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## ANA / \*DANU

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## ANA / \*DANU Between Siberia and Anatolia ?

*Anv an Danube < Dānouio- a c'hell bezañ ereet gant \*Donu / \*Danu an Tuatha Dé Danann goude ma vije berr a \*Danu, peogwir n'eo ket \*Donu ur ger keltieg.*

*Heñveladur Ana ouzh Dana a ziskouez bezañ aesaet gant an hesoniezh. An div vaouez n'int ket eus ar memes familh daoust dezho bezañ Doueezed-mamm o daou.*

*\*Danu a zo Doueez-vamm tri doue o frammañ diaz an TDD, elese meuriadoù barrek war gwidre ar metal hogen divarrek war al labour douar. Ar re-se vo trec'h war gounideien anvet Fomoire e Cath Magh Tuired 2. Orin \*Danu an Tuatha Dé Danann zo ken pell hag hini ar gadourien geltiek o tiskenn eus Proto-Indez-Europiz sevenadur Yamna hag a zalc'ho penn da dud Europa Gozh adalek an trived milved KK.*

*Ana a zo Mamm doueed Iwerzhon, da lavaret eo arouez riegozh an enezenn goude trec'h an TDD war he annezidi kent. Lec'hiet eo en ur rannvro ha kevreet gant div benn-bronn e stumm div dorgenn e Killarney (Munster). Arouez an douar mamm eo. Roet eo bet dezhi kredabl un anv keltiek a c'hellfe dont eus ar Proto-Indez-Europeg kar d'an Hittiteg HannaHannah da skouer.*

*Ken souezhus ha ma c'hell bezañ, e c'hellfe an div boblañs bezañ bet e darempred gwezh all gozh, gant ma ve pignet en-dro betek ar -7vet milved er rannvro kent Ouralek: chaseourien-dastumerien ar mare a reas anaoudegezh gant ar chatalerezh trugarez da dud deuet eus ar sav-heol. O c'hempredidi pe-se a guitaas Anatolia evit trevadenniñ Europa ar mezolitik. Hag ar « Gourganiz » a yeas a-benn da Europa Gozh tro ar -4vet milved adalek ar stepennoù.*

## INTRODUCTION

Some people may be amazed by the subject of this study when many searchers seem to think that the problem of Ana / Dana is solved: Ana is Dana. But fortunately everybody does not agree with this:

“[...], Anu, who was especially connected with Munster, was considered to be *mater deorum hibernensium*, while the deities of Ireland were known as *Tuatha Dé Danann* [...]. There has been a great deal of confusion between Anu and Danu and it is in question whether they are actually distinct persons in origin or not.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ROSS, Ann. Pagan Celtic Britain. London ; New York, 1967, p. 209. Sjoedtedt, 1949: 24 f. PEB, Cw. In KOCH, John T. *Celtic culture*. Santa Barbara, Cal. ; Denver, Col., 2006. ANU [...]. « Danu, Danann or Donann sometimes alternates with Anu as a variant form, but was probably originally a different mythological figure whose name has a distinctly separate origin”, p. 78.

At first sight however, anybody can notice that Ana is close to Neolithic, milk and the country, whereas \*Danu is mother of three gods related to warrior tribes invading an island. In this study we have chosen to follow the steps of the two characters, each one separately. The first one \*Danu will bring us to the great rivers of Siberia, the second one Ana to the Hittites and Neolithic farmers from Anatolia ultimately. But obviously both are said to be Mother Goddesses. One more remark: we think to have succeeded in getting rid of the legend of Anna's early Christian cult in Brittany.

## \*DANU

The first thing to notice when examining Dana's name is that it can be found nowhere in the Old Irish texts. The nominative \*Danu has been built up again from the genitive Danann, as in the well-known Tri Dé Danann for example or Tuatha Dé Danann.<sup>2</sup> The Dana entry is not even found in the Dictionary of the Irish Language neither in the Lexique Etymologique de l'Irlandais Ancien, only \*Danu wherefrom the reader is sent to the genitive Danann. The form \*Danu is very close to the hypothetic Indo-European \*Donu ha \*Donuva both deduced from Indo-European attested languages. Concerning the invisible character under this name we only know that she is a goddess, moreover a prehistoric watercourse which would have been named \*Donu and personalized in several Indo-European civilizations."<sup>3</sup> The Tri Dé Danann are well known : Brían, Iuchar and Iucharbha, as \*Danu's sons, herself Delbaeth's daughter and in the same time Tuireann Picreo's wife, her father "because Tuireann Picreo is only an other name of Dealbáeth."<sup>4</sup>

### *Etymology*

\*Danu is a Mother Goddess whose name is derived from watercourses known by searchers as the Don, Dnieper, Donets, Dniester, all names built on Danuvian roots.<sup>5</sup> The list can be lengthened with the Proto-Indo-European \*Deh3nu or Dehanu. Although there is a large consensus about \*Danu's philological analysis, this does not prevent scientists to stay uneasy about her character:

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<sup>2</sup> LAMBERT, P.-Y. LEIA (Lexique Etymologique de l'Irlandais Ancien). Paris ; Dublin, 1996 ; D-24 : « \*Danu est parfois comparé au nom de déesse Anu; mais il semble préférable de l'identifier au gall. *Don*, nom de la mère de nombreux dieux dans la mythologie du Mabinogi : c'est la déesse-mère, SJOESTEDT, M.-L. Dieux et Héros des Celtes, 35, 52. »

<sup>3</sup> DEXTER, Miriam Robbins. Whence the goddesses. New York, Oxford, Beijing, 1990, p. 45

<sup>4</sup> STERCKX, Claude. Contribution à l'étude des concepts théogoniques dans la mythologie des Celtes pré-chrétiens. Bruxelles, Université Libre, 1973 ; p. 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> PRZYLUCKI, Jean. La grande déesse. Paris : 1950, p. 37

STERCKX, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

DEXTER, M.R. in *Encyclopedia of Indo-European culture* / ed. Mallory, Adams. London, Chicago, 1997, p. 487.

DELAMARRE, Xavier. Noms de lieux celtiques de l'Europe ancienne (-500 / +500). Arles, 2012. « Aut. Class. Δανοῦβιος, Δανοῦτος, *Danubius*, *Dānuvius*, ancien nom du *Danube*, un des grands fleuves de la Celtique appelé *Istros* par Hérodote. Correspond à la rivière galloise *Donwy* dont le protot. est \**Dānovios*. Dérivation en -io- d'un th. i.e. \**dānu-* qui désigne le fleuve en avestique, *dānu-*, et en ossète *don*, et qui en Europe a servi à former des noms de fleuves : *Eridanos* (celt. \**ēri-dānos* 'le fleuve de l'Ouest'), *Dar-danus* et les fleuves « russes » *Don*, *Dnièpr* (scythique \**Dānu-apara*), et *Dniestr* (scythique \**Dānu-nazdya*). » p. 133.

MACLEOD, Sharon paice. *Mater deorum Hibenensium*, in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. XIX, 1999, pp. 349-363.

“In summary, one may deduce that there was a prehistoric, probably Neolithic tribe, which inhabited an area near a watery place, perhaps river or stream. This water became personified as a feminine deity, and the goddess gave her name to the tribe. The tribe was probably not Indo-European but one with which the Proto-Indo-Europeans came in contact early on.”<sup>6</sup>

In fact, even this large consensus on \*Donu’s etymology is questioned because of new phonological considerations:

The Slavic river-names *Don*, *Dnieper*, and *Dniestr* are borrowings from Scythian \**Dānu*, \**Dānu apara* ‘upper river’, \**Dānu nazdya* ‘lower river’. [...], Welsh *Donwy* leaves no doubt that Celtic and Iranian had the same inherited river-name. Despite the views of earlier scholars [...], who took Danube to be Iranian in origin, a Celtic source cannot be ruled out on linguistics grounds, and the name *Dānuvius* is first attested in the Celtic-speaking western region of the Danube basin.<sup>7</sup>

So far, so good, but where is the problem? The Danube’s name <\**Dānouio-* has been associated with \**Danu*, the Irish Goddess name. Here is the point, following the author: “the Irish has a short *a* or short *o*, the Welsh a Celtic short *o*, and *Danube* < \**Dānouio-* a long *ā*.”<sup>8</sup> However, when one remember that \**Danu* is not a Celtic word, but, as we have seen, a word adapted in Celtic from the Indo-European \**Donu*, and “because the Danuva tribe were borrowings into Celtic (rather than formulated in Celtic), as well as the other IE languages, one does not have to account so closely for the vowels as one would if \**Danu* had been of Celtic origin.”<sup>9</sup>

#### *Origin of the word \*Donu*

To go forward regarding the origin of the word, one can turn on Neolithic Siberia. When one try to study early Evenk concepts, there is a word often met with, that is *buga*, meaning the world around, the world as a whole. Everything around the Tungus, earth, living place, taiga, country, region was *Buga* or *Dunne*:

The stem *dun* || *don* is apparently of very ancient origin, and existed before the crystallization of the linguistic stocks [which form the basis of] modern language families. In Sanskrit the word *dhuni* meant “river.”<sup>10</sup>

With this form *dhuni* one recognize the Proto-Indo-European form \**deh3nu* mentioned previously.<sup>11</sup> Vasilevich explains:

“A. Afanasyev points out that [the] word *dhuni* was introduced into the Slavic languages from the east (“Don,” “Danube,” and, in general, “river” in the songs of the Poles and Galicians). [...]. As, it developed further, its original meaning, “surrounding nature” (mountains, rivers, forests) was restricted differently in the

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<sup>6</sup> DEXTER. Reflections on the goddess \**Donu*. *The Mankind Quarterly*, XXXI, 1&2, 1990, p. 58

<sup>7</sup> CW. *Op. cit.* “The Danube (Dānuvius)”, p. 569.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* The *o* of *Don* sounds long to my informers (see n. 2).

<sup>9</sup> DEXTER, Miriam. Private e-mail.

<sup>10</sup> VASILEVICH G.M. Early concepts about the universe among the Evenks (materials) in *Studies in Siberian Shamanism* / Ed. Henry H. Michael. N°4, 1963; p. 49

<sup>11</sup> CW, *Op. cit.*, finds better \**deh2nu-*, p. 569

different linguistic stocks: in some to “land” (mountains, forest), in others to “river.”<sup>12</sup>

River banks used to be inhabited because of the fish and the animals in the neighbouring woods. Elk would come to quench their thirst in them. Therefore we think to have found a tribe which would meet Miriam Dexter’s requirements, the Evenk of the Podkamennaya Tunguska<sup>13</sup> for instance. The Evenk have produced the concept *Bugady Enintyn* : mother of the universe, the plants, the animals, and the people, which explains her animal and human shapes.

“The Evenks of the Podkamennaya Tunguska called by the name “mother” the taiga, mountains, and rivers, and even their place of settlement, saying of the latter that it is their clan mother-land.”<sup>14</sup>

The same could be said also of Evenk Yenisei of the north, for whom the earth is a mother and they call her *dunne enin* “mother earth”. As we can see it is possible to give a Tungusic origin even a far one to the Indo-European \*Donu, which will probably split diachronically in two Celtic roots, Gaelic \*Donu / \*Danu and Brythonic Don.

## ANA

This does not bring us back the name Ana, which could derive by analogy from Nana or from Anāhita as well:

“If Tanaïs and Dānav are, as it seems, borrowings to the pre-Iranian languages, one may find may be in Tanai- / Nanai an old name of water or of river changed later as Nana as if it were a Lallname.”<sup>15</sup>

And although we know that “Tanaïs, the name of the Great Goddess in Asia Minor, means in the Scythians country the river which later will be called Don”<sup>16</sup>, there is no linguistic evidence as far as we know, which would enable to pass from Nana to Ana or from Anāhita who is also an Indo-European river goddess to Ana.

In Hittite though, which is the oldest written Indo-European language, we have *Hanna-* for ‘grandmother’, “the name of the goddess *HannaHanna* which is built up by the doubling of Hittite substantive *hanna-* [...] means probably ‘great-grand-mother’ or ‘ancestress’.”<sup>17</sup> *Hanna-* became ‘anna’ for “mother”,<sup>18</sup> a hypocoristic. The Hittite therefore gives us the best way to explain Anna (or Ana<sup>19</sup>)’s Celtic origin till now.

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<sup>12</sup> VASILEVICH G.M. *Op. cit.* p. 77, n.6

<sup>13</sup> A Tunguska tributary

<sup>14</sup> ANISIMOV, A.F. Cosmological concepts of the peoples of the North, in *Studies in Siberian shamanism*, op. cit., p. 175

<sup>15</sup> PRZYLUKI, *op. cit.* p. 37

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> KELLERMAN, Galina. La déesse Hannahanna, in *Hethitica*, VII, 1987, p. 110.

<sup>18</sup> BENVENISTE, Émile. Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes, 1973: « De plus, seul le groupe hittite a fait de anna- (luwi anni-) le terme pour « mère », p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> MURPHY, Gerard. Duanair Finn, part III. Dublin, 1953, p. 210.

Contrary to the goddess Dana, the form Ana is testified in the Dictionary of the Irish Language : “**Ana** name of a goddess [...] : A. .i. mater deorum Hibernensium.”<sup>20</sup> She is a goddess and a mother like \*Danu. She is Sovereignty and personifies Ireland : *Anann .i. Eireann*.<sup>21</sup>

A very well known detail helps us to distinguish between the two goddesses: Dā Chīc[h] nAnund or Da Chigh Anann.<sup>22</sup> On top of being national Ana is also regional. How can we conciliate these two aspects of her social role and nature? In Cath Magh Tuired we learn that the TDD have no knowledge of agriculture. This enables Dumézil to write:

“[...] before the battle, the Tuatha Dé Danann did not have all the competences necessary in a sedentary community: they had command of druidic magic, warrior prowess, all the arts and crafts, and the techniques of medicine and smithcraft, but they lacked competence in agriculture.”<sup>23</sup>

This remark is followed by another one on the Indo-European teomachy or gods war: “which [Dumézil] interprets as a war between representatives of the first two functions and those of the third, leading to the incorporation of the later into the community of the former.”<sup>24</sup>

This is probably what happened to the defeated: they have been incorporated in the Tuatha Dé Danann’s community, including their Neolithic agricultural deities identified sometimes as two hills symbolizing the milk of the earth as if it were a mother. This tribal “native” deity has been given the Celtic name Ana and be raised to the level of the island, symbolising now Irish sovereignty as becomes a warrior people. Ana will take place \*Danu’s social function. The process at least fits in the concepts of the History of Religions. One must keep in mind that most goddesses assimilated into Indo-European pantheons have their origin in neolitik Europa and the Near East, not in the Indo-Europeans.<sup>25</sup> Their origin does not mean their name. They may have been assimilated in the “Celtic social organisation” forming therefore a new syncretism always based on the triad already present apparently in the three \*Danu’ sons for instance, Brian, Iucharba and Iuchair, in which the (Proto-)Indo-European traces of the twin brothers or Dioskouri may be noticed. This organisation probably persist in the future canonical pantheon “formed by its basic triad Lug, Dagda-Ogme.” “Dagda-Ogme are two brothers who form the diptych of the great double divinity corresponding to Mitra-Varuna in Vedic terms.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Mingling Ana / \*Donu*

I made a rapid survey in part 7 of the Lebor Gabála Erenn, and listed the phrases mentioning Ana: out of 6 occurrences,<sup>27</sup> I found only one mingling Danann with Ana:

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<sup>20</sup> STOKES, Whitley, Ed. *Sanas Chormaic* = Cormac’s glossary. Calcutta, 1868, p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> QUIN. *Dictionary of the Irish Language*. Dublin, 1998 “O’Cl.”, p. 40. *See also* n. 36.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Ó CATHASAIGH, Tomás. *Cath Maige Tuired as exemplary myth in Folia Gadelica*. Cork, 1983, p. 8 quotes (n. 43, p. 17) *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus* (Paris 1941) 171-2, *Mythe et épopée* (Paris 1986) 289-90.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> DEXTER, M. *Whence the goddesses*. New York, Oxford, Beijing, 1990; p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> GUYONVARCH, Christian-J. *Textes mythologiques irlandais 1*. Rennes, 1980. « Dagda et Ogme, qui sont deux « frères », forment le dyptique de la grande divinité double correspondant à Mitra-Varuna en définition védique ». [...] « Lug, Dagda-Ogme forment la triade fondamentale du panthéon », p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> MACALISTER, Robert Alexander Stewart. *Lebor Gabála Érenn, Part IV, Levenn XLI. Irish Texts Society*: Dublin, 1941; pp. 123 (x 2), 155, 161, 183, 189.

“In Mor-rigu, ingen Delbaith mathair na mac aile Dealbaith .i. Brian 7 Iucharba 7 Iuchair: 7 is dia forainm Danand o builead Da Chich Anann for Luachair, 7 o builed Tuatha De Danann.”<sup>28</sup>

We can but notice that the confusion occurred with the variant Danann so that we think that euphony may have been an incentive to confusion:

“It should be noted that the confusion between the two names occur with “the variant *Tuatha Dé Danann* [...] of the later Middle Ages, [succeeding to] *Tuath(a) Dé Donann*, [after] the sporadic shift *o > a* characteristic of the modern Gaelic languages occurred”.<sup>29</sup>

I extended the survey to 8 other writings all chosen in entries Ana and \*Danu of the Dictionary of the Irish Language: Keating, Cath Maige Tuired, Coir Anmann, Cormac’s glossary, O’Clery’s Irish glossary, Eriu XIII, O’Donovan, and O’Davoren’s glossary. In Keating I have found “dá chich Dhanann”<sup>30</sup> in O’Donovan “Dá chich Danainne, *i.e.* the two paps of Danann”<sup>31</sup>, and in Sanas Chormaic, again on the part of O’Donovan “Ana, or as she is most usually called Danann, [...]”. That is only three confusions, on the part of two recent authors (without forgetting Macalister himself who mingles the names twice).<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, out of 9 occurrences I have found 8 times \*Danu as the Tri Dé Danann’s mother in the LGE part 7.<sup>33</sup> Here is the phrase which best characterises her in my view:

“The six sons of Delbaeth, s. Ogma s. Elada s. delbaeth s. Net were Fiachna Ollom Indui, Brian, Iucharba, Iuchar, Donann daughter of the same Delbaeth was mother of the last three. Of her are named the three gods of Dana, and the Tuatha De Danann, and the Hill of the Three Gods. And that Delbaeth had the name of Tuirell Biccreeo.”<sup>34</sup>

Let us now compare the two characters:

| *DANU  | ANA  |
|--|--|
| Delbaeth / Tuirell Biccreeo’s Daughter and Housewife |  |
| <b>Mother-Goddess</b>                                | <b>Mother-Goddess</b>                          |
| <b>Mother of three sons – (the future TDD)</b>       | <b>Mother of the Gods of Ireland (the TDD)</b> |
| <b>Hill of the Three Gods of Dana</b>                | <b>Two Hills of Ana</b>                        |
|  | Water and Milk                                 |

It seems reasonable to think therefore that \*Danu is earlier than Ana or else how could the Tuatha De Danann exist if there had not been before them the three gods named after their mother: Trí Dé Danann ? “They [Brian and Iuchar and Iucharba] were the three gods of Dana,

<sup>28</sup> MACALISTER, *op. cit.* : “The Morigu, daughter of Delbaeth, was mother of the other sons of Delbaeth, Brian, Iucharba, and Iuchair: and it is from her additional name “Danann” the Paps of Ana in Luachair are called, as well as the Tuatha De Danann,” p. 188-9.

<sup>29</sup> CAREY, John. Tuath Dé in *Celtic culture, op. cit.* Vol. V, p. 1693.

<sup>30</sup> KEATING, Geoffrey. The history of Ireland, in *Irish Texts Society* : London, 1902, p. 214, book I, l. 93.

<sup>31</sup> O’DONOVAN, John. Supplement to O’REILLY, Edward. An Irish-English dictionary. Dublin, 19..., p. 614.

<sup>32</sup> MACALISTER, *ibid.*, p. 103. See also D.A. Binchy in *Celtica* Vol. II, p. 195-209.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129, 133, 135, 153, 157, 161, 163, 193, (217 is not clear).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

from whom were named the Tuatha De Danann, [...].”<sup>35</sup> In our view, Ana as *Mater deorum hibernensium* plays the same role of Mother Goddess as \*Danu but in what was previously a nomadic society now settled on farmer lands in an island named *Eireann*,<sup>36</sup> after the final victory of CMT 1 and 2. One should not forget that the Ancient Celts (before writing) would not distinguish between mythical cosmology and history.

### Chronology

We cannot really give dates to the Tuatha Dé Danann because those mythological texts are no ordinary ones to read. All the same the Dagda’s cauldron in CMT2 is in brass<sup>37</sup> (or bronze) which cannot be dated earlier than the tenth or even twelfth century BC<sup>38</sup>. But we find “iron”<sup>39</sup> in the first battle of Moytura (between the TDD and the Fir Bolg), the language of which is more recent.<sup>40</sup> There is another archaeological piece of information in CMT1 about where the first sheep landed in the island:

“The wind freshened, and the storm drove Gann and Sengann till they put in at Inber Douglas, where Corcamruad<sup>41</sup> and Corcabaisginn meet. There they landed, and this is the first place to which sheep were brought in Ireland, and Sheep’s height is its name.”<sup>42</sup>

This event brings us back to about the fourth millennium BC at the beginning of Neolithic in Ireland, that is of agriculture, and there is no other solution than to admit the people kept the memory of the event in their minds. In Corcomroe Co. Clare (Munster) they still take care of sheep today: “Large quantities of corn, butter, sheep, and pigs are shipped here [Burren] [...]”<sup>43</sup> “The Burren name comes from the Irish word Boireann which means a place of stone.” [...] “One quarter of all the known megalithic wedge tombs in Ireland are situated in this region.”<sup>44</sup>

“The abbey of Corcumroe, county Clare [...] was under the patronage of Our Lady; and was called “the abbaye of the Fertile Rock”-probably because of its vicinity to a celebrated well dedicated to St. Patrick on the very summit

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>36</sup> KOCH, John T. Ériu, Alba, and Letha. In *Emania*, 9, 1991, p. 18

<sup>37</sup> GRAY Elizabeth A. Cath Maige Tuired. Naas, 1982. “Crédne [...]. A gold, silver, and bronze smith (*cerd*). Crédne’s epithet, *cerd*, “craftsman, artisan,” is used of a gold and silver smith or a worker in bronze or brass,” p. 120.

<sup>38</sup> KOCH, John Thomas. An atlas for Celtic studies. Oxford, 2007 : “Late Bronze Age Irish cauldrons [...] 12<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.” p. 136

CUNLIFFE Barry. Facing the ocean. Oxford, 2001. “Cauldrons seem to have originated in Ireland in the tenth century BC” p. 284.

<sup>39</sup> MALLORY, J.P. The Indo-Europeanization of Atlantic Europe, in KOCH, CUNLIFFE *Celtic from the West 2*. Oxford; Oakville, CT, 2013 “[...] the earliest silver known in Ireland does not date earlier than the Late Bronze Age [...]. [...], we do not find the use of lead in Irish metallurgy until about c. 1500 onwards. [...]. Proto-Celtic \*isarno ‘iron’ [...] should date to about the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC. p. 28. See also KOCH, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> FRAZER, The first battle of Moytura, in *Ériu*, VIII, Dublin, 1916: “a text which may, in parts, go back to the early Mlr. Period.”, p. 3

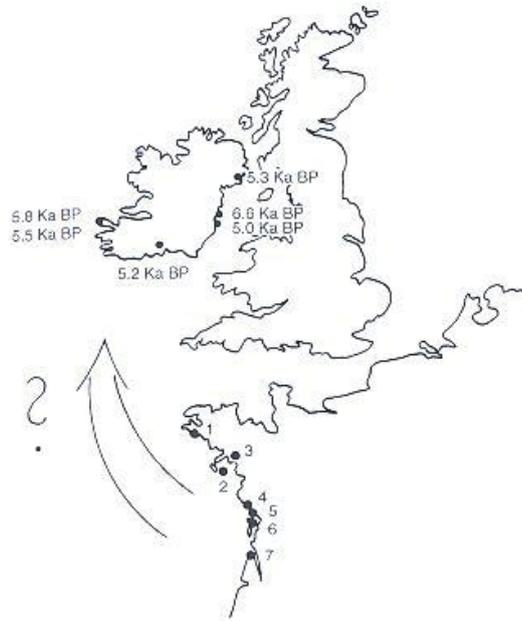
<sup>41</sup> LEWIS, Samuel. A topographical dictionary of Ireland. Vol. 1. London, 1839, p. : « Abbey, a parish and village, in the barony of Burren, county of Clare. [...]»

<sup>42</sup> FRAZER, *op. cit.*, p. 13

<sup>43</sup> LEWIS, Samuel. A topographical dictionary of Ireland, Vol. 1. London, 1839.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.theburrencentre.ie/information/about-burren.html> page 2 of 4 13/10/2013

of the Rosrally mountain.<sup>45</sup> [...]” “On the summit [there] is a well springing from the solid rock; it [...] produces water of the purest quality, which is conveyed by pipes to the road side at the foot of the mountain. »<sup>46</sup>



### Contemplating some awful(ly interesting) vistas<sup>47</sup>

Killarney, Co. Kerry is still in Munster where lies “Dá Chích Anann”, the two fabulous hills: “There is a stream running between the hills. One half flows north into a small lake called Lough Nageeha and the other half flows south into the Clydagh River.”<sup>48</sup> The presence of water, usually not emphasized is nevertheless as much important as the famous two paps from a farmer’s point of view landing in a new land. All the animals, sheep, cattle and goat that the Neolithic people brought with them produce milk. So that water can be associated with the land and the milk they get from their beasts which live upon the land as if it were a mother. They came to Ireland from the Atlantic shores as we know.

In Armorica, the bond between water, milk and the land as a mother is clearly evidenced in the Briec (sur Odet) area for instance, in the Menez Du or Black Mountains, where three fountains can be found:

“The first one, huge and spacious, is dedicated to Our Lady, a typical statue of whom can be found in her niche. It is her that nurses would hasten to, not long ago, since the Sources Virgin was also the “Milk Mother”.”<sup>49</sup>

Around Carhaix in the Menez Are or Aré Mountains:

<sup>45</sup> [142] RUSHE, James P., Rev., O.D.C. “A second Thebaid, Dublin; London; New York; Cincinnati and Chicago, 1905, p. 142

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232

<sup>47</sup> TRESSET, Anne. French Connections II: of cows and men in *Neolithic Settlement in Ireland and Western Britain* / School of archaeology and palaeoecology (Belfast). Oxford, 2003 ; Fig. 4.2, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paps\\_of\\_Anú](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paps_of_Anú)

<sup>49</sup> AR BRAZ, Anatole. Les saints Bretons d’après la tradition populaire en Cornouaille (1893-1894), in *Magies de la Bretagne*, Paris, 1994 ; p. 868.

“There was neither a mother nor a nurse throughout the country who didn’t think they had to go [to the Froust chapel] once a year to invoke or to thank the “Milk Virgin” known as the “Sources Mother“. Sources spring from everywhere in the small stony and sunken way which goes down to the oratory. Their water would come in mains to fill a round basin dug in the holy enclosure. [...]. It was the nurses’ duty to clear and clean the water basin and then to throw needles in it from their blouse as a gift, and recite this short prayer:

*Lady of the Froust, mother and Virgin  
Good health to the child, and to us milk!”<sup>50</sup>*



**Two breasts close to the chamber<sup>51</sup>**

Commana in the Aré Mountains is a good instance of this possible complex because of Ana included in the place-name, but also because of the Neolithic grave “Ti lia ven<sup>52</sup>” in Mougev Vihan dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC<sup>53</sup>. It has been built close to the source of a watercourse the Mougau, which flows into the Elorn and to the sea. On the northern pillar of the passage grave<sup>54</sup> can be found the (double) breasts of a Mother-Goddess or “stele idol” as it is called by archaeologists. The name Commana is usually analysed this way: Komm means “valley”, which suits well “the high place of the village between two nascent hills<sup>55</sup>”, and An(n)a, or

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, « Itrôn ar Froust, mamm ha gwerc’hès, / Yéched d’ar buguel ha d’emp les! », p. 934

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.sherry29.com/article-mougau-bihan-85678001.html>

<sup>52</sup> LE GOFFIC, Michel. Commana et les monts d’Arrée, Rennes, 1984, p. 7.

HEMON, Roparz. Geriadur istorel ar brezhoneg. Levrenn III, 1995-1998. ( ? ) **liac’h** f. pierre plate, mégalithe. (p. 1773). ( ? ) **liac’hven** f. pierre plate, mégalithe. (p. 1774).

<sup>53</sup> L’HELGOUARC’H, Jean *in* [<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commana>].

<sup>54</sup> Passage grave = Mougev in Breton = VALLÉE, Fr. Grand dictionnaire français-breton. Gronwel, 1980. Allée-couverte : *hent-korriganed*, h.-*kor(n)andoned* m. pl. *hēñchoù-*, *mougeo* f.-pl. –*gevioù*, voir **fée** ; p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> TANGUY, Bernard. Dictionnaire de noms de communes, trèves et paroisses du Finistère, 1990, p. 56

even Mana after Joseph Loth.<sup>56</sup> But from Mana<sup>57</sup> you are directed to An(n)a. Mana therefore is only a matter of tonic stress.

One of the oldest form of the place-name, second half of the XIth century, is *de cvmmanna* attested in the Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landevenec<sup>58</sup> as part of a list of place-names like for instance *de Pleiben* or *de Bratberth*, and is contemporary with « Cummana ». <sup>59</sup> Two ecclesiastics, Peyron and Abgrall, referring to the La Borderie edition explain: « Le Cartulaire de Landévenec tells us that the monastery possesses two lands in Commanna (*de Cummanna*), Caer Niuguinen and Caerthnou ». <sup>60</sup> Actually, in order to object to the popular tradition reported by father Auguste Laurent (1875), of an older eponymous *Venus* whom the inhabitants would call Sainte Anne, Peyron and Abgrall don't want 'Cvmmanna' to be an eponymous place-name and say instead that it is the word: « *Coummand, coummanha*, which means to give a land as a fief, to enfeoff, where the words *Kemened, Commendatio et Convent* (Le Gonidec) come from ». <sup>61</sup>

La Borderie mentions in the Variantes of his cartulaire edition: « In the middle-Ages, in Breton, *kemenet* = fief ». No doubt he would have mentioned Commanna had it been a Kemenet. But he did not because « in the beginning of the XIth century [...] the name Kemenet-Ili [...] is translated *Commendatio Ili*. » <sup>62</sup>

Le Men-Ernault in a note of their 1886 edition of the cartulary write that Cummanna belongs to the Berrien (Berriun) parish <sup>63</sup>. La Borderie considers that « Commanna does not and could never belonged to Berrien (Berriun) parish: since Berrien has always been in the Cornouaille diocese, and Commanna in the Leon's one. [...] ». <sup>64</sup>

Therefore instead of:

« [34] DE BRATBERTH. <sup>65</sup> Rudheder, Carrent Luphant, Caer Niuguinen,  
Caer Thnou  
[35] DE CUMMANNA IN PLEBE BERRIUN. Caer Budian, Trefgellan, VI  
villas » <sup>66</sup>

he proposes his own reading of the Quimper manuscript:

« [XXXV] De CVMMANNA. Caer Niuguinen, Caer Thnou, » <sup>67</sup>

which Peyron and Abgrall will quote.

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<sup>56</sup> Les noms des saints Bretons, in *Revue Celtique*, 1908-1909, XXIX, XXX, (quoted by LARGILLIERE in *Les saints et l'organisation chrétienne primitive dans l'Armorique bretonne*, Crozon, 1995, p. 29.)

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>58</sup> LA BORDERIE, Arthur de. Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Landévenec. Rennes, 1888, p. 160-161.

<sup>59</sup> TANGUY, *op. cit.*

<sup>60</sup> PEYRON, ABGRALL, Notices sur les paroisses de Quimper et de Léon, in *Bulletin de la commission diocésaine d'architecture et d'archéologie*, n°3, 1906 : « nous apprend que le monastère possédait en Commanna (*de Cummanna*), deux terres, Caer Niuguinen et Caerthnou. », p. 135.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* : « qui veut dire donner une terre en fief, inféoder, d'où est venu le mot *Kemened, Commendatio et Convent* (Le Gonidec).

<sup>62</sup> LA BORDERIE. *Op. cit.*, p. 209-210 (transl.)

<sup>63</sup> LE MEN René, ERNAULT Émile. Cartulaire de Landevenec, in *Mélanges historiques : choix de documents. 5, Tome cinquième*. Paris, 1886 : « CUMMANNA in plebe Berriun, 35: Commanna, commune du canton de Sizun, arrondissement de Morlaix (Finistère); » p. 584.

p. 584.

<sup>64</sup> LA BORDERIE. *Op. cit.*, p. 203 (transl.)

<sup>65</sup> Today Braspartz.

<sup>66</sup> LE MEN, ERNAULT. *Op. cit.*, p. 567.

<sup>67</sup> LA BORDERIE. *Op. cit.*, p. 161. See also : LARGILLIÈRE, René. La topographie du Cartulaire de Landévenec, in *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère*, LXIX, 1942, publ. 1943, p. 50-51.

All this explanations to make clear that whichever edition is concerned and whoever may be right or wrong on the true location of Commanna in the cartulary, none of the editors consider *Cvmmanna* to be a *Kemenet*. On top of that Albert Deshayes writes: « **Komanant** (*commanant*, 1464), « Coumanāt » in the Katolikon (Tréguier, 1499), is a borrowing from ancient French covenant, agreement, stipulation, promise, word (1155), with a false restitution of the internal syllable”.<sup>68</sup> Now, we’ve just read that *Cvmmanna* and *Cumana* are dated to the (middle of the) XIth century, therefore we can reasonably say that Comman(n)a is neither *Kemenet*, nor *Commendatio* nor *Convenant*, but what is left, that is probably the eponymous Komm + An(n)a.

As a chronology, we propose that there has been a gallo-roman *Venez* christianized as Sainte-Anne in Comman(n)a. But Sainte-Anne’s worship is not older than the XIIIth century in the West, whereas An(n)a is attested in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the eponymous place-name Cumman(n)a as just seen. We know that in the fourth-fifth centuries, “the migrants land in a country stayed mainly rural and remained devoted to their religious observances inherited from the old autochthonous background partly romanised.”<sup>69</sup> Why not imagine that the gallo-roman *Venez* is herself a romanization of an older stele-idol called An(n)a by the Celts and christianized later on as Sainte-Anne by the people because no other name would fit them?

With this place-name we come to the problem of Christian Anne whose cult would have been supposedly earlier in Brittany than anywhere else. This is the way after Lallemand:<sup>70</sup> “in 610 saint Colomban landed in Nantes for Ireland on a ship coming from the island to bring goods to the harbour, and may be also some pilgrim to the Vannes country, who had been to Jerusalem with saint Arculphe<sup>71</sup> on saint Anne’s and Joachim’s grave.”<sup>72</sup> Following saint Anne’s words who appeared to Nicolazic for the first time in August 1622, a small chapel had been built in her honour at the time in the field called ‘Bocénno’,<sup>73</sup> close to a source,<sup>74</sup> before the very existence of Kêr Anna. Saint Anne would speak Breton because Nikolazic knew only the vernacular, but we’re only left with a French translation: “It’s been 924 years and 6 months since it has been ruined”<sup>75</sup> said also Anna to Nicolazic, that is the 25 of January 700. This chronology strangely fits in with Largillières words: “The *Les-*, *Ker-* are much more recent archaeologically and they sometimes have the eponym of the parish, because these are real ancient names”.<sup>76</sup>

First of all, Lallemand makes a Breton out of Arculfe, and of Adamnan an abbot from saint Colomba instead of Iona. Secondly he deduces that the idea to build a sanctuary to Anna must date back to 610, that is during Columban’s time († 615). But actually: “Arculfe was a Franc

<sup>68</sup> DESHAYES, *ibid.* « ... est un emprunt à l’ancien français *covenant*, accord, stipulation, promesse, parole (1155), avec fausse restitution de la syllabe interne » ; p. 407-408.

<sup>69</sup> Landevennec : aux origines de la Bretagne. XVe centenaire de la fondation de l’abbaye de Landevennec. [Catalogue de l’exposition / Jean-Pierre Gestin, Erwan Le Bris du Rest]. Daoulas 1985, p. 14-15.

<sup>70</sup> LALLEMAND, Alfred. Notice historique sur la très ancienne chapelle de sainte Anne et la statue miraculeuse qui en provient, et sur la précieuse relique donnée par Louis XIII au pèlerinage de Sainte-Anne d’Auray. Vannes : Galles, 1863, p. 25.

<sup>71</sup> ADAMNAN. Des lieux saints : livre II, in *Voyageurs anciens et modernes / Édouard Charton*. Paris : Magasin pittoresque, 1854 [http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/adamnan/lieuxsaints1.htm].

<sup>72</sup> LALLEMAND, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>73</sup> Lumps.

<sup>74</sup> HUGUES DE SAINT FRANCOIS : Les grandeurs de sainte Anne [...]. Paris, Pas de Loup, 1657. « [...] la fontaine que Dom Yves Richard prestre [...] avait fait accomoder depuis peu.” p. 180.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* « Il y a neuf cens vingt et quatre ans et six mois qu’elle a été ruinée, [...] ». p. 185.

<sup>76</sup> LARGILLIERE, René. Les saints et l’organisation chrétienne primitive dans l’Armorique bretonne. Crozon, 1995, p. 257.

bishop from the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century, [...]. Around the year 670 he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and stayed 9 months in Jerusalem.” On his way home to Gaul, he would have been caught in a tempest and his boat drawn on the west shores of Britain: “One can hardly imagine that wrecked Arculfe would have reached Adamnan’s monastery, or that he would have been drawn there by the tempest”.<sup>77</sup> Arculfe’s pilgrimage has been narrated by Adamnan.

J.-P. Migne mentions the year 690<sup>78</sup> when Arculfe became famous.<sup>79</sup> Anyway if the small chapel would have been built just after Arculfe’s pilgrimage, that is between 670 (or 690) and 700, how is it that “the nature of the remains described by the eyewitness Hughes de saint-François “stones of a church window and else, hewed and squared”<sup>80</sup> “seemed to indicate a gallo-roman construction”<sup>81</sup> to Lallemand?

In what way does the expression “seemed gallo-roman” strengthens the necessary ‘destruction’ without which Lallemand could not bear his incredible thesis of a cult of Sainte Anne in Brittany brought in 610 by a travelling companion to Arculfe in the Holy Land? All this sounds contradictory. I think therefore in a possible slip of the pen may-be revealing in compensation the true antiquity of the site ‘ruined’ in the course of time, a situation which after all would not be unique in Brittany, but which would be in contradistinction with his arbitrary choice of the destruction by brigands led by Ogerius supposedly at the end of the VIIth century.<sup>82</sup>

On top of that, in the place-name *Treanna* Largillière thinks that “Anna is not saint Anne, the Virgin Mary’s mother, whose worship spread at the end of the Middle Ages but undoubtedly a Celtic name.”<sup>83</sup> Therefore what more do we need, in order to consider the early Sainte Anne’s Christian cult in Brittany a legend?<sup>84</sup>

But all this does not tell us who pre-Celtic Ana is. Archaeology shows us what is called a “stele idol” in Armorica. One of the oldest found in Mane Vihan (Morbihan) dates back to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC.<sup>85</sup> In Locmariaquer (Morbihan) there will be found another one inside the passage grave called the Merchants Table, but which had been outside before.<sup>86</sup> The evolution must have taken place at the eve of the 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. There is a theory which says that the ‘stele idol’ had been placed under ground because death had been added to the Mother-Goddess’ functions as can be seen in Commana for instance dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. Since “the long abandoned attempt to derive the megaliths of Europe from

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<sup>77</sup> DELIERNEUX, Nathalie. Arculfe, sanctus episcopus gente Gallus : une existence historique discutable. *Revue Belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 1997, Vol. 75, N° 75-4 : « On ne peut guère imaginer qu’Arculfe, naufragé, ait pu atteindre le monastère d’Adamnan, encore moins que la tempête l’ait poussé jusque là », p. 931-932.

<sup>78</sup> MIGNE, J.-P. *Patrologiae, latinae tomus LXXXVIII*. J.-P. Migne editorem, 1862. Saeculum VIII, annus 700 : « Arculfus, urbis cujusdam in Gallia episcopus, claruit 690. Suscepto, religionis causa, in Orientem itinere, ac lustratis locis sanctis, Damascus quoque, Constantinopolim, Alexandriam aliaque loca adiit, ac demum in Galliam rediens, vi tempestatis in occidentalia Britanniae littoral delatus, et ab Adamano abate Hyensi hospitio benigne exceptus est. », p. 721-722.

<sup>79</sup> DELIERNEUX, *op. cit.* p. 911-941. Arculfe « whose Gaulish see has still to be identified », (Y. Hen) p. 916.

<sup>80</sup> HUGHES, *op. cit.* « pierres d’un vitrage d’église, et autres taillées et écarées, » p. 219.

<sup>81</sup> LALLEMAND, *op. cit.* p. 10, 11.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> LARGILLIERE, 1995, p. 29.

<sup>84</sup> CHASSÉ, Charles. Le culte Breton de sainte-Anne et la vénération des vierges noires, in *Annales de Bretagne*, 1945, 52. « jusqu’au XVIe siècle, même en Bretagne, aucune paroisse ne lui avait été dédiée », p. 61.

BANNISTER, H.M. The introduction of the cultus of St. Anne into the West, in *The English historical review*. London, 1903. Vol. XVIII, p. 107-112.

<sup>85</sup> LECORNEC, Joël. *Le Petit Mont: Arzon – Morbihan*. Rennes: Documents Archéologiques de l’Ouest, 1994. Et *Site archéologique du Petit Mont (Arzon)*. Non paginé [4 p.].

<sup>86</sup> LE ROUX, Charles-Tanguy. Carnac, Locmariaquer et Gavrinis. Rennes, 2001; p. 19.

the east Mediterranean [...]”,<sup>87</sup> the ultimate origin of the ‘stele idol’ cannot be Anatolia, but could Anatolia be the original place of the Mother worship: *Anna* in Hittite, *Ana* in Turkish, whose name would have been spread in Europe by the Celts?

I’m not sure the name *Ana* could join with the case of Old Irish *carn* (cairn), a Gaulish cognate of which is demonstrated by Carnac in Brittany. John T. Koch “can think of no Celtic word more likely to be a legacy from the age of megaliths. Linguistically, this legacy looks to be neither Celtic nor even Indo-European.”<sup>88</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Following our study, it is safer to treat separately the two mother-goddesses, \*Danu and Ana. They may represent both the same mythological function but not in the same time, nor for the same type of society. \*Danu still represents a society of warriors with their divinities, invading an island as shown in Cath Maige Tuired. Whereas there is already with Ana some farmer-breeder traits as water and milk for instance which indicate that the evolution has gone a step farther after the battle when the island has turned Irish.

One should not be surprised at the far Siberian root involved in \*Donu’s name, after Jozef Weisweiler’s pioneering work on the bull and deer cults in Europe.<sup>89</sup> The Early Hittites had a deer cult<sup>90</sup> and traces of one can be found in Buile Suibhne § 40<sup>91</sup> the origin of which could be Siberia.

Today I would approve of the theory never evidenced before of the identity of the Breton An(n)a with the Irish one, despite the numerous attempts to Christianise her.

Finally, one should reflect that if we were sent back at about the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC in the south Urals area, we could make out hunter-gatherers learning to domesticate animals thanks to people coming from the Levant<sup>92</sup>. This area is not very far from Anatolia which the agriculturists left at about the same time to south-east Mesolithic Europe<sup>93</sup>. In their turn, Kurgan people living in a steppe region adjacent to the Urals made their way to the West in the fourth/third millennia BC and confronted the agricultural population of Old Europe.

It is the cultural history of these two waves of population which we have tried to document in this study.

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<sup>87</sup> MALLORY. *op. cit.* n. 34, p. 33.

<sup>88</sup> KOCH, 1991, p. 24.

<sup>89</sup> WEISWEILER, Jozef. Die Kultur der Irischen Heldensage, in *Peideuma*. Frankfurt, 1950, p. 149-170, and Vorindogermanische Schichten der Irischen Heldensage, in *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 24, 1-2, 1953, p. 10-197.

<sup>90</sup> THIERRY, Nicole. Le culte du cerf en Anatolie et la vision de saint-Eustathe, in *Dossiers Histoire et Archéologie*, n° 121. [S.l.]: [s.n.], 1987.

<sup>91</sup> O’KEEFFE, *op. cit.* “A mathair na groidhi-si [...]”; p. 78.

<sup>92</sup> MATYUSHIN, G. The Mesolithic and Neolithic in the southern Urals and Central Asia, in *Hunters in transition* / ed. Marek Zvebil. Cambridge, 1986; p. 133-150.

<sup>93</sup> MAZURIE de KERAOUALIN, Karoline. Genèse et diffusion de l’agriculture en Europe. Paris, 2003 ; carte, p. 160.

