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MAKING THE WHOLE (DIVINE) WORLD CELTIC: TWO NATURAL OBJECTIONS

Abstract

This paper considers two natural difficulties of studying ancient cults from the point of view of methodology, which are further compromised by a human factor. They are in no way confined exclusively to the study of Celtic theonymy and certainly not neglected in academic publications. The first of them is the validity of certain restoration of divine names in fragmentary inscriptions which makes them linguistically Celtic, and this point is illustrated by the alleged but barely proven relation of]kadriaco from Altino in Italy with *Belatukadros* attested in Britain. The second is a very common problem of segmenting linguistically Celtic data from difficult onomastic landscapes, which is illustrated with examples from eastern and central Europe, as well as from northern Italy. These questions are difficult, sometimes impossible, to answer, but nevertheless they should be posed.

Key-words: Celtic, divine-names, epigraphy, Britain, Veneto, Silesia

In this paper two natural difficulties of studying ancient cults as they are recorded in epigraphy will be considered. In fact, these difficulties are further compromised by a human factor, and they are in no way confined exclusively to the study of Celtic theonymy, and both of them are certainly familiar to students of Celtic. The two problems to be addressed are the validity of emendations and extensions of divine names in inscriptions which make them linguistically Celtic, and that of segmenting linguistically Celtic data from the difficult onomastic landscapes represented and filled by purely onomastic or fragmentarily attested languages.[1] Certainly, these difficulties – sometimes interrelated – are known in most individual philologies, and the methodology for addressing these questions has been discussed, as a rule in passing, hundreds if not thousands of times. It is not intended here to be involved in the discussion of theoretical aspects pertaining to the study of these two problems. These questions are difficult, perhaps impossible to answer in quite a few cases, but nevertheless they should be posed while discussing particular data. Therefore, the present study will look at some evidence which raises the two questions, with rather practical aims in view: to contribute properly to

[1]For this set of issues see most recently Daniele Baglioni, Luca Rigobianco, 'Rethinking fragmentariness and reconstruction: an introduction', in D. Baglioni and L. Rigobianco (eds), *Fragments of Languages: From 'Restsprachen' to Contemporary Endangered Languages* (Leiden, 2024), 1–25.

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the compilation of the corpus of linguistically Celtic divine names attested epigraphically in antiquity.

I. VALIDITY OF EMENDATIONS AND EXTENSIONS: THE CASE OF *[BELATU]KADR-

This problem has been at the centre of attention of scholars dealing with Greek and Latin epigraphy for centuries, and students of Ancient Celtic are regularly troubled by the necessity to improve readings in various ways. As was noted by P. De Bernardo Stempel in her article dedicated to methodological issues of analysis of the relevant data, '[a] further pitfall is represented by broken or shortened words'.[2] The challenges presented by abbreviated or shortened words in inscriptions can be various. To illustrate this gradation of (un)certainty in extension one may quote this heavily abbreviated inscription from Lusitania, BVS V S / FIL / S, where BVS is commonly extended into B(andi) V(orteaeceo) s(acrum).[3] The divine name itself is noteworthy: it is generally considered Lusitanian, but is sometimes analysed as Celtic in academic publications,[4] and this problem will be addressed in the second part of this paper. Several more straightforward examples of extensions of Celtic (viz. Gaulish) divine names in Latin inscription attested at the other end of the Roman world may be provided by the data from Dacia. In Ad Mediam (modern Mehadia in Romania) we come across Suc / pro salute / M Sedat / Severiani / leg Aug extended to [D(eo)] Suc(ello) / pro salute / M(arci) Sedat(i) / Severiani / leg(ati) Aug(usti), which contains the famous and much discussed divine name *Sucellus*, while *Sulevia* is attested in the same province in two inscriptions where it is shortened into *Sule* and *Sul*.[5] There are numerous arguments that make extensions and emendations valid, particularly when the divine name is known from other sources, and sometimes the text of the inscription itself through its various 'Celtic symptoms' is supportive of them. I need not add that linguistic expertise to resolve these matters as well as proper philological and epigraphic analysis are of paramount importance. The procedures are helpful for compilation of a definitive corpus of Celtic divine names attested epigraphically, and in doing so a number of examples traditionally considered Celtic in academic studies turn out to be ghost-forms. Thus, recently it has become possible to exclude *Epona* and *Mars Camulus*, thought to be attested fragmentarily in a Latin inscription from Roman Dalmatia (cf. CIL III 8671), from the list of

[2] Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'Method in the analysis of Romano-Celtic theonymic materials: improved readings and etymological interpretations', in J. A. Arenas-Esteban (ed.), *Celtic Religion across Time and Space* (Toledo, 2010), 18–27, at 20.

[3] See, e.g., M. L. Barberarena Núñez and J. L. Ramírez Sádaba, 'Los devotos de las divinidades indígenas en Lusitania', in A. Sartori (ed.), *Dedicanti e cultores nelle religioni celtiche* (Milano, 2008), 9–42, at 20.

[4] See references in Eugenio R. Luján, 'Language and writing among the Lusitanians', in A. G. Sinner and J. Velaza (eds), *Palaeohispanic Languages and Epigraphies* (Oxford, 2019), 304–34, at 329.

[5] See Alexander Falileyev, *Celtic Dacia: Personal Names, Place-Names and Ethnic Names of Celtic Origin in Dacia and Scythia Minor* (Aberystwyth, 2007), 134–5, with further references.

Celtic divine names of the area.[6] In this part of my paper I am going to discuss one particular inscription, the emendation of which has led to a remarkable consensus on the presence in it of a linguistically Celtic name, and to claim that such an approach is erroneous in many respects.

The inscription in question is the Venetic fragmentary text from Altino found in an archaeological context dated to the fifth–fourth centuries; labelled *Tr 8, it reads]kadriako-kvero.n[. The interpretation of its initial part as [Belatu]kadriako-, and its consequent equation with Celtic (or British) *Belatucadros* discussed by A. L. Prosdocimi,[7] are certainly popular with academics, and the title of the paper by E. Zampieri dedicated to this find, 'L'iscrizione votiva in onore di Belatukadro', speaks for itself.[8] As the area where this inscription in Venetic script was found is certainly known for linguistically Celtic components attested in its epigraphy,[9] and (to mention this only in parenthesis) some material artefacts unearthed in Altino are associated by archaeologists with the Celts,[10] a Celtic attribution of a (divine) name in this region thus is certainly unproblematic, historically speaking. Besides, the discussion of whether linguistically Celtic theophoric names are attested in Venetic inscriptions or whether they are simply personal names of Celtic origin[11] does not compromise this approach. Thus, the suggested reconstruction of the name nowadays is most commonly accepted in scholarship,[12] and the

[6]Alexander Falileyev and Anamarija Kurilić, 'Celtic deities in Roman Dalmatia: a reassessment', in K. Matijević (ed.), *Kelto-Römische Gottheiten und ihre Verehrer* (Rahden/Westf., 2016), 239–71, at 258–60.

[7]Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi and Alberto Mancini, 'Venetico VII–VIII', *Archivo Veneto* 105 (1975), 5–68, at 66–8; Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', in G. Fogolari and A. L. Prosdocimi (eds), *I Veneti antichi, lingua e cultura* (Padova, 1988), 221–420, at 301–2.

[8]E. Zampieri, 'L'iscrizione votiva in onore di Belatukadro', *Aquileia Nostra* 69 (1998), 417–18; on this inscription, see also Anna Marinetti, 'Epigrafia e lingua di Altino preromana', in *La protostoria tra Sile e Tagliamento: Antiche genti tra Veneto e Friuli* (Padova, 1996), 75–80, at 78; Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Divino, sacro e culti: Le forme della continuità tra nomi, figure, funzioni', in G. Cresci Marrone and M. Tirelli (eds), *Altnoi. Il santuario altinate: strutture del sacro a confronto e i luoghi di culto lungo la via Annia* (Roma, 2009), 361–86, at 364–5; or, more recently, Luca Rigobianco, 'La designazione dei liberti nella documentazione venetica: strategie linguistiche e riflessi istituzionali', *Scienze dell'antichità* 27 (2021), 185–99, at 192.

[9]See, e.g., Anna Marinetti and Patrizia Solinas, 'I Celti del Veneto nella documentazione epigrafica locale', in P. Barral et al. (eds), *Les Celtes et le Nord de l'Italie* (Dijon, 2014), 75–87, at 76–80; Alexander Falileyev, 'Miscellania Venetica II', *Indoevropejskoie yazykoznanije i klassičeskaja filologija* 20 (2016), 1020–7, at 1020–4; Blanca María Prósper, 'The Venetic inscription from Monte Manicola and three *termini publici* from Padua: a reappraisal', *The Journal of Indo-European Studies* 46 (2018), 47–107, at 61–3 et passim; Blanca María Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic in contact: the dialectal attribution of the personal names in the Venetic record', *ZCP* 66 (2019), 131–76; Anna Marinetti, 'Annotazioni sull'iscrizione venetica con onomastica celtica da Bologna', in A. Calderini and R. Massarelli (eds), *Eqo Duenosio: Studi offerti a Luciano Agostiniani* (Perugia, 2022), 647–62.

[10]See, e.g., Giovanna Gambacurta and Angela Ruta Serafini, *I Celti e il Veneto: Storie di culture a confronto* (Bologna, 2019).

[11]E.g., *Tivalei Bellenei*; see the divergent views in Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia sulla base dell'onomastica antica', in P. Poccetti (ed.), *L'Onomastica dell'Italia antica* (Roma, 2009), 153–92, at 173 and Marinetti and Solinas, 'I Celti del Veneto', 79; and most recently Marinetti, 'Annotazioni sull'iscrizione', 649 et passim.

[12]See, e.g., Daniele Vitali, 'Luoghi di culto e santuari celtici in Italia', in S. Vitri and F. Oriolo (eds), *I Celti in Carnia e nell'arco alpino centro-orientale* (Trieste, 2001), 279–301, at 290; De Bernardo

form, considered as Celtic and referred to as a theophoric name, frequently appears on the pages of numerous publications.[13]

Obviously, the very reconstruction of]kadriako- of the fragmentary inscription from Altino in Northern Italy as **Belatukadr-* is due ultimately to the existence *Belatucadros* venerated by Celtic-speaking tribes elsewhere. Indeed, this divine name is well attested, and, interestingly, in a variety of spellings, such as *Balatocadrus*, *Balatucadrus*, *Balaticaurus*, *Balatucairus*, *Baliticaurus*, *Belatu-cairus*, *Belatugagus*, *Belleticaurus*, *Blatucadrus* and *Blatucairus*, and there are attempts to explain these variations.[14] As was noted in this respect, '[t]he fact is there was no established orthography for Belatucadrus, and so the concept of getting it right does not apply. People were just attempting to put into writing what they had heard, or thought they had heard. The many variations indicate uncertain pronunciation.'[15] Anyhow, these variations in spellings are not critical for the assumption that there is one single divine name, traditionally associated with combat and fighting. Such an interpretation has remained consistent for decades, and the divine name has been glossed

Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia', 176; or Emanuela Murgia, *Culti e romanizzazione: Resistenze, continuità, trasformazioni* (Trieste, 2013), 81–2.

[13]Claudio Zaccaria, 'Alla ricerca di divinità "celtiche" nell'Italia settentrionale in età romana: Revisione della documentazione per le regiones IX, X, XI', in J. Gorrochategui and P. De Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Die Kelten und ihre Religion im Spiegel der epigraphischen Quellen / Los Celtas y su religión a través de la epigrafía* (Vitoria Gasteiz, 2004), 129–64, at 132 and 141; Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'I nomi teoforici del Celta antico: Individuazione, classificazione, divinitá venerate e cronologia relative', in A. Sartori (ed.), *Dedicanti e cultores nelle religioni celtiche* (Milano, 2008), 92; Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names found in the Italian Peninsula', in A. Hofeneder and P. de Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Théonymie celtique, cultes, interpretatio / Keltische Theonymie, Kulte, interpretatio* (Wien, 2013), 73–104, at 85; Mariolina Gamba, '*Uno scudo così grande e forte:* considerazioni su una lamina dal santuario del dio Altino', in Giovannella Cresci Marrone et al. (eds), *Il dono di Altino: Scritti di archeologia in onore di Margherita Tirelli* (Venezia 2019), 93–102, at 98; Rigobianco, 'La designazione dei liberti', 192.

[14]For references, see Nicole Jufer and Thierry Luginbühl, *Les dieux gaulois* (Paris, 2001), 27–8, and for various explanation of variations, cf. Martin Henig, *Religion in Roman Britain* (London, 1984), 63; Michelle L. Mann and John Vanderspoel, 'The end of winter: *Belatucadrus* as a spring deity', *Mouseion: Journal of the Classical Association of Canada* 3 (2003), 399–414, at 403–4 (list of attestations on pp. 409–12); or Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Die sprachliche Analyse keltischer Theonyme', in J. Gorrochategui and P. De Bernardo Stempel (eds), *Die Kelten und ihre Religion im Spiegel der epigraphischen Quellen / Los Celtas y su religión a través de la epigrafía* (Vitoria Gasteiz, 2004), 201–31, at 212 n. 99. See also Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Celtic composition vowels *-i-* and *-u-*', in G. Oudaer, G. Hily and H. Le Bihan (eds), *Mélanges en l'honneur de Pierre-Yves Lambert* (Rennes, 2015), 313–32, at 323 for the variation of the composition vowel; for vocalic variations in the first component, consider Joseph's rule. For diphthongisation of the second component, cf. Blanca Maria Prósper, 'Two divinities of the Celtic Cantabri: 1) *Ervdino*, divinity of the yearly cycle; 2) *Cabvniaegino*, the Celtic fate of IE **kap-* and the Gaulish spindle whorl from Saint-Révérien', in R. Haeussler and T. King (eds), *Celtic Religions in the Roman Period: Personal, Local, and Global* (Aberystwyth, 2017), 207–28, at 222. Eric Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', in W. Haase (ed.), *Religion* (*Heidentum: Die religiösen Verhältnisse in den Provinzen*), Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt, Part II, vol. 18/1 (Berlin and Boston, 1986), 3–112, at 60, observing variations, notes that '*Belatucadro* predominates'.

[15]Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green and M. E. Raybould, 'Deities with Gallo-British names recorded in inscriptions from Roman Britain', *SC* 33 (1999), 91–135, at 107.

as 'mighty in war',[16] 'strong in battle'[17], or the like, and the attestation from Italy has been characterized – similarly – as 'Celtic god of war'.[18] It should be stressed that *Belatucadrus* (and its variations) is attested only in epigraphy, while ancient authors do not provide any clarification of the corresponding deity, and in fact never mention it at all. Moreover, as experts admit, 'decorative features on the altars to Belatucadrus include cables, chevrons, roundels and a jug, but none of these helps to clarify the nature of the cult'.[19] Therefore, as in quite a few cases, our understanding of the deity is based entirely on the etymology of the divine name. In fact, its belligerent character was observed more than a century ago, and John Rhys summarized the etymological findings in the following way:

> This is a Celtic compound meaning handsome in the slaughter or mighty to kill. The epithet was doubtless meant as a flattering one, acceptable to the god in his character of warrior and slaughterer of his worshippers' enemies.[20]

This etymology of *Belatucadrus* suggested by Rhys is accepted – with certain modifications – by quite a few historians, and, as the translations quoted above already suggest, linguists. The first component of the compounded name, *belatu-*, is thus historically connected, sometimes tentatively, with Early Irish *at-bail*, *epeltu* (< **eks-beltu*) 'die', to PIE **g*^{w}*elh*$_1$- 'stab'.[21] This interpretation, however, is not unanimously accepted, and we find its derivation from **b*^{h}*elH-tu-*, therefore 'shining', in linguistic works, and, consequently, this was accepted by some historians as well.[22] Some details of the traditional reconstruction of *belatu-* remain difficult, and these were addressed by D. Stifter. Without going into details about his investigation, it should be noted that this scholar admits a possibility that the Gaulish word may be derived from Celtic **belo-*, referring further to X. Delamarre's interpretation of the Gaulish forms

[16] Garrett S. Olmsted, *The Gods of the Celts and the Indo-Europeans* (Budapest, 1994), 114.

[17] De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names found in the Italian Peninsula', 85. Note, however, the interpretation as 'spring deity' in Mann and Vanderspoel, 'The end of winter', 399–414.

[18] 'Dio celtico della Guerra', Gamba, '*Uno scudo così grande e forte*', 98.

[19] Aldhouse-Green and Raybould, 'Deities with Gallo-British names', 113, noting that Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', 61–2 admitted that he may be identified with one of the horned gods found on many of the uninscribed stones of the area.

[20] John Rhys, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (London and Edinburgh, 1888), 37–8.

[21] See, e.g., Alfred Holder, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* (Leipzig, 1896–1910), vol. 1, col. 367 and vol. 3, col. 823; Georges Dottin, *La langue gauloise* (Paris, 1918), 110 and 232; Karl Horst Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', *ZCP* 26 (1957), 145; Xavier Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise* (Paris, 2003), 70–1, Wolfgang Meid, *Keltische Personennamen in Pannonien* (Budapest, 2005), 97. For PIE **g*^{w}*elh*$_1$- in Celtic, cf. Nicholas Zair, *The Reflexes of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals in Celtic* (Leiden, Boston, 2012), 114 and 218.

[22] Cf. Blanca María Prósper, *The Indo-European Names of Central Hispania: A Study in Continental Celtic and Latin Word Formation* (Innsbruck, 2016), 149 (tentatively), and note the translations of *Belatucadrus* as 'bright shining one' in Anthony Birley, *The People of Roman Britain* (London, 1979), 113 or 'bright one' in Miranda J. Green, *Symbol and Image in Celtic Religious Art* (London, 1989), 113.

as meaning 'strong' or 'bright'.[23] and, therefore, with this treatment as well, *belatu-* may be semantically connected either with brightness or belligerency.

The second component of *Belatucadrus*, as acknowledged by Rhys, has been traditionally and firmly associated with W *cadr*, 'handsome, comely, fine; powerful, mighty', Old Breton *cadr*, Middle Breton *karz* 'id.'.[24] However, H. Pedersen and later K. H. Jackson raised a number of questions regarding this equation, also noting the problem of Gaulish *-dr-* being reflected in Welsh unexpectedly as *-dr-*,[25] and there exist certain attempts to clarify the problem.[26] It may be recalled that J. Pokorny differentiates between W *cadr*, etc., (< **ĥkat-* 'kämpfen') and the second component of *Belatucadrus*, which he traces to PIE **ĥkad-* 'glänzen'. He admits, however, that 'Umbildung eines **katros* "tapfer" [..] zu *kadros* wäre freilich nicht ganz ausgeschlossen'.[27] As only the formal aspect of linguistic comparison matters here, it is possible to venture a number of other explanations of this part of the divine name. Thus, noting the recent explanation of Celtic *Cadanus* by Prósper as a derivation from PIE **ĥ(e)h₂do-* ('hatred, enemy'),[28] one may consider a similar etymology for the second part of *Belatucadrus*. In this case it finds a perfect match in Av. *sādra* 'grief, disaster' or 'woe, torment', from the point of view of word formation,[29] and 'disastrous'

[23]David Stifter, 'Keltische Namen im burgenländischen Landesmuseum', in H. Heftner and K. Tomaschitz (eds), *Ad Fontes! Festschrift für Gerhard Dobesch zum fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag am 15. September 2004 dargebracht von Kollegen, Schülern und Freunden* (Wien, 2004), 757–72, at 763, referring to Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 72; cf. Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', 145. Note that in his study of *Belatucadros* K. J. Fairless, 'Three religious cults from the northern frontier region', in R. Miket and C. Burges (eds), *Between and Beyond the Wall: Essays on the Prehistory and History of North Britain in Honour of George Jobey* (Edinburgh, 1984), 224–42, at 225 quotes both interpretations, 'fair in destruction' or 'fair shining one', referring to Holder. It is not quite clear why *Belatucadros* is taken there (p. 228) for a solar deity, protector, healer and multi-natured tribal god.

[24]Holder, *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, vol. 1, col. 671; Dottin, *La langue gauloise*, 239; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire*, 96, etc.

[25]Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), 429–31. See also the discussion and references in Schmidt, 'Die Komposition in gallischen Personennamen', 159; D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names* (Oxford, 1967), 167; Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology,* c. *400–1200* (Oxford, 2003), 73; Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 96. The divine name is left untranslated in most of these studies. I note that in Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du gaulois*, 169–70, Gaulish *cadro-* is glossed as 'handsome' and compared to W *cadr* 'id.', and the same reference to Jackson, *Language and History*, 429–31, is provided. Prósper, 'Two divinities of the Celtic *Cantabri*', 222, also derives the second component of the divine name from **kad-ro-* 'beautiful'.

[26]Richard Coates, 'Four pre-English river names in and around Fenland: *Chater*, *Granta*, *Nene* and *Welland*', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 103 (2005), 303–22, at 307–12. I also note that De Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names', 84, allows for the sonarization of the voiceless stop followed by *r* in Ancient Celtic, illustrating it by *Ambi-sagros* vs Celt. **sakro-*, and *Gabro-* < **kapro-*, although different explanations may be offered here.

[27]Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern, 1959), 517 and 534, with a question mark.

[28]Prósper, *The Indo-European Names of Central Hispania*, 151. For the PIE root see Helmut Rix et al., *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 319; it is represented in Celtic, see R. Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (Leiden and Boston 2009), 183 s.v. **kādo-* 'regret, anger'.

[29]Cf. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 517 and Brent Vine, 'On full-grade **-ro-* formations in Greek and Indo-European', in M. Southern (ed.), *Indo-European Perspectives*

semantics will fit the belligerent image of the deity. Therefore, there are again at least two possibilities for an etymological analysis of the second part of the compounded name,[30] one of which leads again to belligerent association, the other being rather different. The uncertainty in the meaning of the Gaulish word has been also noted recently.[31]

Yet again, this is certainly to be expected taking into consideration the character of the data itself. One may be reminded of A. Meillet's famous maxim, 'the etymologies of proper names are uncertain because of the two pieces of data whose value is established by agreement with the facts of other languages, meaning and phonological form, we can utilize only one: phonological form',[32] and although some of divine names – with the help of various types of data of extra-linguistic character – may indeed be explained perfectly clear linguistically, *Belatucadrus* is certainly not a case in point. Still, as this image and semantics of *Belatucadrus* are derived exclusively from etymology, other options for its analysis remain open. It is not, however, intended here or elsewhere to discuss various Celtic or Indo-European stems, a rather mechanical combination of which will formally explain this Celtic compound. Generally, this raises another difficult methodological question pertaining to this study, and as it has been observed for Celtic, 'the etymology of divine names is already problematic enough and we should ask ourselves constantly how etymology relates to semantics and meaning. And again, how do such linguistic insights relate to mythology?'[33] As a result, we have at our disposal a set of interpretations of this word which are similarly plausible provided that its semantics remain by default vague, and it does not seem possible to choose any variant with any degree of confidence.

Whatever the meaning of the divine name *Belatucadrus* may be, its relation with *[*Belatu*]*kadr*-attested in Altino is certainly linguistically possible, at least at face value. In northern Italy as well as elsewhere we find a considerable amount of -(*i*)*āko*- derivatives,[34] and sometimes this suffix is attested

(Washington, 2002), 329–50, at 337 for a tentative derivation of the Avestan word from PIE **k´(e)h₂d-reh₂*. For the root, see now Anders Richardt Jørgensen, 'Mourning among the speakers of Proto-Indo-European: **k̂eh₂d*- "to fall" and "to mourn" ', in J. Larsson, T. Olander and A. Jørgensen (eds), *Indo-European Afterlives: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Life beyond Death* (Stockholm, 2025), 177–94.

[30] *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, edited by R. J. Thomas et al., (Cardiff, 1950–2002), s.v. *cadr* treats Neo-Brittonic words together with (*Belatu*)*-cadros*, to **kat-ro*- (< **k̂at*-); for the morphological model, cf. Skt. *śátru*- 'enemy', discussed by Manfred Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (Heidelberg 1996), vol. 2, 607. For the problems of Celt. **kat*- see Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of proto-Celtic*, 195.

[31] Xavier Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux du gaulois*: I. *Ab- / Iχs(o)*- (n. p.: Les Cent Chemins, 2019), 116 and 169. Bernard Mees, 'The Celtic theonyms from Hadrian's Wall', *SC* 59 (2025), 39–50, at 47–8, also discusses *Belarucadrus*, providing more references.

[32] Antoine Meillet, *The Comparative Method in Historical Linguistics*, translated from the French by Gordon B. Ford (Paris, 1967), 57–8.

[33] Lauran Toorians, Review of *Théonymie celtique, cultes, interpretatio* (Wien 2013), *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 61 (2014), 258.

[34] See the data and discussion in Paul Russell, 'The suffix -*āko*- in Continental Celtic', *EC* 25 (1988), 131–73.

with divine names.[35] However, there are a number of hindrances of an extra-linguistic nature which make this connection fairly unlikely. First, the distribution of the altars dedicated to *Belatucadrus* should be considered. All of them are found in a rather restricted area of northern England, and K. J. Fairless, who studied this cult in detail, notes that '[t]here is a notable concentration of the altars within the valley of the River Eden', and suggests alongside many scholars that the cult centre was perhaps at or near modern Brougham. He comes to the conclusion that *Belatucadrus* was a tribal or sub-tribal deity, and the tribe in question turns out to be the Carvetii, who are supposed to have lived around Luguvalium (modern Carlisle).[36] It is commonly assumed that we see here a local deity worshipped in the territory of Cumbria, and there is not a single attestation of the divine name outside this very restricted area in the northern part of modern England. Therefore, to relate *Belatucadrus* from the north of England to **Belatukadriakos* in northern Italy we have to presume contacts between the two territories. This is a difficult task in view of the fact that the attestation of the latter is dated to the fifth to fourth centuries BC, and although a number of individuals with foreign names are attested in Cumbria in Roman times, the data is too late chronologically to be used in support of such contacts. It may be mentioned in parenthesis that even in Roman times, as the limited evidence studied by Anthony Birley suggests, there were no devotees of *Belatucadrus* bearing foreign names, with the exception of Germanic *Vidaris*,[37] and, in the words of Henig, the deity 'appears to have a strong appeal to the indigenous population'.[38] Consequently, one should rely here on archaeological data, also bearing in mind that the Altino of this period is firmly associated with the so-called Este archaeological culture, and Iron Age vestiges in northern Britain are well examined. Disappointingly, archaeological observations are also not helpful: at least to my knowledge, not a single artefact which may be associated with the northern British Iron Age has ever been found in Veneto, and, similarly, there are no proofs of Este presence or influences in Cumbria. Moreover, archaeologists remain rather sceptical in regard of such early contacts between northern England and the Continent in general.[39] So, to support the hypothesis, one must posit a stray traveller crossing more than a thousand miles to bring *Belatucadrus* (or even just a corresponding theophoric name) to Altino from Cumbria.

This, although not entirely impossible, still remains a rather doubtful and at most a very dubious scenario. Moreover, there may be strong reservations whether the cult of *Belatucadrus* in fact existed in fifth- to fourth-century BC northern Britain itself. As K. J. Fairless summarizes, 'the evidence [...] suggests the existence of the cult in the second century, its continuation,

[35] Recently discussed in Falileyev and Kurilić, 'Celtic deities in Roman Dalmatia', 270–5.

[36] Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 225 and 228, cf. Birley, 'The deities of Roman Britain', 60; on the Carvetii, see N. J. Higham and G. D. B. Jones, *The Carvetii* (Gloucester, 1985), or Catherine Ross, 'The Carvetii – a pro-Roman community?', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* 2012, 55–68.

[37] Birley, *The People of Roman Britain*, 113.

[38] Henig, *Religion in Roman Britain*, 63.

[39] Cf. Dennis W. Harding, *The Iron Age in Northern Britain* (Abingdon, 2004), 305.

with an increase in popularity in the third century, and its survival perhaps into the early fourth century'.[40] This of course brings us into the domain of *interpretatio*, *translatio* and *identificatio*, seeing that all attestations of the divine name are found in Latin inscriptions of Roman times. Thus, P. De Bernardo Stempel has suggested that 'Mars Belatucadros, "the Mars strong in the battle", and Mars Camulos, "the Mars king of the slaves", are rendering of Mars Victor'.[41] Scholars working in this modern framework acknowledge the fact that there are a few ways to provide a 'Celtic reading' of Latin *Mars Victor*, and de Bernardo Stempel herself in her paper dedicated to the study of Celtic equivalents of classical divine epithets suggests that in Gaul it was rendered by *Mars Segomu* 'M. der Stärkste', and *Mars Belatucadros*, which is rendered there as 'M. der Starke in der Zerstörung', is compared to *Mars Belado* (Narbonensis).[42] As for our particular example, the opinion of R. Haeussler requires full quotation:

> If Romano-Celtic temples indicate a certain persistence of indigenous cult activities, at least in Britain, then it is interesting to see that the distribution pattern of Romano-Celtic temples does not overlap with the distribution of dedications. Especially the myriad of Celtic theonyms attested on Hadrian's Wall, like Belatucadros, Cocidios, the Veteri, and many more, cannot be associated with pre-Roman cults; instead they relate to a military context. And since most Celtic theonyms and epithets are very localised, we cannot assume that these deities were imported from other parts of Britain or Gaul. **Belatucadros therefore need not be a theonym of pre-Roman times**, but an epithet that suits the war-like context on Hadrian's Wall: *Mars belatucadros* is 'the Mars strong in the battle', i.e. the victorious Mars.[43]

This difficulty was seen by P. de Bernardo Stempel, who in discussing the disputable [*Belatu*]*kadriako-* allows for two options: whether it 'was derived from *Belatvcadros* "Strong in the battle" as a functional, explicative attribute of Mars (as it is once explicitly attested in Britain) or as an indigenous deity which became only later identified with the Classical war-god.'[44] While the first

[40] Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 227.

[41] Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Continuity, *translatio* and *identificatio* in Gallo-Roman religion: the case of Britain', in R. Haeussler et al. (eds), *Continuity and Innovation in Religion in the Roman West* (Portsmouth, 2007), 67–82, at 79.

[42] Patrizia De Bernardo Stempel, 'Keltische Äquivalente klassischer Epitheta und andere sprachliche und nicht-sprachliche Phänomene im Rahmen der sogenannten "interpretatio Romana" ', *ZCP* 61 (2014), 7–48, at 18 and 22; I note the rendering of *Mars Belados* as 'Mars who destroys' in Ralph Häussler, 'Interpretatio indigena: re-inventing local cults in a global world', *Mediterraneo Antico* 15 (2012), 143–74, at 168.

[43] Ralph Haeussler, 'How to identify Celtic religion(s) in Roman Britain and Gaul', in J. d'Encarnação (ed.), *Divindades indígenas em análise: Divinités pré-romaines – bilan et perspectives d'une recherché* (Coimbra/Porto 2008), 13–63, at 41. The bold script added.

[44] de Bernardo Stempel, 'Celtic and other indigenous divine names', 85. Military and martial associations of *Belatucadros* are noted by all scholars who have dealt with this cult, cf. Fairless, 'Three religious cults', 226 or Higham and Jones, *The Carvetii*, 11.

scenario may be considered, the second possibility cannot be taken as proven as we have no evidence in favour of the existence of the deity *Belatucadros* in pre-Roman Cumbria, and any means for the transmission of the cult from northern Britain to northern Italy at this early time are very doubtful, to say the least. It may be suggested that the [*Belatu*]*kadriako-* attested in Altino has nothing to do with *Mars Belatucadros* of Roman or **Belatucadros* of pre-Roman Britain. If indeed Celtic in origin, it may go back to a Celt. appellative **belatucadros* which can be safely reconstructed on the basis of Romano-British data, and the corresponding word may well have been used on the Continent among speakers of Celtic in the fifth to fourth centuries BC. As experience teaches us, a newly discovered text may contain a previously unattested lexeme, the existence of which has been postulated purely on comparative linguistic grounds. This was the case for Gaulish 'daughter' *duχtir* which was found in an inscription unearthed in 1983, although the appellative had been reconstructed decades before the find. Therefore, a discovery of ***belatukadros* (or, perhaps, ***balatukadros*) or their distinct components in a newly found text would solve the problem of the interpretation of the tiny fragment from Altino. This might also help with the establishment of a more precise meaning for **belatucadros*, as the etymological analysis of the compound allows for a number of admissible semantic interpretations. However, the compound may well be a dialectal British word known only in this geographically restricted area.

There is yet another approach to the treatment of [Belatu]kadriako- attested in Altino. As has been shown by Paul Russell, quite a few forms with -(*i*)*āko-* in Northern Italy are derived from non-Celtic bases.[45] Moreover, this sequence is found in a number of Venetic texts, and not only with linguistically Celtic anthroponyms,[46] but also in indigenous formations,[47] and this derivation model has received considerable attention from linguists, and these instances were discussed by such scholars as J. Untermann, M. Lejeune, A. Prosdocimi, and A. Marinetti.[48] That allows us, at least theoretically, to consider the base found in Altino as epichoric, and hence to regard the extension [Belatu-] as totally unnecessary. The configuration -*cadr-* in]kadriako- is (so far) unknown in Venetic, but the corpus of this language is fairly limited, so the lack of corresponding attestations or comparable lexemes may be blamed on that. *Mutatis mutandis*,]kadriako- may well be Celtic, and even a part of a compounded form, but its first component may equally be different from what is

[45] Russell, 'The suffix -*āko-*', 157–64, cf. Luka Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina v toponimiji jugovzhodnega alpskega prostora* (Ljubljana, 2016), 87–9 and Alexander Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria: some considerations', in R. Haeussler and T. King (eds), *Celtic Religions in the Roman Period: Personal, Local, and Global* (Aberystwyth, 2017), 419–39, at 429.

[46] For the analysis of *.a.rs.petijako.s.* in the inscription from Cadore, see Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 215–16 and Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 163–4.

[47] Cf. Russell, 'The suffix -*āko-*', 159 n. 109 and see Blanca María Prósper, 'Language change at the crossroads: what Celtic, what Venetic, and what else in the personal names of Emona?', *Voprosy onomastiki* 16/4 (2019), 33–73, at 40. For Venetic vho.u.go.n.tiiaka and .o.stiiako see Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 88.

[48] Cf., e.g., Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 373–4 or Anna Marinetti, 'Il Venetico di Lagole', in G. Fogolari and G. Gambacurta (eds), *Materiali Veneti e Romani del Santuario di Lagole di Calalzo al Museo di Pieve di Cadore* (Roma, 2001), 59–73, with further references.

restored traditionally. At any rate, it seems reasonable to exclude from our discussion of Celtic theophoric names the form attested in the Venetic inscription from Altino, and the connection of]kadriako- with northern British *Belatucadros*, which is after all very dubious from both historical and geographical perspectives, remains thus highly hypothetical, to use fairly mild terms.

II. Up in arms about the long arm of coincidence

The term 'the long arm of coincidence' was elegantly used by P. Sims-Williams in his discussion of ancient place-names which look Celtic at face-value, but in fact definitely or most probably belong to other languages.[49] *Mutatis mutandis*, this long arm operates in various domains of ancient onomastics, and divine names are no exception here. Therefore, this natural difficulty should be addressed in order to redeem the corpus of *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* from a number of attestations that do not belong to it. Since in the first part of this paper the data from ancient Veneto was discussed, to illustrate the second point I will use an example from the same area. But first, however, we have to move to the territory of Silesia in modern south-western Poland in antiquity.

Discussing the tribes of *Lugiorum nomen* who dwelt in this area, some of which most probably had Celtic names, Tacitus, *Germ.* 43, mentions the divinity Alci (*nomen Alcis*) venerated by the Naharvali:

> Apud Nahanarvalos antiquae religionis lucus ostenditur. Praesidet sacerdos muliebri ornatu, sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant. Ea vis numini, nomen Alcis. Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium; ut fratres tamen, ut iuvenes venerantur.
>
> 'The Naharvali proudly point out a grove associated with an ancient worship. The presiding priest dresses like a woman; but the deities are said to be counterparts of our Castor and Pollux. This indicates their character, but their name is the Alci. There are no images, and nothing to suggest that the cult is of foreign origin; but they are certainly worshipped as young men and as brothers.'[50]

Now we go back to Veneto, where the word *alkomno* is found in the famous early Venetic inscription from Este, *Es 120 *alkomno metlon śikos enogenes vilkenis horvionte donasan*. Both the form and the complete text where it occurs have been the subject of lengthy scholarly discussions and disputes. It is normally considered nowadays that it contains three personal names in the nominative case, *Śikos*, *Enogenes* and *Vilkenis*, and the verbal form

[49] Patrick Sims-Williams, *Ancient Celtic Place-Names in Europe and Asia Minor* (Oxford, 2006), 27–37.

[50] Text and translation from Alf Önnerfors (ed.), *P. Cornelii Taciti libri qui supersunt*, vol. II/2: *Germania* (Stuttgart, 1983) and *Tacitus: The Agricola and the Germania*, translated with an introduction by H. Mattingly, revised by S. A. Handford (Harmondsworth, 1970).

donasan 'they gave'. The noun in the accusative singular *metlon* denotes, probably, the term for an offering, while *horvionte* is totally obscure but may be seen as an epithet of the divine name.[51] The subject of a votive offering, *alkomno*, at least according to many scholars, is to be analysed historically as a participle in a dual masculine form. This Venetic divine name is often treated in association with the dioscuric myth,[52] and it should be remembered that dual formations are certainly to be expected in conjunction with the dioscuric phenomenon.[53] Fortunately, at least to my knowledge, there have been no attempts to argue in favour of the linguistic Celticity of *alkomno* in the Este inscription, notwithstanding the fact that Celtic linguistic traces have been found, as noted above, in Venetic inscriptions, and even some Venetic divine names have been analysed as Celtic: for example, a Celtic etymology has recently been considered, although tentatively, for an undeniably Venetic goddess – the famous Reitia.[54]

The *Alci* from Silesia are occasionally brought into discussion of Venetic *alkomn-*. Although in the first edition of the inscription from Este A. L. Pros-

[51] See, e.g., Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 282–4; Anna Marinetti, 'Terminologia istituzionale e formula onomastica in venetico', in P. Poccetti (ed.), *L'onomastica dell'Italia antica* (Roma, 2009), 357–74, at 371–2; or more recently Cristina Girardi and Simona Marchesini, 'Le forme della pluralità divina nell'Italia preromana: *Prolegomena* per una tipologia', in M. J. Estarán Tolosa et al. (eds), *Des mots pour les dieux: Dédicaces cultuelles dans les langues indigènes de la Méditerranée occidentale* (Bern, etc., 2021), 35–59, at 45.

[52] Cf. also, e.g., Sarah De Nardi, 'Revisiting the sacred landscapes of northeast Italy between the 8th century BC and the 2nd Century BC', unpublished PhD thesis, University College of London, 2008, 408 or Giuseppe Sassatelli, 'I Veneti e l'Etruria padana', in M. Gamba et al. (eds), *Venetkens: Viaggio nella terra dei Veneti antichi* (Venezia, 2013), 119–32, at 129. There are other interpretations of *alkomno*: thus, Jürgen Untermann, 'Die venetische Sprache', *Glotta* 58 (1980), 281–317, at 297–300 takes it for a *n*-stem variant of the anthroponym **Alkomnos* (he reads the text as *Alkomno Metlonšikos*).

[53] Melanie Malzahn, 'Die Genese des indogermanischen Duals', in M. Ofitsch and Ch. Zinko (eds) *125 Jahre Indogermanistik in Graz* (Graz, 2000), 291–315, at 304. For IE backgrounds of the myth and its various manifestations, see the classical monograph by Donald Ward, *The Divine Twins: An Indo-European Myth in Germanic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1968). Deverbal forms in **-mno-* are known and well-examined in Celtic and Venetic. See Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'Das indogermanische *m*(*V*)*no*-Verbaladjektiv im Keltischen', in R. Bielmeier and R. Stempel (eds), *Indogermanica et Caucasica: Festschrift für K. H. Schmidt* (Berlin and New York, 1994), 281–305 (and cf. p. 287 for kara.n.mn.s. found in Venetic context) and Blanca María Prósper, 'Some thoughts on the Gaulish results of Common Celtic *-mn-* in Galatian', *Keltische Forschungen* 3 (2008), 189–99. For *-mno-* derivatives in Venetic see, e.g., Michele Lejeune, '*Voltiomnos, Volsomnos, Volsounos*', *Bulletin de la société de linguistique* 49 (1953), 41–51, or Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Note linguistiche italiche 1–4', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina* 81 (1968–9), 279–92, and recently Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 141.

[54] de Bernardo Stempel, 'La ricostruzione del celtico d'Italia', 173: ? Celtic, **reg´-t-yā*. For a Venetic approach, see Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 388, and cf. Anna Marinetti, 'Da Altno – a Giove: la titolarita del santuario. I. La fase preromana', in G. Cresci Marrone, M. Tirelli (eds), *Altnoi. Il santuario altinate: strutture del sacro a confronto e i luoghi di culto lungo la via Annia* (Roma, 2009), 87–127, at 110. The etymology traces the name to PIE **h₃reiH-* 'flow' (cf. Lat. *riuus* 'stream') and will not be discussed here. For the corresponding texts, see Katherine McDonald, 'The dedications to Reitia and the epigraphic visibility of women in Este and the Veneto', in M. J. Estarán Tolosa et al. (eds), *Des mots pour les dieux: Dédicaces cultuelles dans les langues indigènes de la Méditerranée occidentale* (Bern, etc., 2021), 79–94.

docimi argued against this equation,[55] this dismissal was refuted in his later work. Still, he spoke there about archaeological and not linguistic considerations,[56] and this parallel was taken on board in the recent article by Girardi and Marchesini and is discussed there already in terms of 'linguistic comparison'.[57] The visual likeness of *alkomn-* and *Alci* and the fact that they both allegedly refer to dioscuric deities is definitely remarkable. Although the tribal name *Naharvali* itself is most probably linguistically Germanic in origin, the tribe belonged to *Lugiorum nomen* with its straightforward Celtic associations. Probably in view of that also, this divine name *Alci* has been listed as Celtic by Whatmough, even though in the same publication he provides its Germanic etymology.[58] Forms in *alco-* certainly are known in Gaulish toponymy as well as in personal names,[59] and their similarity at face value to the Silesian attestation is apparent, which however does not make it Celtic by default. To the best of my knowledge it was K. T. Witczak who first offered a comprehensive discussion of Tacitus's *Alci* as linguistically Celtic.[60] For those who do not read Polish, a summary of the observations is conveniently provided in the author's English article published in a journal with excellent accessibility, but, for readers' convenience, it may still be quoted here in full:

> Lusitanian *Trebo-pala* (name of a deity) < IE. **trebo-palā* 'protector of the dwelling', cf. Vedic *Viś-pala* (f.), a horse-like goddess or heroine connected with the twin gods Aśvins (see Maggi 1983), Latin *Pales* (dat. pl. *Palibus*), a divine pair of Old Roman deities, the patrons of flocks and herds. Also the Indo-European name of the divine twins **Pal-ikoi* (du. *Paliko*), preserved in the name of the Sicilian twin-gods *Palici* and Celtic *Alci* (cf. Witczak 1995, 1997), contains the same Indo-European root **pal-* 'to protect'.[61]

[55] Aldo Luigi Prosdocimi, 'Una iscrizione inedita dal territorio atestino: Nuovi aspetti epigrafici linguistici culturali dell'area paleoveneta', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto* 127 (1968–9), 182–3 referring to Rosenfeld, 'Die Dioskuren', 1–6.

[56] In his fundamental work: Prosdocimi, 'La lingua', 284 ('per le considerazioni archeologiche').

[57] Girardi and Marchesini, 'Le forme della pluralità divina nell'Italia preromana', 45 ('comparazioni linguistiche').

[58] Joshua Whatmough, *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul* (Cambridge, 1970), 1101, 1244 and 1081 correspondingly.

[59] See a collection in Delamarre, *Dictionnaire des thèmes nominaux*, 45–6; geographical names may be of a different origin, cf. Alexander Falileyev, *In Search of the Eastern Celts: Studies in Geographical Names, their Distribution and Morphology* (Budapest, 2014), 96 with further references. The paper by Diether Schürr, 'Zum Namen des Altkönigs: Volksetymologie und keltischer Kontext', *Keltische Forschungen* 8 (2019–26), 111–19, which is relevant for this discussion, appeared too late to be referred to below.

[60] Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'Śląsk w epoce antycznej: kult Alków (Tacyt, Germania 43) i jego celtycka geneza', in J. Rostropowicz (ed.), *Tradycje kultury antycznej na Śląsku* (Opole, 1997), 48–55.

[61] Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'On the Indo-European origin of two Lusitanian theonyms (*Laebo* and *Reve*)', *Emerita* 66 (1999), 65–73, at 66. The argument is repeated in subsequent publications, cf., e.g., Ignacy Ryszard Danka and Krzysztof Tomasz Witczak, 'DEIS EQUEUNUBO – the divine twins in Asturia', in P. Stalmaszczyk and M. Fomin (eds), *Dimensions and Categories of Celticity: Studies in Language* (Łódź, 2010), 17–26, at 23.

As I have already analysed this piece of evidence in my analysis of Celtic linguistic traces in the territory of modern Poland,[62] I will proceed to further arguments in conjunction with the topic and aim of this discussion, providing further linguistic arguments against this comparison. It should be reminded, nevertheless, that a cult of divine twins was certainly known in Celtic antiquity,[63] that Celtic associations in the early history of Silesia are well established,[64] and, incidentally, that the claim for the presence of Celtic-speaking people in fifth-century Sicily – the home of the twin-gods *Palici* – has also been made.[65] As for the Palici,

> [t]he cult of these twin gods, who are identified by Aeschylus as the sons of Zeus and Thalia, a local nymph and daughter of Hephaestus, was among the most important for the island's native Sikel communities. Aeschylus is said to have been the first writer to bring the Palici into Greek literature (Macrob. Sat. 5.19.17), and they are the subject of the play's main surviving fragment, which offers a Greek etymology of their name.[66]

The name of the Sicilian divine twins was explained by Aeschylus as 'those who have returned', and their association with dioscuric narratives is prominent.[67] Nevertheless, Witczak's equation of the Sicilian *Palici* (i.e. *Palicī*, Gk. Παλικοί) with the alleged Celtic *nomen Alcis* attested in the territory of modern Poland and their common etymology is difficult to accept even on linguistic grounds, and should therefore be abandoned. The arguments against this equation may be briefly summarised in the following way.

Indeed, Lusitanian *Trebopala* used in this analysis has been derived recently from **trebo-ph₂-ló-* ('protectress of the village') by Prósper, who also

[62] Alexander Falileyev, 'The Silesian Harii', *SC* 43 (2009), 201–6 and Falileyev, *In Search of the Eastern Celts*, 81–90.

[63] See, e.g., Steven O'Brien, 'Dioscuric elements in Celtic and Germanic mythology', *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 10 (1982), 117–136 or Antone Minard, 'Of horses and humans – the divine twins in Celtic mythology and folklore', in K. Jones-Bley et al. (eds), *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual UCLA Indo-European Conference* (Washington, 1998), 158–78.

[64] See (recently) Przemysław Dulęba, 'La Tène culture in Silesia: remarks on the state of research and new cognitive perspectives', *Recherches Archéologiques* 10 (2019), 137–59 or Przemysław Dulęba, Renata Abłamowicz, Agata Sady-Bugajska and Jacek Soida, 'The economy of the La Tène culture communities based on the example of research from Upper Silesia', *Prähistorische Zeitschrift* 96 (2021), 511–31.

[65] Luuk de Ligt, 'The inscription from Centuripe: language, meaning and historical background', *Glotta* 83 (2007), 30–42, at 38; for early languages in Sicily, see a useful survey in Jonathan Prag, 'The indigenous languages of ancient Sicily', *Palaeohispanica* 20 (2020), 531–51.

[66] Mark Thatcher, 'Aeschylus' *Aetnaeans*, the Palici and cultural politics in Deinomenid Sicily', *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 139 (2019), 67–82, at 67.

[67] That is ἦ καὶ Παλικῶν εὐλόγως μένει φάτις; πάλιν γὰρ ἵκουσ' ἐκ σκότου τόδ' εἰς φάος 'And does the name of the Palici remain reasonable? Yes, since they come back from darkness to this light'. See recently Thatcher, 'Aeschylus' *Aetnaeans*', 71. For the sanctuary of *Palici*, see Laura Maniscalco (ed.), *Il santuario dei Palici: Un centro di culto nella Valle del Margi* (Palermo, 2008).

notes that the full grade **peh₂-ló-* is attested as the second part of Vedic compounds *avi-pālá-* 'shepherd,' *aja-pālá-* 'goat-herd,' or *go-pālá-* 'cow-herd'.[68] The (apparently) Siculian *Palici* theoretically may contain its reflex, but, nevertheless, our knowledge of this idiom is frustratingly meagre for any definitive conclusions,[69] and this is the obvious objection to other attempts to provide PIE etymologies for this divine name.[70] In regard to the suggested equation of *Palici* and *Alci* if labelled Celtic, more definite observations may be pronounced. Although reflexes of the PIE etymon with 'guarding' semantics are probably found in Celtic,[71] this equation is difficult to accept purely on formal grounds. The explanation of discrepancies exhibited by *Alci* as suggested by the Polish scholar ("[t]he syncope of the short vowel *-ĭ-* seems a quite common process, whereas the loss of the initial **p-* is such a phonological feature, which appears exclusively in the Celtic languages")[72] thus deserves a commentary. If indeed the PIE etymon contained the initial **p-*, its loss in Celtic is expected and unproblematic, of course, but to label this phenomenon exclusively Celtic would be erroneous. A more serious objection concerns the syncope of *-ĭ-*: infrequent in Gaulish, it is securely attested only for the composition vowel in compounds,[73] while Celtic names in *Virdo-* have been tentatively traced to *virido-* through syncope, but may be dealt with differently.[74] In addition, Prósper advocates a Common Celtic syncope of medial *-i-* between two sibilants,[75] and all these explanations are not applicable to our case. Besides, Gaulish **saliko-* as in the personal name *Salicogenna*, etc., normally glossed as 'willow'

[68]Blanca Maria Prósper, 'The Lusitanian oblique cases revisited: new light on the dative endings', in J. A. González Iglesias et al. (eds), *Curiositas nihil recusat: Studia Isabel Moreno Ferrero dicata* (Salamanca, 2021), 427–42, at 439, and 'Celto-Venetica: Indo-European names from north-eastern Italy and the dialectal classification of Venetic', *Voprosy onomastiki* 21 (2024), 9–50, at 20. Different strategies to explain its second component of the Lusitanian divine names have been used, see, e.g., Blanca Maria Prósper, 'The inscription of Cabeço das Fráguas revisited: Lusitanian and *Alteuropäisch* populations in the west of the Iberian Peninsula', *Transactions of the Philological Society* 97 (1999), 151–83, at 157–60 for a different etymology and, subsequently, cf. pp. 157–8 against attempts to discuss *Trebo-pala* together with *Viś-pala*. Cf. also Luján, 'Language and writing', 322 et passim.

[69]Cf., e.g., Markus Hartmann, 'Siculian', in L. Klein et al. (eds), *Handbook of Comparative and Historical Indo-European Linguistics*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 2017), 1854–7.

[70]See, e.g., Marcel Meulder, 'Les dieux sicules paliques portent un nom indo-européen', *Latomus* 57 (1998), 33–7, where it is derived from a colour name. Earlier literature in J. H. Croon, 'The Palici: an autochthonous cult in ancient Sicily', *Mnemosyne* 5 (1952), 116–29 (esp. 119–20, 125–7).

[71]Cf. Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*, 125 on Celt. **fasto-* 'growth' (as in OIr *ás*) < **peh₂-s-* 'herd, protect'. For the configuration, see Lucien van Beek, 'The etymology of Greek πέπαμαι', in B. S. Sandgaard Hansen et al. (ed.), *Etymology and the European Lexicon* (Wiesbaden, 2017), 427–41.

[72]Danka and Witczak, 'DEIS EQUEUNUBO', 23.

[73]See Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names*, 134, and Patrick Sims-Williams, 'The Celtic composition vowels *-i-* and *-u-*', 317. Cf. also Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel, 'The phonetic interface of word formation in Continental Celtic', in J. L. García Alonso (ed.), *Continental Celtic Word Formation: The Onomastic Data* (Salamanca, 2013), 63–84, at 78–9 for syncope in unstressed syllables.

[74]Schmidt, 'Die Komposition', 92, 296; Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names*, 125; cf. Delamarre, *Dictionnaire*, 321.

[75]E.g., Prósper, 'Celtic and Venetic', 153.

(cf. OIr *sail*, gen. *sailech*, W *helyg* 'id.') < **salik*- 'willow-tree'[76] presupposes that PIE (descriptive) **palik*- yields ***alik*- in Gaulish. As for Gaulish *alco*- attested in onomastics, its meaning and etymology remain disputable, and several approaches to deal with it are known.[77] In any event, to interpret – following Witczak – the Lepontic name *Alkouinos* (= Gaul. *Alcovindos*) as '[who is] white like the *Alci*', or the toponym *Alcobendas* near modern Madrid as 'hillock[s] of the *Alci*', appears unacceptable, as we are certainly dealing here with a common noun.[78]

Moreover, it is most likely that the name of the divine twins venerated by the *Nahanarvali* in the territory of modern Poland is not linguistically Celtic at all. A Germanic etymology has been applied to it, and quite often Proto-Germanic **alh*- 'temple' (Gothic *alhs*, Old English *ealh* 'id.')[79] is cited in this respect; whatever prehistoric details the word (and, respectively, the cult) might have remain by default disputable.[80] Much has been written on this cult venerated by one of tribes of *Lugiorum nomen* and its genesis, and as was summarized recently by Matthias Egeler in his comment on the testimony of Tacitus, 'the example of the divine brothers illustrates that Celtic-Germanic parallels may be due not only to borrowings or a process of exchange between these two peoples, but also to a shared heritage'.[81] It is more or less evident, however, that on purely linguistic grounds Siculian *Palici* cannot share its pre-history with Gaulish forms in *alco*-, and Venetic *alcomn*- is unrelated to the divine name from Sicily. Nevertheless, the Celtic and Venetic forms referred to *may* have a common PIE etymology with Tacitus's *Alci*, which is not linguistically Celtic. It is of course remarkable that apart from Celtic all these examples are discussed within the dioscuric narrative, and it has been noted that '[i]t is common for a pair of twins to be called by a single

[76]For the pre-history, see Rosemarie Lühr (ed.), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen* VII (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021) s.v. *sal(a)ha*, and cf. David Stifter, 'Prehistoric layers of loanwords in Old Irish', in G. Kroonen (ed.), *Sub-Indo-European Europe: Problems, Methods, Results* (Berlin, Boston, 2024), 157–202, at 171.

[77]It is traditionally rendered as 'elk', see Delamarre, *Dictionaire de la langue gauloise*, 38 with references; alternative suggestions (incl. < PIE **h₂elk*- 'ward off, defend') are discussed in David Stifter et al. (eds), *Lexicon Leponticum* (2009–), URL: https://lexlep.univie.ac.at/, s.v. **alk* (David Stifter, Corinna Salomon).

[78]For the former, see the previous footnote, for the latter, cf. Blanca Prósper, 'Indogermanisches bei einem ligurischen Wort: 'Ex rivo *Vindupale*' (*CIL* 5, 7749)', *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 33/2 (1998), 143–58, at 147–8 (I am grateful to Prof. Juan Luis García Alonso for this reference)

[79]See, e.g., Hellmut Rosenfeld, 'Die Dioskuren als λευκὼ πώλω und die Alces', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 89 (1940), 1–6, at 2, or Guus Kroonen, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Germanic* (Leiden, Boston, 2013), 22. Cf. also Ward, *The Divine Twins*, 43–4 for other Germanic approaches and most recently Anders Andrén, 'Divine Twins', in Jens Peter Schjødt et al. (eds), *Pre-Christian Religions of the North: History and Structures* (Turnhout, 2020), 1453–63, at 1456.

[80]Note that Rick Derksen, *Etymological Dictionary of the Baltic Inherited Lexicon* (Leiden, Boston, 2015), 49–50 discussing its Common Baltic cognate **alkas* (cf. Lith. *elkas* '(holy) grove on a hill, idol', *alka* (dial.) 'place on a hill where sacrifices are performed, sacrifice'), apart from the PIE etymology, to **h₂elk*- 'ward off, defend', admits that the Germanic and Baltic words may be of substratum origin. For the Baltic words and their meanings, see Dalia Pakalniškienė, Audronė Kaukienė and Jūratė Laučiūtė, 'Baltų kalbų žodynas (A)', *Res humanitariae* 4 (2008), 8–53, at 21–2 et passim.

[81]Matthias Egeler, *Celtic Influences in Germanic Religion: A Survey* (München, 2013), 19.

name in the plural, or dual'.[82] This description fits perfectly with the data from Veneto, Silesia and, probably, from Sicily, and the fact that the former two (as well as Gaulish onomastic *alco-* unrelated to the dioscuric narrative) may be etymologically connected is notable insofar that normally different motivations lie beyond dioscuric names, cf. the *Ashvins* in Sanskrit texts, lit. 'horse-possessors', or indeed Greek Διόσκοροι, Διόσκουροι, Διὸς κοῦροι 'sons of Zeus'. This possible interrelation of the Celtic, Venetic, and Germanic lexemes remains far from certain, of course, but a more definitive and negative response should be made to the attempts to reconstruct the common name of the divine brothers which goes back to PIE times.

The example discussed here should be viewed as a dramatic reminder that extreme caution should be exercised in dealing with the segmentation of linguistically Celtic divine names, for which data of an extra-linguistic nature becomes sometimes more important than the linguistic procedure itself. Moreover, with Venetic *alcomn-* and Germanic *Alci* we most likely deal with the same *signifié* (presented also in etymologically unclear Siculian *Palici*), and in both areas Celtic linguistic traces are fairly well visible. Nevertheless, it is still yet another illustration of 'the long arm of coincidence', and this rather imperceptible factor should be borne in mind in the discussion of methodologies and the natural difficulties pertaining to this field of academic exercise. Obviously, the selection of linguistically Celtic divine names is particularly difficult in those regions which are represented by onomastic languages, and I have dealt with a reasonable amount of this type of data preserved in the Roman epigraphy of various parts of eastern, central and southern Europe to the effect that, e.g., *Dea Orcia*, *Porobonus*, *Sedatus*, *Tamitenus*, or *Vertumnus*, which have been considered linguistically Celtic at given attestations by a number of scholars, should most probably be removed from these discussions.[83] More recently, analysing the evidence of the lack of linguistically Celtic divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria in modern Croatia I was forced to go back to the same set of questions in order to demonstrate that local attestations of *Ica*, *Sentona*, *Trita* (and *Iria* in the neighbouring Liburnia) should be excluded from any further discussion of *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz*, although they have been rather constantly referred to as Gaulish in academic literature.[84] Fortunately, this revision of the data in favour of its epichoricity is now becoming a trend in historical Celtic linguistics, and non-Celtic approaches have been used aptly, e.g., to analyse the divine names *Adsalluta* and *Sauercna* in Alpine regions by Repanšek.[85] Certainly, to pronounce a (divine) name found, for example, in Holder's still useful compendium or elsewhere in the existing all-inclusive surveys as non-Celtic is a Sisyphean task, even for those areas

[82]Ward, *The Divine Twins*, 6.

[83]Alexander Falileyev, *The Celtic Balkans* (Aberystwyth, 2013), 108, 111, 121–2, 134, 150; Alexander Falileyev, 'Where linguistics fails: towards interpretations of some divine names in the Roman Danubian Provinces', in L. Zerbini (ed.), *Culti e religiosità nelle province Danubiane* (Bologna, 2015), 167–76, at 168–72; Ascold Ivantchik and Alexander Falileyev, 'A Celtic dedication from Olbia? A Reassesment', in K. Konuk (ed.), *Stephanèphoros* (Bordeaux, 2012), 335–40.

[84]Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria', 419–39.

[85]Repanšek, *Keltska dediščina*, 43–4 and 46.

where we have a much better understanding of the languages used there in antiquity.[86] Purely linguistic analysis, however perfect and precise it may be, is not a universal remedy to ensure proper selection of the data, as has been shown on many occasions.[87] Nevertheless, there exists a certain tendency in modern Celtic studies which takes for granted that nearly anything which can be linguistically explained as Celtic is in fact Celtic. This undoubtedly constitutes an enormous methodological problem in its own right, since with a variation of the Midas touch everything obscure may be turned into Celtic. To take this point to its extreme, the name *Midas* itself allows for a Celtic linguistic approach within this framework, and Gaulish *mid* attested in the calendar of Coligny might be quoted in support of the claim as well as an impressive amount of forms in *-as* collected as Celtic by J. Whatmough in his great *Dialects of Ancient Gaul*.[88]

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[86]Celto-Germanic areas of interactions come instantly to mind, see recently, e.g., Torsten Meißner, 'Celtic and Germanic names and naming traditions', in T. Meißner (ed.), *Personal Names in the Western Roman World* (Berlin, 2012), 179–98, at 191.

[87]See, e.g., Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Celtic personal names', in T. Meißner (ed.), *Personal Names in the Western Roman World* (Berlin, 2012), 151–66 (cf. '[t]he fact that the name or a similar one can be found in authoritative-looking works such as Holder's *Alt-celtischer Sprachschatz* is no guarantee that the name really is Celtic and often leads to circular arguments. It is also perilous to argue that a name must be Celtic because a plausible Celtic stem can be found in the Indo-European and Celtic etymological dictionaries, for many names are open to multiple etymologies', p. 151) or Falileyev, 'Divine names from Latin inscriptions of Istria', 434–5, where a Celtic approach to the number of Near Eastern divine names is applied outrageously as an attempt to illustrated the fallacy of a strictly linguistic procedure.

[88]For Gaulish *mid* 'month' see Delamarre, *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise*, 226–7; for forms in *-as* see, e.g., Whatmough, *The Dialects of Ancient Gaul*, 192 (*Baginas*), 868 (*Buccas*), 1079 (*Arcas*), 1106 (*Aduenas*), etc. This article is based on my paper delivered at Lisbon F.E.R.C.An. workshop in 2016, and the contribution to its *Proceedings* written shortly afterwards. I am grateful to the participants for a useful discussion and to Dr Simon Rodway for his comments on an earlier draft of the paper. The *Proceedings* were never published, and the present version of the text incorporates more details and takes more recent discussions into account. This additional research became possible within the Leverhulme Trust Project RPG-2025-116 'Celtic Britain and Ireland: An Etymological and Historical Dictionary of Early Celtic'.