

Celts' coexistence with Gods in ancient Europe and Boiohemia Jan SETUNSKÝ, Tábor - CZECH

I don't know what it is that drives us ever onwards, gives us energy and motivates us in researching our own history or the history of our families, neighbours, tribes, states and whole nations. What is that internal force which pushes us ever onwards and whispers a model of national sentiment to us, a belonging to a particular group of citizens, religion or culture and forces us to defend it? I really don't know. It seems our behaviour is firmly set in our genes, in those spirals of DNA. So let's take a look at what surprises nature has given us. And I promise it will be fascinating. Right to the end.

To begin with it was stories of power. In particular, I wanted to understand the tensions in the Middle East, to understand the issue of the Jews, Palestinians and Arabs, and this requires a knowledge of the history of Persia, Greece and Egypt. Coins led me to the 6th century BC, but this was still insufficient to grasp the whole course of events. Only archaeology could go further. Sources may know of the memory of the Jews in the Qumran texts, which can probably only be seen through the Bible's Old Testament. Information overlapped, in time contexts were recognised and a new world opened up. At that moment, we begin to read between the lines, create pictures and come up with hypotheses. The Celtic Gauls arrive on the scene.

Reports from historians of antiquity of the living conditions of the Celts of Central Europe are short of more precise information. I won't present here what Strabo, Plinius and Diodorus Siculus wrote in their records. The one thing that is sure is that the fate of our ancestors and the discovery and declaration of new hypotheses and eventually tested theories of the activities and lives of Celts on the basis of familiar and preserved historic artefacts will always excite us and motivate us to further research and to finding the frontiers of the possible. It is then just a question of time in order to come up with new ideas and find a suitable platform for public dissemination.

A valuable basis for investigating the life of the Celts is Book VI of Caesar's 'Commentaries on the Gallic War'. Caesar used the carrot and stick method, pitting tribes against each other, and slowly acquiring control of the land of the Gauls. His military pressure accelerated revolutionary movements within Celtic society. The advanced Gallic aristocracy gradually acquired dominance, getting rich on the ever growing trade between tribes in Europe, and the king and his heirs were removed. In the end, there was partial unification of the tribes in joint resistance against the Roman supremacy under the command of Vercingetorix of the Averni tribe, but unfortunately this came too late. In the end, the Gauls were surrounded at Alesia, starved and forced to surrender. Vercingetorix was imprisoned as leader for 6 years, and in 46 BC was paraded in Caesar's triumph in Rome and then executed (only portrait – see coin below).

The Celts, a nation deeply devoted to its gods, had a plethora of gods they worshipped residing in sacred groves, wells, springs, caves and trees. There are 400 named gods. Taranis, god of thunder, ruler of heaven is described as the main god. Defender of the tribe – the god Toutatis – protected the tribe's fighters and secured prosperity. Trade and craft were protected by the god Lugh, water and streams by Epona and trees by Esus. I was attracted to the goddess Nemain, who is mentioned in relation to the Irish goddesses of war, Macha, Morrigan and Badb, as an expression of the havoc of war. The goddess hid in springs and it seems a white rabbit – the goddess's favourite creature – signalled her proximity.

Hypothesis 1 – War goddess Nemain was one of the most worshipped deities in Gaul.

A strongly flowing spring reveals her presence, see above. Confirmation of this hypothesis is seen in the example of the vigorous spring in the fountain gardens in the northwest of the centre of the Southern French city of Nimes. Caesar's heir Octavianus built the **Nemausus colony** here along with General Agrippa after the climax of the wars against Mark Antony, settling war veterans from both sides here, with a mobile mint also positioned here. Beside the spring, the Romans built a church to the Roman goddess Diana. **The name of the town of Nimes – Nemausus** comes from the name of the Gallic goddess Nemain.

Hypothesis 2 - The Celts had topographic experience in building oppida, which they acquired from contact with their 'gods'.

Example 1 – The first Celtic settlement I visited was the Boii oppidum of Stradonice in the Berounka basin in the land of 'Boios' – Boiohaemie, or Bohemia. This oppidum 90ha in size stretched out in the undulating land around the rounded hill of Hradiště at an elevation of 388m/m and height difference of 130m. This is the location with the largest number of discoveries, at over 100 000! As a numismatist, I have seen the traces of Boii history in the coins of the period.

This stater comes from the Aurea 12/2008 auction.

The excellent condition of the coin allowed a detailed analysis of the coin image which showed the image contained a number of important messages. The rounded bulge on the obverse and the shell shape of the reverse, as described by all previous specialist catalogues struck me as an experienced collector of antiquities. The 1st message on the coin's tail suggests it displays a rising sun and thick crescent moon. The 2nd message suggests the coin can be turned on the west (moon) – east (sun) axis. The 3rd message surprises after turning the coin along this axis. The irregular bulge turns into a model of the terrain of the oppidum of Stradonice from an aerial perspective. Three protrusions can be felt on the bulge – three centres!!

Mapa keltského oppida kmene Bójů - Stradonice Bohemie-Kmen Bójů - Au Stater, Stradonice'180př.-oblý hrbol

South -1:'Castle'04) 380m/m; North -2:'Cul. centre' 300m/m against Nižbor castle 04); East -3: another 'Castle'? also marked by rays. 4th message says that there is a slanting object, ΘΕΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟΥ, in the centre of the tail side of divine (extra-terrestrial) essence from which radiates and to the right of which lightning strikes earth from it. On the right is a crescent in the sky. The shape of the terrain, the borders of the oppidum on the coin, are inexplicitly in correlation with the reality shown on the map. Only once we visit the location, however, do we come up with questions. How did such a precise matter come about? What extra-terrestrial force gave the Celts an aerial perspective?....

Example 2 – After studying the great work of Celtic scholar Jiří Waldhauser⁰⁴), I chose an interesting location 15km north of the oppidum in Starý Kolín for investigation – the oppidum of Oškobrň or Jasanová Hora (Askiburgion) (Ash Mountain). The oppidum land is a nature reserve and some of it is leased as Vlkov deerpark by millionaire Tomáš Chrenek. As such, it is fully fenced off and, it seems, guarded. I could not get in. Luckily, the sacred hill with crater is not enclosed. From the documents, map and terrain assessment, I selected coins and assigned them according to the same rules as the excavation:

Oškobrň: 1. Muscheln Au Stater-Paulsen345cf, Lanz53v, 2. 2xAu 1/3 Stater -Lanz54v

Katastrální mapa keltského oppida Oškobrň-Hřebínek Bohemie-Kmen Bójů - Au Stater, Oškobrň'150př.-mušlový

On the obverse of the 1/3 stater is again the sacred Jasanová hora with marked depression. The wrinkled area in the shape of a crescent moon – western direction – could be an ornament for the torse of the tribal chief of the Boii. Turning the coin on its W-E axis, an aerial view of a model of the territory of the Oškobrň oppidum is again seen on the reverse. This Celtic fortified hill fort is here shown as twisting snake forming a double-peaked terrain with a NE slope from Jasanová hora called Hřebínek. The sacred mountain here stands outside the inhabited and fortified section of the oppidum. Today, the shell of a military shelter from the 1930s lies in the crater.

Bohemie-Bójové - Au 1/3Statéru, Oškobrň'130př.-oppid.Hřebínek

A detailed study of the coin reverse shows a link between both hills, a connecting bridge, probably across a stream. Even today, a body of water is located at this site – then probably an important source of drinking water. For the second of the 1/3 staters, likely of older provenance, the obverse again contains a model of Jasanová hora, although here the crescent wrinkling and central crater are not present. Why? Were they not there at the time? The reverse has a very

similar image to the first coin. Furthermore, the left edge contains a wedge-shaped object similar to that on the stater from Stradonice. It's heading to the site of the hill fort! Are the two lines above the wedge an access path?

Schematické znázornění polohy oppida Jasanová Hora

Now we draw our attention to the very centre of Bohemia, the place from which the land was governed historically, a place which is of great importance for the self-determination of the Czech nation.

1. The Boii migrated to Italy to the Alpine foothills 400BC? The Senones headed by Brennus 390BC, and plunder Rome with Boii. In 218BC, Hannibal defeats Rome at Trebia river with Boii participation, for which they are moved to Noricum.

2. The Boii settle 400BC? In the land of the Boii – Boiohaemie. The name of the Boii is seen in Boionia – Bologna, and Roman Emperor Titus Boionius Arrius Antoninus Pius 138÷161.

Hypothesis 3 – the largest Boii Celtic oppidum in Bohemia at Zbraslav -'Závist', minted staters.

Example 3 – I will attempt to demonstrate this claim by applying the same methods for the origin of the obverse image. As a model, I chose the gold shell stater from the ČNS Brno no.169 auction of 03/2015, pol.4, termed undescribed option NS 24/19, Kolníková 1, with cross on reverse!

The location of Závist is south of Prague, 200m above the Vltava River. It is spread over two elevations on the right bank of the river. Both parts, south-Hradiště and north-Šance, are separated from each other by the 120m deep Břežanské údolí valley. The total area of the walled ancient fortification 9km long comes to 170ha 04).

Bohemie-Bójové - Au Statér, Závist-Šance asi 200př

This is the largest location in Boiohaemie, and the largest in Europe along with South German Manching? The Hradiště location was settled from the 6th to the end of the 5th century BC. In the La Tène period, LT C1 250÷165 BC, the Boii oppidum was built here. It has not yet been shown that the hill Šance was part of the oppidum during the Celtic era 04). This changes the hypothesis. After turning the stater along the W-E (crescent moon-sun) axis, again upon turning over to the obverse an extraordinary correspondence is seen of the model aerial view with the map (see +). What does the cross-sign in the upper part of the reverse signify? It's like Long John Silver's map from Treasure Island!

Another Boii settlement east of Bohemia is in nearby Moravia. Purely commercial activities have been undertaken here along the Amber Road in the NS direction. The karst area north of Brno with the Býčí Skála cave has been settled since paleolithic times. The area further east on the northern edge of the Drahan Highlands is the heart of the Celtic Boii settlements in Moravia. It is the largest and best researched location in Moravia in terms of the archaeology of the La Tène –Staré Hradisko period in Moravia 05). I chose 2 coins for studying this location. Twenty-four carat gold stater – see 3 images of the coin on introductory page.

↑ vodní toky Mapa okolí Starého Hradiska se schematickým ztvárněním zúžené výškové body ↓

Pol.no.5 Rev/Av and no.4 Rev from NUMMUS auction 02) Olomouc in February 2016. The bulge on the head copies the rough outline of the terrain around Staré Hradisko and recedes westwards towards today's Malé Hradisko. I interpret the tail side after turning it round, this time along the vertical axis, as giving the 1st message –a set of lines roughly corresponding to the layout of water courses. In particular, it represents the W-E direction of the Okluky stream and two southern tributaries. 1st under the ruins of Čertův Hrádek and the other 1.5 km further. The upper hook-shaped line represents the Ptenka stream. 2nd message-7 spheres across the surface copy the high points of the Boii controlled land in 2 options.

Zúžené a rozlehlé - viz ⇨ Mapa se schemat.propojením rozlehlých výškových bodů

For the narrowed option, I assigned the Stínava telephone mast as the end point, and Holubice for the large option. 3rd

message -8th point on the extreme left is the sacred Hradiska- home of the god of heaven and thunder, Taranis. The mark on the coin at the sacred site looks like a spruce branch with 6 cones. It could also be a lightning bolt too, and the 7 points on the terrain the places where the gods spoke using thunder and lightning. Are you also looking at this for the first time and being reminded of the head of Radegast? The third image of the coin from the introductory page is coinage of the same provenance but from a later period, probably after 60BC and it is made even more systematically, with the mark or sphere at the sacred site missing. The coin contains other lines whose significance is unclear which point in various directions and which create the impression that it is a copy of an original coin. A copy from the newly arrived Germanic community which forced the Boii tribes after 60BC to leave their lands in the southeast at the Danube and assimilated some of them? Many Boii tribes left the Central European areas of Panonia, Bohemia and Boreia after the defeat of the Boii by the Dacians, King Burebista, 58BC to head west back to the area of La Tène. To NE Gaul, the place the Gallic Senones left in 400 BC through overpopulation? The region mentioned in the tales of heroic Gallic resistance to the usurping of their land between 58÷51BC by Gaius Julius Caesar? The Boii tribes defeated at Bibracte and settled in the land of the Aedui in 56 BC-see ↓

And what kind of life did the western neighbours of the Boii tribes live and which pagan gods did they worship? From what we know, we can assume they were very similar. The largest oppidum of the Celtic Vindelici tribe is spread out 3km south of the Danube in Manching, Bavaria near Ingolstadt on the River Paar. The circular 'oppidum city' lies on the eastern edge of Manching and a sports airport crosses through it. Its diameter of over 2km and area of approx. 380ha on flat land behind walls allowed for the domestication of cattle and sheep, and there were also fields here. Sacred objects have been documented within the oppidum. The river flows here outside the walls, and a harbour was built at its bank. A gold coin hoard was discovered near the harbour in 1999 containing 483 gold Celtic Boii staters! This is sure to become a treasure trove for discovering the history of the Boii and Vindelici tribes in Europe. Now let us look into the mysteries of the Vindelici tribe. For this, I have chosen a gold stater- Lanz collection, Kelten im Osten, pl.5 ↓ and a gold stater from ČNS Brno 169 auction, pl.no.5 → Comparing the obverse side of both coins shows the use of a similar die. Message no.1 –The obverse image along the direction of the crescent body? In the west, remarkably reminiscent of the terrain of the northern locality of the town of Manching as the map with linked peaks below shows. Typical here is the contours in the shape of a nose. This signals that the goddess of heaven Taranis may be worshipped here. I don't know whether this location has been subject to an archaeological survey. It is located outside of the oppidum's borders. The first stater has been better preserved and gives a better representation of the situation compared to the second worn one.

Vrstevnicový snímek severní lokality města Manching-svatyně Baiuvarii-Vindelici - Au Statér, Manching asi 150př.-avers

The obverse contains 6 points-2xnose, 2x around the nose and 2x at the end of the crescent body (wreaths) = 6 points see map ↑. To determine the significance of the sphere on the underside of the stater, one must turn the coin now along the crescent moon on the rear again towards the west. Thus we get an equilateral triangle made up of 6 spheres. There just remains to add the final 7th sphere hidden on the upper end of the crescent moon. Now we look again at the map of the surroundings of Manching and look for something analogous as in the previous cases to get the message. Message no.2 – We can find 7 high points in the surroundings on the map for all seven spheres on the gold stater ↓.

Baiuvarii-Vindelici - Au Statér, Manching asi 150př.-revers

Point 1 –the northernmost point on the image, point 2-the area of the main sacred god of heaven, point 3 –SE direction in the wood at the front of the airport, point 4-the island on the lake 400 m/m, point 5 – the uncovered site at the A9 road, point 6 – the high point NW of Brautlach, point 7 –the peak east of Oberstimm, point 8 – back to the sacred area. The map below shows the similarity to the image on the stater. The question is again posed. Are these places sites of contact for the god of thunder and the Vindelici? Or did these sites have a lookout or other purpose to ensure the working of the oppidum? We already know a partial answer around point 5 since the remains of a wall were found here. Thus it remains to investigate the other co-ordinates with their surroundings as in accordance with Hypothesis 2 and suggested in Hypothesis 3 too. Now let's go back to the reverse of the coin from the Lanz collection no. 5

Message no.3 – The observe is a map of the oppidum. Left NW outside the wall is the harbour (points shaped ◆) on the River Paar. From the northwest gate here leads a path? (=) to the east to the 1st sphere under which are underneath

each other ↙ no.2 and 3, and at the east gate no.4, which again has a path (=) to the east gate. The shrine will likely be here. The 2nd sphere has rays on its left. The 3rd ball is almost outside the obverse image because of the coin's eccentricity and it looks like it is an object with a function closely related to the main, SW gate of the Celts -Vindilici.

Baiuvarii-Vindelici - Au Statér Lanz 5, Manching '150př.-rev.

Message no.4 – Sphere no.2 likely has key religious significance. If we leave aside the possibility of the three rays being cartographic in nature, then the rays may carry information on the fact that the residence of the Vindelici tribe main druid is here and a rare iconic object is worshipped here - the golden sprig of iconic ivy which was discovered here during a dig at the Manching oppidus and which is stored in the local Kelten-Römer Museum. The three rays here take on the significance of depicting the sprig of iconic ivy. We do not find a depiction of a sacred object like in the Boii shell stater here. **Vindelici - Kultovní břečťan, Kelten-Römer Museum Manching**

Even a brief look at the Manching area in the previous map draws our attention to the evident similarity of the highlighted red terrain points on the map to the reverse of the gold stater from the ČNS Brno auction. One can but admire the precision of the aerial view in the tiny record of the Celtic territory on the Vindelici coins. Which divine powers helped them ascertain this fact? Hypothesis no. 2 applies for Vinedlici-Bavaria too.

Letecký snímek oppida s dráhou letiště a městem Manching v pozadí, vpravo Dunaj s Ingoldstadtem

Summary

Not many know of the history of the Celtic deities. Most is known from Ireland, where the tribes remained until the arrival of Christianity. Central Europe certainly had its peculiarities and I hope I have managed to reveal some of these. Three hypotheses were stated here and supported by facts. It is up to readers to determine to what extent I have succeeded. First of all, one must once again focus on the use of the symbols '=', moon and sun in the shell stater and decipher the importance of the fact that the same sun rays also serve as a brilliance coming from the centre of the shell where there is an unknown divine (extra-terrestrial) object emitting this light, with a moon and bolt of lightning in the background – god of the heavens Taranis with horns? One must further verify what the wedge-shaped object and '=' mark refer to on the other coinage of the Oškobrň oppidum, and why the hill sometimes has a crater and sometimes doesn't. We must also confirm the finding from Staré Hradisko. We must also check the shell stater in general and find further possible locations for Boii mints. An excellent source of information is the Boii shell stater hoard from Manching and its possible new cataloguing according to the rules outlined here. This also applies for the other Celtic and Gallic coin collections. Questions around the Manching oppidus will undoubtedly be investigated by the local Kelten-Römer Museum.

When I spoke in the introduction to this paper of a desire to understand the historical developments leading to the situation in the Middle East, I came to the following conclusion after years of studying circumstances here: It is essential to understand as much as possible about the history of your nation and the history of its surroundings, look after it, commemorate it, transfer it from generation to generation and be proud of it in order to ensure the self-determination of your nation and its survival in the history and in future as human development continues in its complexity. It is important to monitor events in your surroundings, know your enemies, be prepared as best you can, and face up to any danger or threat through the cultural and moral principles of your country. Vigorously and without hesitation. At the same time you should assess and according to historical rules respect different cultures, both your neighbours and enemies. To appreciate the courage and heroism of your own people within generally applicable moral principles and humanity, and even appreciate it within individual enemies. Only in this manner can the cultural value of your country be protected for future generations. Solidarity yes. But the transformation of humanity in weakness takes place invisibly if one does not assess the situation which has occurred correctly. The reason behind this may be erroneous or late political response to accompanying symptoms. Note that the defeated and those on the run can in certain circumstances adapt to new circumstances and with the help of his God suddenly defeat becomes victory!

