

## Celtic Source 1

### *Lugus*

#### 1. Lugus as Mercury?

- Interpretatio Romana; Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VI.17.1 (c. 50 BC):

*They worship as their divinity, Mercury in particular, and have many images of him, and regard him as the inventor of all arts, they consider him the guide of their journeys and marches, and believe him to have great influence over the acquisition of gain and mercantile transactions.*

- Places associated with Lugus:

Lugdunum - Lyon, France

Luguvalium - Carlisle, England

Dinlleu and Nantlleu - Wales

#### 2. Lug

- *Lamfada* ('of the long arm'); *Ildánach* ('skilled in many arts'); *Samildánach* ('equally skilled in many arts').

- Cath Maige Tuired, 'The Battle of Moytura'

- <https://storyarchaeology.com/cath-maige-tuired-sections-1-14/>

- <https://celt.ucc.ie//published/T300010/index.html>

- Elizabeth A. Gray, *Cath Maige Tuired: The Second Battle of Mag Tuired* (British Library, Harleian MS 5280, 63a-70b) c. 800 AD, p.41- 62:

After Bres, Núadu was once more in the kingship over the Túatha Dé; and at that time he held a great feast for the Túatha Dé in Tara. Now there was a certain warrior whose name

was Samildánach on his way to Tara. At that time there were doorkeepers at Tara named Gamal mac Figail and Camall mac Ríagail. While the latter was on duty, he saw the strange company coming toward him. A handsome, well-built young warrior with a king's diadem was at the front of the band.

They told the doorkeeper to announce their arrival in Tara. The doorkeeper asked, 'Who is there?'

'Lug Lonnansclech is here, the son of Cían son of Dían Cécht and of Ethne daughter of Balor. He is the foster son of Tailtiu the daughter of Magmór, the king of Spain, and of Eochaid Garb mac Dúach.'

The doorkeeper then asked of Samildánach, 'What art do you practice? For no one without an art enters Tara.'

'Question me,' he said. 'I am a builder.' The doorkeeper answered, 'We do not need you. We have a builder already, Luchta mac Lúachada.'

He said, 'Question me, doorkeeper: I am a smith.' The doorkeeper answered him, 'We have a smith already, Colum Cúaléinech of the three new techniques.'

He said, 'Question me: I am a champion.' The doorkeeper answered, 'We do not need you. We have a champion already, Ogma mac Ethlend.'

He said again, 'Question me.' 'I am a harper,' he said. 'We do not need you. We have a harper already, Abcán mac Bicelmois, whom the men of the three gods chose in the síd-mounds.'

. . . I am a warrior. . . . I am a poet and a historian. . . . I am a sorcerer. . . . I am a physician. . . . I am a cupbearer. . . . I am a good brazier. . . .

He said, 'Ask the king whether he has one man who possesses all these arts: if he has I will not be able to enter Tara.'

Then the doorkeeper went into the royal hall and told everything to the king. 'A warrior has come before the court,' he said, 'named Samildánach; and all the arts which help your people, he practices them all, so that he is the man of each and every art.' . . .

. . . 'Let him into the court,' said Núadu, 'for a man like that has never before come into this fortress.'

Then the doorkeeper let him past, and he went into the fortress, and he sat in the seat of the sage, because he was a sage in every art.

. . .

In order to protect him, the men of Ireland had agreed to keep Lug from the battle. His nine foster fathers came to guard him: Tollusdam and Echdam and Eru, Rechtaid Finn and Fosad and Feidlimid, Ibar and Scibar and Minn. They feared an early death for the warrior because of the great number of his arts. For that reason they did not let him go to the battle.

...

Then in this way Lug addressed each of them in turn concerning their arts, strengthening them and addressing them in such a way that every man had the courage of a king or great lord.

...

On the other side, the Túatha Dé Danann arose and left his nine companions guarding Lug, and went to join the battle. But when the battle ensued, Lug escaped from the guard set over him, as a chariot-fighter, and it was he who was in front of the battalion of the Túatha Dé. Then a keen and cruel battle was fought between the race of the Fomoiré and the men of Ireland.

Lug was urging the men of Ireland to fight the battle fiercely so they should not be in bondage any longer, because it was better for them to find death while protecting their fatherland than to be in bondage and under tribute as they had been. Then Lug chanted the spell which follows, going around the men of Ireland on one foot and with one eye closed  
[gap: meaning of text unclear]

...

Then Núadu Silverhand and Macha the daughter of Ernmas fell at the hands of Balor grandson of Nét. Casmáel fell at the hands of Ochtríallach son of Indech. Lug and Balor of the piercing eye met in the battle. The latter had a destructive eye which was never opened except on a battlefield. Four men would raise the lid of the eye by a polished ring in its lid. The host which looked at that eye, even if they were many thousands in number, would offer no resistance to warriors. It had that poisonous power for this reason: once his father's druids were brewing magic. He came and looked over the window, and the fumes of the concoction affected the eye and the venomous power of the brew settled in it. Then he and Lug met. [gap: meaning of text unclear]

‘Lift up my eyelid, lad,’ said Balor, ‘so I may see the talkative fellow who is conversing with me.’

The lid was raised from Balor's eye. Then Lug cast a sling stone at him which carried the eye through his head, and it was his own host that looked at it. He fell on top of the Fomorian host so that twenty-seven of them died under his side; and the crown of his head struck against the breast of Indech mac Dé Domnann so that a gush of blood spouted over his lips.

### 3. Culhwch

- Sioned Davies, 'Culhwch and Olwen', *The Mabinogion* (Oxford World's Classics).

The boy went off on a steed with a gleaming grey head, four winters old, well-jointed stride, shell-like hoofs, and a tubular gold bridle-bit in its mouth, with a precious gold saddle beneath him, and two sharp spears of silver in his hand. He had a battle-axe in his hand, etc etc . . . Not even the tip of a hair on him stirred, so light was his steed's canter beneath him on his way to the gate of Arthur's court.

The boy said, 'Is there a gatekeeper?' 'There is. And as for you, may you lose your head for asking. I am gatekeeper to Arthur each first day of January, . . .

'Open the gate.'

'No, I won't.'

'Why won't you open it?'

'Knife has gone into meat and drink into horn, and a thronging in the hall of Arthur. Apart from the son of the lawful king of a country, or a craftsman who brings his craft, none will be allowed to enter. You shall have food for your dogs and corn for your horse, and hot peppered chops for yourself, and wine brimming over, and songs to entertain you. . . .'

. . . The boy said, 'I will do none of that. If you open the gate, well and good. If not, I will bring dishonour on your lord and give you a bad name. . . .'

. . . Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr said, 'However much you shout against the laws of Arthur's court, you shall not be allowed in until I go and speak with Arthur first.'

And Glewlwyd came into the hall. Arthur said to him, 'You have news from the gate?' 'I do — Two thirds of my life have gone and two thirds of your own. I was once in Caer Se and Asse, . . . I was once in Caer Oeth and Anoeth, and in Caer Nefenhyr Nawdant: fair kingly men did we see there — but I never in my life saw a man as handsome as the one who is at the entrance to the gate this very moment.'

Arthur said, 'If you came in walking, then go out running. And he who looks at the light and who opens his eye and then closes it, an injunction upon him. And let some serve with golden drinking-horns and others with hot peppered chops until he has plenty of food and drink.'

. . .

And the third day they came to the court. They said, ‘Ysbaddaden Bencawr, do not aim at us again. Do not bring harm and hurt and death upon yourself.’ ‘Where are my servants? Raise the forks—my eyelids have fallen down over my eyeballs—so that I may take a look at my prospective son-in-law.’ They got up, and as they got up he took the third poisoned stone spear and hurled it after them. And Culhwch caught it and hurled it back as he had longed to do, and pierced him in his eyeball so that it came out through the nape of his neck. ‘Cursed, savage son-in-law, as long as I live my eyesight shall be the worse. When I walk against the wind, my eyes will water; I shall have a headache and giddiness with each new moon.

#### 4. Llew Llaw Gyffes

- Llew of the skilful hand:

‘Who are the people in the ship?’ said Aranrhod. ‘Shoemakers,’ they said. ‘Go and see what kind of leather they have, and what sort of work they are doing.’ They went. When they arrived, Gwydion was colouring Cordovan leather with gold. Then the messengers returned and told her.

‘Good,’ she said, ‘measure my foot and ask the shoemaker to make shoes for me.’

He made the shoes, not according to her size, but bigger. They bring her the shoes. Behold, the shoes are too big.

‘These are too big,’ she said. ‘He shall be paid for these, but let him also make some that are smaller.’ So he made others much smaller than her foot, and sent them to her.

‘Tell him that not one of these shoes fits me,’ she said.

He was told that.

‘Fine,’ he said, ‘I will not make shoes for her until I see her foot.’

And she was told that.

‘Fine,’ she said, ‘I will go to him.’

Then Aranrhod went to the ship, and when she arrived he was cutting out and the boy was stitching.

‘Lady,’ he said, ‘good day to you.’

‘May God prosper you,’ she said. ‘I find it strange that you could not make shoes to fit.’

‘I could not,’ he said. ‘But I can, now.’

And suddenly a wren lands on the deck of the ship. The boy aims at it and hits it in the leg, between the tendon and the bone. She laughs.

‘God knows,’ she said, ‘it is with a skilful hand that the fair-haired one has hit it.’

‘Indeed,’ he said. ‘And God’s curse upon you. He has got a new name, and it’s good enough. From now on he is Llew Llaw Gyffes.’

- *lleu*, as in MW *goleu*, W *golau*, ‘light’.