparanda.

In the case of the original earth-deity/ies *ITUNOS* and *ITUNA* (Fig. 1), the evidence of Old Irish *iθ* “corn, grain” < **p̥i-tu* (ntr.) : Old Indian *pitú* ‘food’ (masc.) and in particular of the Irish mythical hero *Íth* (♂), whose *u*-stem genitive *ítha* appears in the name of *Lugaid mac Ítha*, leader of the Milesians who first reached Ireland, suggests the masculine *ITUNOS* to have been the original form of the theonym³¹.

The same conclusion can be reached on behalf of (*MERCURIUS*) *VISUCIUS* with respect to *VISUCI*, his parhedros in Upper Germany (SPICKERMANN 2003/i.p.), since not only Gaulish *visu-* and the corresponding Middle Irish *fi* “poison” are masculine, but also the figure of the mythical dwarf *Gwion Bach*, who became all-knowing through a herbal potion and whose first element, Welsh *Gwion*, goes back to **wīsonos* (“der große Saftkundige”) in the translation by MEID 1996: 109).

On the contrary, in the case of *MEDUNA* vs. *MEDURINIS* the existence of Irish *Medb* (<**medu-ā*), the mythical warrior-queen of Connacht, suggests the priority of the feminine form, from which also the Narbonensic *MEDVIO* could be derived³².

Also the feminine *VIHANSA* “the Fighting one” may, even if phonetically Germanicized, precede *MARS VICINNOS* as to its formation, being a protoform like **wik-nt-yā* more archaic than the suffix *-in(n)o-* used to derive the masculine.

5.8. Triple splitting

In many a case, not only both gender splitting and number variation take place, but three variants, even if not derived with the same suffix, are attested. Interestingly enough, these theonymic triplets vary in the singular between masculine and feminine, and between feminine singular and feminine plural, while the form of the masculine plural is not (yet?) attested, cf.³³

<i>BERGIMOS</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>BERGUSIA</i> <i>BERGONIA</i> <i>BERGUAHENAE</i>
<i>NEMEDOS</i> <i>NIMMEDOS</i> <i>FANO</i> by <i>translatio Latina</i>	<i>Holy place</i>	<i>NEMETONA</i> <i>ARNEMETIA</i> <i>MATRES NEMET(I)ALES</i>

³⁰ One does also wonder about the relation existing, if any, between *BEDAIOS* and *BEDA*.

³¹ With regard to its etymology, cf. also place names like *Mag Ítha* “corn field” in Co. Donegal.

³² As for *MEDOCIOS*, the fact that the corresponding British dedication reads *Marti medocio Campesium* suggests it to mean simply ‘the Mars who rules (Brit. *medōcios* ‘ruler’ < Celt. **med-āk-yo-s*) over the people frequenting his Field (drilling soldiers? assemblies?’).

³³ References and earlier bibliography on the theonyms in this paragraph in PRÓSPER 2002: 220f., ARENAS BERNARDO STEMPFL 2005, and eadem 2002/2005b, 2003/i.p.a, 2005/i.p.

<i>BUDENUS</i> <i>MARS BUDENICUS</i> by <i>translatio Celtica</i>	<i>Mars militaris</i>	<i>BOUDINA, BOUDENA</i> ³⁴
		<i>MATRONAE BOUDUNNEAE, MATRONAE BOUDUNNEIHAE</i>

<i>DEVER(I?)OS</i>	<i>Dēva</i> “The shiny; goddess”	<i>DEVONA</i>
		<i>DEVIATAE</i>

5.9. Diasystemic variations in gender and number

If we then take into account not only the derivatives from one and the same lexeme, but also the Latin equivalents together with the synonymous variants in other territories of the Keltiké, as in³⁵

<i>EXP(E)RCENNIOΣ</i> <i>DEUS ROBUR</i>	<i>Oak</i>	<i>HER(E)CURA</i>
		<i>NYMPHAE PERCERNAE FATAE DERVONES MATRONAE DERVONNAE</i>

<i>APONOS</i> <i>ABINIOS, ABIAN(I)OS</i> <i>AQUO</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>DEA APADEVA URA FONS, URNIA</i>
		<i>UDROVARINEAE MATRONAE UDRAVARIHENAE</i>

<i>BELENOS</i> <i>FONS BELENOS</i> <i>FONTANUS</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>FONTANA</i>
		<i>NYMPHAE FONTANAE</i>

³⁴ It may be questioned if *BOUDICCA* and the Germanicized *BAUDIHILLIA* emanate from the same divine principle or rather represent one (or two) of the many earlier, native Celtic war goddesses.

³⁵ References to the evidence in this paragraph are to be found in DOLENZ 2004, ARENAS – DE BERNARDO STEMPFL 2005, eadem 2002/2003=2004, 2002/2005b, 2003/i.p.b, 2005/i.p., DE BERNARDO STEMPFL – GARCÍA QUINTELA (i.p.), FABRE – MAYER – RODÀ: 73f. no. 16.

<i>VLAOS</i>	<i>Good rule</i>	<i>ICOVELLAUNA</i>
<i>VIEPIOS</i>		<i>SULEVIA</i>
<i>VELLAUNOS</i>		(ματρέβο) [ον]λατιαβ[ο] (<i>MATRES/IUNONES</i>) <i>SULEVIAE</i> <i>MATRONAE VALABNEI(H)AE</i> <i>MATRES GUBERNATRICES</i>

we even find a few examples of quadruple theonymic splitting like

<i>SILVANUS CALLIRIOS</i>	<i>Wood</i>	<i>SILVANA</i>
<i>VIDUCOS</i>		<i>VOCALLINEHAE, VACALLINEAE</i>
<i>VIDASO</i>		<i>SILVANAE</i>
<i>SILVANI</i>		
<i>SEXARBORES</i>		

and

<i>SENAICOS</i>	<i>Old age</i>	<i>AMMACA</i> sive <i>GAMELDA</i>
<i>DEUS H(ENOS) VETER</i> , cf. <i>deo HVeteri</i> and <i>deo Veteri</i>		
<i>DII H(ENI) VETERES</i> , cf. <i>dibus HVeteribus</i> and <i>dibus Veteribus</i>		<i>SENAE</i> <i>DEAE H(ENAE) VITIRES</i> , cf. <i>deabus Vitiribus</i> ; <i>HVitiribus</i>

where both masculine and feminine singular as well as plural are represented. It is evident that Gauls and other Celts all over Europe could visualize the deities they worshipped under different genders and numbers at more or less the same time.

6. Gender and number variation in Palaeohispanic inscriptions

On the basis of this knowledge, we can now submit the Hispanic votive inscriptions to a fresh analysis. There we find *ARANTIA* and *ARANTIOS*, which are even worshipped together in not less than four inscriptions, half of them with what seem to be their Latinized variants *ARENTIA* and *ARENTIUS*. On the recently published ara of Castelejo (Fundão/CB, cf. SALVADO – MÉNDEZ ROSA – GUERRA 2004) they even show the same epitheton of appurtenance in the form of the plural adjective *EBUROBRICI* “belonging to the town of Eburobriga” used ἀπὸ κοινοῦ in the dative: *Arantiae et Arantio Eburobricis*. Both genders are also followed by the same epitheton of appurtenance in the dedication from nearby Ferro (Covilhã/CB), where it has been split into two separate adjectives³⁶, and in the two identical inscriptions of Arroyo Tumbón (Coria/CC), where it takes the form of the genitive plural *AMRUNAECO^N*, again used ἀπὸ κοινοῦ in *Arentiae Arentio Amrunaeco* “to [the goddess] A. [& the god] A. of the Amrunaici”. In five further individual dedications from the territory encompassed by the four sites

³⁶ Cf. the *OCELAECA* and *OCELAECOS* above in § 4.

listed above, the masculine theonym is attested once in the older form and three times in the modernized, vs. one modernized feminine theonym³⁷.

We also find the masculine *BANDUS*, related to Old Indian *bandhuḥ* “Verwandschaft, Genossenschaft, nahe Verbindung, Beziehung”, on which is built the feminine *BANDUA* (DE BERNARDO STEMPLE 2003), cf. e.g.

♂	vs.	♀
dat. <i>Bandei</i> dat. sing. <i>Brialeacui</i>		dat. <i>Bandua</i> gen. sing. <i>Lansbrigae</i>
dat. <i>Bandi</i> gen. plur. <i>[L]ongobricu(m)</i>		dat. <i>Bandue</i> gen. plur. <i>Aetobrico^N</i>
dat. <i>Bandi</i> gen. plur. <i>Malunrico^N</i>		dat. <i>Bandue</i> gen. plur. <i>Roudeaeco^N</i>

Another derived feminine is *COSUNEA* (no. 1042 in *Hispania epigraphica* 5/1995) with respect to the originally Italic foundation-god *COSUS* (< *COSSUS* < *CONSUS*).

Turning to the oath-god *LUGUS*, we find that various Spanish colleagues refused to acknowledge the epigraphical evidence, as summarized in the following table,

<i>LUGUS</i> , cf. dat. <i>Luguei</i> (Peñalba ³⁸), <i>Lueikar()</i> ← * <i>Luguei-karo-s</i> (Gracurris ³⁹), and voc. <i>Luge / Luxe</i> (Chamalières ⁴⁰) <i>LUGOVIOS?</i> perhaps in dat. <i>Luxovio</i> (LUXEUIL)	
<i>LUGOVES</i> (Avenches ⁴¹) and dat. <i>Lugovibus</i> (Osma) <i>LUGŪS</i> , cf. dat. <i>Lucubus</i> (Nîmes ⁴²), dat. <i>Lugubo Arquienob(o)</i> (Liñarán/Lugo), and dat. <i>Lucoubu Arquieni(s)</i> (Sinoga/Lugo) ⁴³	<i>LUGUNAE</i> , cf. dat. <i>Lugunis deabus</i> (Atapuerca) dat. l.o.co.o.po.o.n.i.i.a.r.a.po.o (M.L.H: J.1.1, Bensafrim) [lo'gobo # niya'rabo]

just on account of its variation in gender and number, not realizing that in Continental Celtic pantheons almost every divine principle could be expressed as belonging to either gender and number.

7. Reasons behind the selection of gender and number in Continental Celtic religion

A thorough investigation of the reasons behind the selection of gender and number in Continental Celtic religion must be left for future research. For the moment, it seems that motives for a theonym's switching between genders and numbers might rather have to be sought in (a) the motive of a dedication, (b) the sex of the dedicant(s), (c) the geographic area, (d) the historical period. The rôle of (e) theophoric personal names should also be investigated in this context.

³⁷ Cf. *Arantio Tanginiciaeco^N* vs. *Arentiae Equotullaicensi*.

³⁸ In another inscription from the same site appears the kenning *Voramos ednoum* ‘Supreme among the birds’ (DE BERNARDO STEMPLE 2002/2003: 48f.= 2004: 204f.).

³⁹ DE BERNARDO STEMPLE 2002: 113.

⁴⁰ Cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPLE 2001. A similar *luge* is also attested in Rhaetic context (MARKEY – MEES 2004: 82).

⁴¹ LAMBERT LG³: 62.

⁴² HOLDER: II, col. 304.

⁴³ OLIVARES PEDREÑO 2002: 88f.

Not to be underestimated is also the importance of (f) the *identificatio Romana vel indigena*: e.g. the feminine *BANDUA* might have sprung from the equation of the original masculine *BANDUS* with the Roman feminine deity *TUTELA*⁴⁴, even if we know of cases – many of them discussed above in § 5.4 – where a goddess emanates from a typically masculine classical god.

On the other hand, the lack of variation can be due to the nature of the venerated concept; this is evidently the case of the deities associated with male fertility, which are also masculine in gender, cf. the *GENIUS CUCULLATUS* and also the classical *PRIAPOS* that appears, phonetically transformed into *ERIPOS*, in the Aquitanian dedications *deo Eriapo* and *Erriape* (from an original dative **Priapyō*⁴⁵). The opposite case is that of *EPONA*, consistently feminine for representing the mare in the king's sacral marriage with his country.

8. Gender variation in Insular Celtic mythology

Gender and number permeability, however, was not restricted to Continental Celtic religion, but seems to have characterized also the original insular pantheons, as a short incursion into Irish mythology already reveals.

Here⁴⁶ we find the sorceress and former goddess *Monghinn* whose name corresponds to that of *Mongán*, son of the great sea-god *Manannán*, and also a fairy-queen *Grian* matching the Classical sun-god *GRANNOS*. *Ai* is the poet of the principal family of euhemerized pre-Christian deities in Old Irish tradition – the so-called *Tuatha Dé Danann* –, but also the name of a female mythical figure, and a femininum is *AVETA*, the older name of the Celtic deity of poetic inspiration.

It goes without saying, however, that any original ambiguity with regard to gender was doomed to be almost completely eradicated by the strong Catholic 'filter' that reshaped the medieval Celtic literatures and mythology⁴⁷.

9. Gender and number variation in Celtic vs. Non-Celtic pantheons

If we now look at religions outside the Celtic world, we find that gender variation is known from the ancient Semitic religion (GESE – HÖFNER – RUDOLPH 1970: 137):

<i>Ištar</i> (Mesopotamia) ♀	
<i>D<small>A</small>š-dar</i> (Ebla) ♀	
<i>Ištar</i> and <i>E<small>š</small>tarat</i> (Mari) ♀	<i>E<small>š</small>tar U<small>š</small></i> (Mari) ♂
<i>Attr</i> (Ugarit) ♀	<i>Attr</i> (Ugarit) ♂

Also in the Etruscan pantheon "Il semble que l'existence d'une ambiguïté dans la définition du sexe [...] soit à en juger par les plus récents synthèses sur la religion étrusque de plus en plus souvent admise". "Lorsque l'iconographie vient au secours de notre analyse, à partir du V^e siècle av. J.-C., l'anthropomorphisation et la détermination sexuelle montrent que *Alpan* (variante *Alpnu*) est féminine

⁴⁴ On this and the other theonyms in this paragraph cf. DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2003, 2002/2003=2004, and GORROCHATEGUI 2002=2004: 172.

⁴⁵ S. above in fn. 19 and cf. also *ERUDINOS* < **RUDINOS* on the Iberian Peninsula.

⁴⁶ On the following cf. COGHLAN 1985 s.vv., MACKILLOP 1998 s.vv., ZEIDLER 2003 and DE BERNARDO STEMPPEL 2002/2003: 61 = 2004: 217.

⁴⁷ In this respect, it might be compared to the elimination of bisexuality that seems to have affected the classical pantheons of Greece and Rome (cf. § 9. below).

dans six cas sur sept et *Evan* dans trois cas sur quatre" and that such ambiguity also affects further mythical figures (CRISTOFANI 1997: resp. 209 and 211).

In the Indo-European world, gender splitting is known from ancient India, where in the Vedic texts *Indrāṇī* and *Varāṇī* represent the feminine energy of the original masculine gods *Indra* and *Varuṇa*. However, "In Hindu mythology, gods are more often serially than simultaneously bisexual": "Each of the great gods, Vishnu and Shiva, is transformed into a female in a famous cycle of myths, and the Goddess becomes male in a later and more miscellaneous cycle of texts"⁴⁸.

Also in the Mycenaean inscriptions, few goddesses are attested whose names correspond to those of gods of the classical period, cf. *Diwija* and *Posidaeja* in Pylos, Tn 316 (HILLER 1986: 301). Gender permeability is, though, no longer admitted in the religion of classical Greece, as it appears from the lack of theonyms such as ***Aphrodisios*, ***Artemidios* or ***Apollonia*, ***Dionysia* and the like. As to number variation, there is Πλάv with the Πάνες and the Πανίσκοι, whose plural form has been supposed to be the original one (PÖTSCHER 1979: col. 446). The same is true for classical Rome, where there is no evidence of worshipping ***Dianos* beside *Diana*, ***Minervus* beside *Minerva*, nor ***Iumater/Iupiteria* or ***Martia* and the like.

There is only a little evidence of gender-variation stemming from the earliest period of the Italic religion, as in *LIBER / LIBERA* and the singular formulas *si(ve) deus si(ve) dea, deus deae, and deus deaque*, "que aplicada a una divinidad singular es expresión de su indefinición sexual, o mejor de su bisexualidad, condición común a muchas divinidades cuyos orígenes se pierden en la noche de los tiempos"⁴⁹.

On the other hand, dedications to *Fatis masculis* beside the *FATAE* (ZACCARIA 2002=2004: 147f.) as well as some evidence for number variation like the *IUNONES, MINERVAE, MERCURII* and *MARTES*⁵⁰ are only known in comparatively late provincial inscriptions mainly from Celtic speaking territories, where they seem to go back to Celtic sub- and adstrata.

It is thus evident that gender splitting and number variation, although hitherto underestimated and not completely unknown in other ancient Indo-European branches, are peculiar characteristics of the Old Celtic religion. And it is even conceivable that the Celtic threefold iconographic representations were an attempt at representing the two genders and the plurality of a deity at the same time.

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⁴⁸ "Indeed, serial transformation [...] is an attempt to recover a lost possibility, to express an ambiguity that is present from the start, revealed when it seems to be transformed": DONIGER 1999: 260 and ff. with a whole series of examples.

⁴⁹ PEREA YÉBENES 1998: 169; different is the case of the plural formula *diis deabusque* encompassing all possible kinds of divine entities (e.g. Mainz no. 177: *diis deabusque immortalibus*).

⁵⁰ Cf. WHATMOUGH DAG, § 82 p. 196, who – according to OLMSTED 1994: 395 – goes back to D'ARBOIS DE JUBAINVILLE 1906.