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# The Early Medieval Irish and Indic Polities and the Concept of Righteous Ruler

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The purpose of this paper is to address the topic of moral cosmos from the viewpoint of early Indic and Irish political thought. What sort of ideas constituted the moral cosmos of the ruler in the early societies of Ireland and India? How close are the ideas of the two societies? Can we establish any connection between them? And, if we can, what kind of connection may it be?

Before we go into a detailed analysis of the Irish and Indic sources on righteous kingship, first let us deal with the following issues: methodology, key terms, structures and ideas. In our opinion, the word “polity” may serve as a clue to a proper understanding of the depictions of kingship presented in the early Irish and Indic documents. We take *polity*, denoting the political culture of a society, to be distinct from *politics*, which means the political process as it is in reality. Polity is an ideal notion, encompassing a realm of ideas concerning what the proper ruler should look like, how he should behave, what morality he should personify, and in what form – whether in the form of a fable, or a myth, or an instruction – these ideas should be related to him. It is different from “politics”, which is a realistic concept and stands for the ruler’s political activity in a given historical period. Polity can be seen as the essence of secular power in its transcendental dimension, and politics as the essence of secular power in its pragmatic perspective. In early societies polity is closely related to the theological vision of power; the perception of ideal rule that one may witness in the primary sources is to a great extent dominated by the religious archetype current in the society. This archetype serves as the basis for the subsequent development of political thought.<sup>1</sup>

## THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Ideal kingship can be defined in a variety of different ways. Early Greeks – and I refer to the point of view of Aristotle – presented the ideal relationship between a king and his subjects as the one between a father and his children.<sup>2</sup> Early Persians called King Darius a good king on account of his numerous invasions and conquests of foreign lands.<sup>3</sup> In the works of medieval scholiasts, a good king was depicted as a corrector of the wicked and a law-giver.<sup>4</sup> The sources from early Christian Ireland and early medieval India give strikingly similar depictions of ideal kingship, based not only on the universal topics of justice and punishment usually connected with kingship but also on moral themes.<sup>5</sup> Not so long ago, however, there was an extensive amount of controversy about the legitimacy of making any sort of comparisons between the early Irish and early Indian polities.<sup>6</sup> The criticism emerged as a response to the earlier findings of James G. Frazer (1933: 10, 89, 171, 262-3), Georges Dumézil (1973: 98) and Emile Benveniste (1973), who all argued that the early Irish and early Indian societies retained extremely archaic and conservative features inherited from the common Indo-European background.<sup>7</sup> Their ideas are still current among comparativists, and *Myth, Cosmos, and Society* by Bruce Lincoln (1986) is probably one of the recent books written from this perspective.

I wish to distance myself from their approach. It should be pointed out that the early medieval Irish ideology of kingship was far from being archaic, but was quite up-to-date

with the political doctrine of its time, and the early Irish documents, presenting us with a depiction of kings and royalty, should be looked at from this point of view.<sup>8</sup> This can be proved by looking at the earliest specimen of Irish political thought written in the Irish variant of Latin (called Hiberno-Latin by the medievalists) in the early seventh century by Mo-Chúaróc maccu Neth Sémon (Cronanus *sapiens*), a pupil of Sinlán of Bangor (see Breen 1988: 229). Chronologically, this composition is the oldest surviving text written in Ireland<sup>9</sup> on the topic of ideal kingship. This extremely important passage is contained in the Hiberno-Latin document *De duodecim abusiuis saeculi*, “Concerning the twelve abuses of the world” (hereinafter *De duodecim*) under the rubric *Nonus abusionis gradus est rex iniquus*, “The ninth abuse of the world is an unjust king” (Hellmann 1909: 51.3). The introduction to this section of *De duodecim*, wholly devoted to a depiction of good versus bad kingship, starts with:

*Quem cum iniquorum correctorem esse oportuit, licet in semet ipso nominis sui dignitatem non custodit. Nomen enim regis intellectualiter hoc retinet, ut subiectis omnibus rectoris officium procuret. Sed qualiter alios corrigere poterit qui proprios mores ne iniqui sint non corrigit?* (Hellmann 1909: 51.3-8; my bold print)

Who, although he ought to be the corrector of the wicked, does not maintain the dignity of his name even as regards himself. For the name of a king implies that he ought to perform the function of director for all those who are subject to him. But how will he be able to correct others if he does not correct his own behaviour, lest it be unjust?<sup>10</sup>

In the opinion of the author the king (*rex*) exercises his rule (*rectoris officium*) by correcting (*corrigenere*) the moral behaviour (*proprius mores*) of his subjects and of himself. This theme constitutes the main principle of narration built upon the different connotations and the shift in meaning that the range of the nouns *rex*, *rector*, *corrector*, as well as the verb *corrigenere*, imply. This etymology deriving *rex*, “a king”, from the corresponding *regere*, “to govern, to lead”, was quite common in medieval literature.<sup>11</sup> There are also many other examples of it in Hiberno-Latin sources from quite an early date; for instance, *rex* and *rectum* are linked in one of the passages in *Altus Prosator*, a late sixth-century poem, attributed to St Columba,<sup>12</sup> in the collocation *regis regum rectissimi*, “the most righteous King of kings” (Clancy and Márkus, eds, 1995: 50-1). Overall, the etymology *rex-rectus/ rector* was a commonplace of early medieval literature: a collocation *reges a regendo vocati*, “kings are thus called from (the word) ruling” was employed by Isidore of Seville among his first examples of etymology as such (VII.xii.17).

It is to be noted that vernacular Irish sources have something to offer in this regard. A similar “popular” etymology of the native cognate of Lat. *rex*, an Old Irish (hereinafter OIr.) noun *rí*, “a king”, was afforded by an early eighth century legal tract on status, *Críth Gablach* (Binchy, ed., 1941: ll. 444-5). Its etymology is based upon the similarity between the noun *rí*, “a king”, the simple verb *rigid*, “stretches, extends”, and *cuindrech*, verbal noun of *con-dírig*, “corrects, controls”.

*Rí, cid ara n-eperr? Arindí riges cumachtu(i) chun[d]rig for a thúatha(i).*

King, on what account is it said so? Because he extends the power of control over his people. (Binchy, ed., 1941: 18 §30; my bold print)

It was D. A. Binchy who first drew scholarly attention to the above etymology, trying to connect it with the one established by Benveniste (1973: 311-12) for an Indo-European stem *\*reg-*, through a Greek verb, *opéyo*, “stretch out”, and Lat. *regere fines*, “trace out

limits by straight lines”, paralleled by an OIr. *rigid*, “stretches, extends”, in our source. His inclination was to support Benveniste’s opinion on the archaic character of the royal institution in Ireland, and its close resemblance to the Italic *rex sacrorum* (Binchy 1970: 3, 9).

However, in view of the etymology offered by *De duodecim*, and the correspondence between the passages in terms of ideology and terminology, Binchy’s suggestion seems improbable. The king (Lat. *rex*), in the view of the author of *De duodecim*, has a function of correction (Lat. *corrigere*); similarly, in the Irish legal tract the king (OIr. *ri*) has to extend “the power of control” (OIr. *cumachtu(i) chun[d]rig*). The OIr. word *cundrig* is a verbal noun of the verb *con-drig*, “controls, checks”, which is etymologically derived from \**com-dí-reg* (Pedersen, ed., 1909-13: 2.596). The Irish *chundrig* may be regarded therefore as a calque on the Lat. *corrigere* (\**cum/regere*), as both words have the prefix \**com-* and the stem \**reg-* among their components. It is therefore quite legitimate to conclude that *Críth Gablach*’s etymology stemmed from the one in *De duodecim*, which is very likely, or from some other source available, which is less likely, and not from the archaic royal institutions of the Irish.

#### A TYPOLOGICAL APPROACH

However, when rejecting the traditional approach to the subject, it is important to replace it with a different one, grounded on other reasons and defined from another angle.<sup>13</sup>

I shall consider the similarities between the Irish and Indian polities from a typological point of view. I shall argue that many of the parallels noted below are to be understood in terms of analogues in their cultural development, and also that the institution of kingship served as a bridge between the old and the new traditions, incorporating elements of both.

What kind of similarities can we thus speak about?

What we know is that, before the advent of Christianity and Buddhism, the religious institutions of Brahmanism and druidism – “powerful colleges of priests who were repositories of sacred traditions, which they maintained with a formalist vigour” (Benveniste 1973: 308) – were exercising their authority in early India and early Ireland.

Brahmanism, as we know from the early Indian legal codes (called *dharmaśāstras* in Sanskrit (hereinafter Skt.)), was primarily concerned with ritual and the performance of religious rites in everyday life. Each male member of society was given a position in society according to his age (Skt. *āśrāma*) and his rank (Skt. *varṇa*).<sup>14</sup> This constituted the essence of personal existence, denoted by the fundamental notion of *dharma*. In contrast to Brahmanism, the religion of Buddhism looked at public life from another angle. For Buddhists, *dharma* was a universal concept, meaning the proper way to behave, based on Buddhist morality.<sup>15</sup> The performance of ritual as a socially prescribed norm of human existence was not so important for Buddhists as was the practising of certain rules of moral conduct.<sup>16</sup>

As the comparison between druids and brahmins is a common-place in comparative studies, let us next deal with the subject of the religious institution of druidism. What do the primary sources tell us about it?

Firstly, there are references to the druids in the works of classical ethnographers, who present them either as moral philosophers and theologians, who “search into secret and sublime things”, or as the legal experts and mentors of the young, and also as priests, performing human sacrifices and practices of divination. Still, the classical accounts can not be regarded as based solely on first-hand experience, but rather as drawing on the literary model of describing primitive barbaric peoples and their customs, including their religion.<sup>17</sup> Also the classical authors never had Ireland as the subject of their description.

Therefore, we cannot be sure that the picture obtained from the Greek and Latin sources is applicable to pre-Christian Ireland.

Secondly, there are references to druids in the Irish hagiography, where they are mainly presented as magicians, idol-worshippers and sorcerers, and the opinion of Irish hagiographers here is derived from Old Testament models (McCone 1990: 35).

With such scant and uncertain evidence, it does not seem possible to make a meaningful comparison between druidism and brahmanism. The temptation to attempt such comparisons, on the basis of superficial similarities, goes back beyond Dumézil and Benveniste as far as the classical authors themselves;<sup>18</sup> but it should be resisted.

Nevertheless, it is tempting to draw a parallel between the early societies of Ireland and India in terms of their cultural development: Buddhism replaced brahmanism in the Northern Indian kingdom of Magadha during the rule of the first royal Buddhist convert Ashoka (*floruit* 248 BC), and Christianity replaced druidism in Ireland owing largely to the activity of missionaries. The overall transfer from one belief system to another can be described as a socio-religious transformation, in which a religious movement which emphasised moral teaching replaced a religious institution of ritual and sacrifice.

#### THE CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST POLITIES IN IRELAND AND INDIA

If one were to compare the religious institutions of early Christian Ireland and early medieval India, it is the similarities between the Irish form of Christianity, known as “Irish monasticism” (Hughes 1966; Ryan 1992 [1931]), and Buddhist religious organisation (*sangha*, or “religious community”) that might attract scholars. However, I shall not be going into detailed discussion of this or other matters such as the parallel developments of the religions (each “planned” as a religion “for an elite” and turned into one “for the masses”) and the topic of similarities between the Buddhist and Christian ethics.<sup>19</sup>

Our interest here is to establish a correspondence between the Christian and Buddhist polities, seen in their Irish and Indian dimensions. It is necessary to point out two things in this regard. First, both religions “encouraged the formation of a *new two-class society*” (Küng et al. 1987: 350), creating the religious dualism of elite and masses, clergy and laity, as opposed to a primitive threefold division of the society into priests, warriors and cultivators (Dumézil 1968: 73). Second, they also associated themselves with monarchical government: “together with a monk as the supreme religious ideal, the ‘just king’ was a guiding figure for the Buddhist society” (Küng et al. 1987: 352). The same can be said of the Christian polity. However, the origin of the concept of the “just king” (or the “righteous ruler” in the terminology proposed above) still raises many questions for historians of Christian and Buddhist political thought.

Comparison between Ireland and India is very promising in this regard; the depictions of ideal kingship in both cultures played a crucial role in the formation of the socio-political doctrines of Christianity and Buddhism. As far as the Irish evidence is concerned, the doctrine of a pious Christian king that prevailed in medieval Europe from Charlemagne to Louis IX owed much to the teachings of the early Irish scholars.<sup>20</sup> As regards early medieval India, the conception of Universal Monarch, still current in the Buddhist states of Sri Lanka and South-East Asia, owed much to the teaching of the *Arthaśāstra*, an ancient Indian treatise on politics (Tambiah 1976: 19f.; Gonda 1969: 126-8).

The sources that I will employ in my exposition of the Irish and Indic evidence will therefore be the passages that stood at the basis of the Christian and Buddhist understanding of what the ideal (or, in the terminology of the sources, “righteous”) king ought to be. We have already looked at a piece of evidence from a highly influential composition, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, in connection with the etymology of the word *rex*, “a king”, advanced in the text in relation to the topic of the king’s proper functioning. The

three passages from the text that we shall be dealing with now are contained in the *Collectio Canonum* and constitute the core of the Catholic Church's teaching concerning the good king.<sup>21</sup> On the Indian side the most pertinent comparanda to it, as I think, appear in the doctrinal lecture of Buddha devoted to ideal kingship known as *Cakkavattisihanāda-sutta*, "The Sutra of the Lion's Roar of a Universal Monarch".

#### THE EVIDENCE OF *DE DUODECIM ABUSIUIS SAECULI*

Let us look at the evidence of *De duodecim* in more detail.

The first part of the section consists of the string of short precepts, enumerating the components of the ruler's justice, such as:

*neminem iniuste per potentiam opprimere, ... pauperes elemosynis alere, senes et sapientes et sobrios consiliarios habere, ... furta cohibere, adulteria punire, ... parricidas et periurantes vivere non sinere, ante horas congruas non gustare cibum...*

To oppress nobody unjustly by his might, to sustain the poor with alms, to have as counsellors the old, the wise and the moderate, to repress thefts, to punish adultery ... not to allow parricides and perjurers to live, not to taste food before the suitable time.

The section finishes off with a famous passage from Ecclesiastes 10:16:

*Vae enim terrae, cuius rex est puer et cuius principes mane comedunt.*

Woe to the land, whose king is a boy and whose governors start eating early in the morning.<sup>22</sup>

The second part of the section envisages the consequences of unjust rule, and describes the cosmos torn apart by foreign invaders and natural catastrophes.

*Multi et varii dolores prosperitatem regni inficiunt: carorum et liberorum mortes tristitiam conferunt, hostium incursus provincias undique vastant, bestiae armentorum et pecorum greges dilacerant, tempestates aeris et hiemisperia turbata terrarum fecunditatem et maris ministeria prohibent et aliquando fulminum ictus segetes et arborum flores et pampinos exurunt.*

Numerous and various troubles corrupt the prosperity of his kingdom, the deaths of dear ones and of children bring sorrow, attacks of enemies from everywhere devastate the provinces, beasts tear into pieces the droves of the herds and of the flocks, storms of the air and agitated skies keep destroying the fecundity of the land and the supplies of the sea, and at times the blows of lightnings strip bare the crops and the flowers and young leaves of the trees.

The third part is a logical continuation of the second, presenting the central principle of just rule, "the justice of the king" (*iustitia regis*). It is described in sequences of paired nouns, one of these a dependent genitive. Some of the collocations of the third part are direct opposites to those in the second part: for example, the misfortunes of unjust rule in the second part are said to be *tristitiam, ... tempestates aeris*, "sorrow, ... storms of the air", while the third part has *iustitia regis ...est ...gaudium hominum, temperum aeris*, "the

justice of the king ... is ... the joy of human beings, mildness of the air". Other topics include: the topic of abundance expressed by collocations such as *iustitia regis est ... terrae fecunditas et maris ministeria*, "the justice of the king is ... the fecundity of the land and the supplies of the sea", as well as of the protective characteristics of the ruler, incorporated as [*iustitia regis est...*] *tutamen patriae*, ... *munimentum gentis* "[the justice of the king is ...] the protection of his native land, ... the protection of the nation", and some purely ecclesiastical precepts are seen in this part as well: [*iustitia regis est ...*] *cura languorum ... solacium pauperum*, "[the justice of the king is ...] the healing of weaknesses ... the relief of the poor".

All of the ideas listed above would be seen nowadays as common-places of moral advice to kings, but one reason why the advice is so familiar to us is because this very tract was to be copied, and its ad-vice repeated, by the churchmen and political theorists of Carolingian Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries, and from their works the teaching was transmitted to later medieval writers.<sup>24</sup>

What can one say about the basis of the ideas?

As far as the first part is concerned, in terms of phraseology and ideology the Irish author relies heavily upon the tradition of patristic and biblical exegesis of his time.<sup>25</sup> For instance, the first injunction in this series reads *neminem iniuste per potentiam opprimere*, "to des-troy nobody unjustly by might". I have noted the following thematic parallels with Ps.-Cyprian's account of the excessive abuse of power in St Gildas's work *De excidio Britonum*:

*Propter hoc dissipata est lex et non perducitur ad finem iudicium, quia impius per potentiam deprimit iustum.*

For this reason has the law been scattered, and the judgement is not brought to its full end, because an impious man uses his power to oppress the just. (Gildas, ed. and tr. Winterbottom 1978: 113, 46)

A precept for the king not to allow parricides and perjurers to live (*parricidas et periurantes vivere non sinere*) may also go back to the insular writings, such as the *Epistola* of St Patrick and the already mentioned *De excidio Britonum* of Gildas, as "Patrick and Gildas both show concern about rulers swearing false oaths."<sup>26</sup> Gildas also denounces the crime of parricide and other sins mentioned by the author of *De duodecim*, such as adultery.<sup>27</sup> As far as other maxims of the first part of the section are concerned, I have shown elsewhere (Fomin 2003: 39-57) that their sources can be encountered without any difficulty throughout the Bible, patristic sources and insular monastic literature.

However, it is not so easy to prove biblical or patristic origin of the second part of the section. In order to find a picture similar to the one in *De duodecim*, we may look at the descriptions of natural catastrophes that punish wicked kings of the Old Testament. I allude to the famous passages from Exodus 7-9, where several types of natural catastrophes falling upon the Egyptians are portrayed. However, one can hardly find any kind of catastrophe to match those exhibited in our text, with the minor exception of the death of the first-born at Ex. 12:30, which provides a loose parallel to the "deaths of dear ones and of children" (*carorum et liberorum mortes*) in our text.

The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, which was established by Hellmann as among the sources of the first part of *De duodecim*, provides an extensive list of instances, affording two types of catastrophes which slightly resemble the ones in *De duodecim*. We may note the terminological differences between the texts: describing the invasions of foreign troops in 4:29, the Book of Jeremiah speaks of *equities et mittentis*, 'horsemen and archers', rather than *hostes*, 'enemies', as *De duodecim* does. The enumeration of wild animals, given in Jer. 5:6 as *leo, lupus, pardus*, 'a lion, a wolf, a male panther',<sup>28</sup> is also very

different from the more general term *bestiae*, ‘beasts’, of *De duodecim*. The latter does, however, crop up in Jer. 15:3.<sup>29</sup> This passage differs from the one in *De duodecim* in terms of context: *De duodecim* describes catastrophes happening as the result of the king’s injustice (*iniquitas regi*), while Jeremiah had earlier provided a picture of the wicked character of the land’s inhabitants as the cause of disruptions in the natural order in 12:4:

*Usquequo lugebit terra et herba omnis regionis siccabitur  
propter malitiam habitantium in ea consumptum est animal et volucre* (Weber, 1985, 1183)

For how long will the land mourn and the grass of every region will be dried up?  
Because of the malice of its inhabitants, beast and bird are consumed.

In almost all respects, then, the exposition of disasters in Jeremiah disagrees with our list of calamities: the conceptual resemblance is loose, and in none of them do we have direct verbal parallels to our text.<sup>30</sup>

If we turn ourselves to the Irish sources, for instance, the vernacular Irish tradition of *speculi principibus* or wisdom-texts, devoted to kings, we may find some passages, corresponding to *De duodecim*’s exposition of disasters.

In the oldest surviving recension of the Irish wisdom-text, ‘The Testament of Morand’ (OIr. *Audacht Morainn*, hereinafter *AM*) the ruler’s righteousness is said to prevent his subjects from “plagues, numerous (invading)-hosts and great lightnings” (OIr. *mortlithi mórslóg no márloch*) (Kelly 1976: 6, §12). On the notional level the correspondences between the vernacular texts and *De duodecim* do not seem immediately obvious. Again, *De duodecim*’s set of disasters starts with the deaths of the dear ones and the children (*carorum et liberorum mortes*), which slightly resembles the first item of the *AM*’s triad (OIr. *mortlithi*, “plagues”). Then *De duodecim* is speaking about foreign invaders (*hostium incursus*, lit. “attacks of enemies”), causing devastation of land, reminiscent of *AM*’s “great (invading)-hosts” (OIr. *mórslóg*) and also of severe storms and lightnings destroying the fecundity of land, paralleled by *AM*’s “great lightnings” (OIr. *márloch*). The correspondences in terms of wording are not striking either. The collocations denoting different types of disasters are constructed on a different basis in each text. Those in *De duodecim* follow the pattern NOUN + GEN.PL. *AM*’s enumeration consists visually of compounds whose first element is the adjective *már/mór*, ‘great’.

*AM* also goes on to say that the righteousness of the ruler produces different types of fortunes, such as the fertility of land (OIr. *tír toirthrech*) (Kelly 1976: 60, §14); “enclosures of protection of cattle” (OIr. *comrara comge cethre*) (Kelly 1976: 8, §27); conception of human progeny (OIr. *clanda caini cain-tussimter*) (Kelly 1976: 8, §21, translating “fair children are well begotten”). Although the herds and the flocks (*armentorum et pecorum greges*), the children and the beloved ones (*cari et liberi*) etc. are said to be distorted by beasts (*bestiae*) and enemies (*hostes*) in *De duodecim*, they are actually the components of the ‘prosperity of the kingdom’ (*prosperitas regni*), created by the justice of the ruler (*iustitia regis*) and may therefore be taken into consideration as corresponding to *AM*’s collocations just mentioned.

The third part of the ninth section of *De duodecim* is solely dedicated to a concept of *iustitia regis*, “the justice of a king”, which is described as the law (*lex*) for every ruler to follow.<sup>31</sup> It was noted by Breen that the implications of the fact that the concept of *iustitia*, “justice”, pertained throughout the text, are still to be investigated<sup>32</sup> and, in his opinion, the uses of the word are strictly ecclesiastical. However, in our passage the concept is used restrictively with regard to a mundane ruler. When the author is enumerating the consequences of the ruler’s justice he does not refer to the ruler’s “divine grace”, or to any other transcendental characteristics as its cause. Moreover, the Irish author seems to

neglect the approach he had already taken to the subject in the first part of the section. This discrepancy in his ideas may serve as an indication of the authentic Irish background of the sources of the second and the third part.

Let us consider the stoic advice to a king to meet both the prosperity and the adversities of his rule regardless of their effects,<sup>33</sup> contained in the first part of the section. It is based on the precepts, found in monastic rules by Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great and other Church Fathers, to treat both good and bad fortune equally.<sup>34</sup> This idea is a commonplace in the patristic literature and for that reason it may have been incorporated into the author's list of the proper activities of the ruler. On the other hand, in comparison to the juxtaposed illustrations of the catastrophes of a wicked rule and the benefits promoted by righteous kingship which follow, the purpose of which is to warn the ruler against wrong-doing, it can be treated as contrastive. In the latter case, we most likely have what Máire Herbert (1997: 27) has called mythic ideology: "Cosmos reflected the manner in which the ruler upheld the principles of truth and justice." As we know from the classical sources, for instance from Livy's account of the reign of the ideal pagan Celtic monarch Ambigatus,<sup>35</sup> the theme of abundance constituted the essence of the archaic Celtic polity.<sup>36</sup>

The evidence of *AM* may be again employed as an illuminating parallel. About a third of the text is devoted to the description of different aspects of abundance, such as *mesrada mórfheda*, lit. "tree-fruits of great forest", *mlechti márbóis*, "milk-yields of cattle", *imbeth etha*, "abundance of corn", *aidble íasc*, "abundance of fish", *clanda caini*, "lawful progeny", etc.,<sup>37</sup> presented as the consequences of the ruler's justice by the introductory formula *Is tre fhír fíathemon ...*, "It is through the ruler's truth ...".<sup>38</sup> In the manner of presentation the vernacular collocations noted above are the cognates of sequences of paired nouns, one of these a dependent genitive, from the Hiberno-Latin text.<sup>39</sup> This indicates a similar background to the sources of *AM* and *De duodecim*.

This observation on two opposing treatments of the topic of prosperity and abundance points to the conclusion that, in the last passage of the section, the author of *De duodecim* was inspired by the native political imagery, rather than by the one from patristic sources of the time, which may have had nothing to offer in this regard.<sup>40</sup>

#### THE EVIDENCE OF *CHAKKAVATTI-SĪHANĀDA-SUTTA*

Now let us turn to the Buddhist account of righteous rulership, *Chakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta*, "The Sutra of the Lion's Roar of a Universal Monarch". I shall first provide the reader with an outline of the sutra.

The first part is dedicated to a description of the rule of an ideal Buddhist monarch, (Pāli *chakkavattin*),<sup>41</sup> comprising stories about his conquest of the earth, about his renunciation of worldly life, and about the moral instructions given by the former *chakkavattin*, then a royal seer, to his son, then a royal warrior.

The sutra continues with a description of the rule of the royal warrior who failed to fulfil the duties of a *chakkavattin*. Because of that failure the royal warrior experienced the collapse of his rule and a state of anarchy in his kingdom. The righteousness of human beings diminished, resulting in the decrease of the human life-span to ten years, and in the total deterioration of mankind's appearance. When this happened, people wished to free themselves from this state of inhumanity and immorality and, with the lapse of twelve generations, they progressed by the gradual improvement of their morality as well as of their physical appearance and life-span through the observance of ten patterns of moral conduct, such as "abstention from killing living beings, from stealing wealth, from doing wrong things when taking pleasure, from [uttering] falsehood, from slander",<sup>42</sup> etc. All of the aforementioned constitute the Buddhist catechism under the title *dasa sīla*, or "ten rules

of good conduct". Having reached a perfect appearance and the life-span of eighty thousand years, people experience the re-establishment of the *chakkavattin*'s rule as the ultimate stage of human progress.<sup>43</sup>

Though the Hiberno-Latin text, considered above, and the Buddhist sutra are so different in terms of style and presentation, there are striking similarities between them.

The first is the idea that the welfare of the state is dependent on the morality of its ruler. As we have seen, the author of *De duodecim* recommended every ruler to follow the guidelines of Christian behaviour in order to gain peace and prosperity in his country. An ideal Buddhist ruler, a *chakkavattin*, by practising principles of Buddhist morality (Pāl. *dasa sīla*) and observing Buddhist teaching (Pāl. *dhmmo*) sees his country "flourishing and rich, and abundant in towns, cities, and royal capitals".<sup>44</sup> An unrighteous ruler, a royal warrior, experienced the collapse of his rule and a state of anarchy in his kingdom when he established the institution of capital punishment, violating the first principle of Buddhist *dhmmo*, not to kill living beings.

The second parallel is the picture of cosmic disturbances that destroy peace and prosperity in the domains of the unrighteous ruler. Due to them the domains "are no longer abundant"<sup>45</sup> and are devastated by marauders.<sup>46</sup>

The third is the idea of the re-evolving of the cosmos if morality as the basis of human existence is supported and restored. Similarly, the description of the "justice of a king" in *De duodecim* comes after the antithetical account illustrating the cosmic consequences of the ruler's injustice.

#### THE DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIVERSAL CONQUEST CAMPAIGN IN THE *CHAKKAVATTI-SĪHANĀDA-SUTTA*

There are several important steps constituting the career of the Universal Monarch (*chakkavattin*) but the most crucial of them is his conquest of the earth for the purpose of establishing the Buddhist over-kingship.

First, let us look at the description of the start of the Universal Conquest campaign. I will argue that the description of the campaign as it stands can be regarded as a straightforward literary fabrication, based upon the motives and themes of two native Indian royal rituals – the inauguration ritual (Skt. *rājasūya*) and the *vājapeya* or the royal ritual that establishes the sacrificer in the position of an over-king (Skt. *saṃrāt*) in which the specifically Buddhist elements were incorporated.

*Rājā khattiyo muddhābhisitto utthāyāsanaṃ ekasamṃ uttarāsāṅgaṃ karitvā vāmena hatthena bhīṅkāraṃ gahetvā dakkhiṇena hatthena cakkaratanaṃ abbhukkiri-pavattatu bhavaṃ cakkaratanaṃ, abhivijjātu bhavaṃ cakkaratanaṃ'ti.*

(Carpenter, ed., 1992: 62, §6)

The anointed royal warrior, having risen from his royal seat,  
having fixed his upper mantle across the right shoulder,  
having taken a *bhīṅkara* in his left hand,  
sprinkled some water onto the wheel's rim with his right hand [saying],  
– Move on, O dearest *chakka*-jewel,  
conquer [the world], O dearest *chakka*-jewel! (Fomin 2003: 309)

In the structure of the *rājasūya* ritual, the first necessary step is the preparation of the sacrificer, a future king. He is clothed "with special garments and he is equipped with a set of arms, and has to raise them" (Heesterman 1957: 93-4). In the passage from the sutra cited above, metaphorically the "special garments" are to be identified with the upper

mantle of the *chakkavattin*, and the “set of arms” of the *chakkavattin* is represented by his *bhinkara*. The latter is a jug for collecting alms, and has a sacred meaning in Buddhism. It is included among the three objects that the Buddhist monk was entitled to have in his possession, the other two being the robe (*vattha*)<sup>47</sup> and the bundle of medicinal herbs (*kusa*).

Next comes the unction: “while the sacrificer stands with raised arms, the unction is administered to him” (Heesterman 1957: 97). In the sutra the *chakkavattin* sprinkles the rim of the wheel (Pāl. *chakka*),<sup>48</sup> with his jug raised.

After the unction rites are administered, a chariot drive takes place, beginning with the formula, “At the instigation of the Maruts may I conquer.” (Heesterman 1957: 127-9). In the Buddhist sutra, having sent the *chakka* in front of him to conquer the world, the *chakkavattin* accepts its supreme role, and follows it in his royal chariot, accompanied by the whole army. The address of the *chakkavattin* to the *chakka*: “Move on, O dearest *chakka*-jewel, conquer [the world], O dearest *chakka*-jewel!” can be definitely paralleled in the *rājasūya*’s formula.

The chariot drive symbolically represents the movement of the sun, with which the sacrificer is identified. Besides its role in the *rājasūya*, the chariot drive constitutes one of the culminating points of the *vājapeya*. In the context of the *vājapeya*, “the chariot drive takes place beginning and ending at a point behind the *cātvāla* (*the hole in the ground for constructing the northern altar for the sacred fire* – my comment), representing the Ocean. The sacrificer goes by the chariot course from the Ocean to heaven and back to the Ocean again, as does the sun. Thus the course of the chariot corresponds to that of the sun, encompassing in its march the whole world.” (Heesterman 1957: 134). The description of the Universal Conquest by the *chakka* also has certain solar connotations, and it should probably be regarded as a derivation from the above *vājapeya* rite. The following section corresponds to the structure of the *vājapeya* rite; and the parallels between them, such as the solar movement of the *chakka* and its diving into the Ocean, are extremely prominent:

*Atha kho taṃ, bhikkhave, cakkarataṇaṃ puratthimaṃ disaṃ ... dakkhiṇaṃdisaṃ ... pacchimaṃ disaṃ ... uttaraṃ disaṃ pavatti... Yasmim kho pana, bhikkhave, padese cakkarataṇaṃ patiṭṭhāsi... Atha kho taṃ, bhikkhave, cakkarataṇaṃ puratthimaṃ ... dakkhiṇaṃ ...pacchimaṃ ... uttaraṃ samuddaṃ ajjhogāhetvā paccuttarivā dakkhiṇaṃ disaṃ ... pacchimaṃ disaṃ ... uttaraṃ disaṃ pavatti... Atha kho taṃ, bhikkhave, cakkarataṇaṃ samuddapariyantaṃ pathavim abhivijinitvā taṃeva rājadhānim paccāgantvā rañño cakkavattissa antepuradvāre aṭṭhāsi. (Carpenter, ed., 1992: 62-3, §6-7)*

Then, o monks, the divine *chakka*-jewel started rolling eastwards... southwards... westwards ...northwards... There, o monks, the divine *chakka*-jewel stopped... [Having conquered the region] the *chakka*-jewel, having dived into the eastern...southern...western...northern sea and jumped onto the shore, started rolling toward the southern... western...northern part(s) of the world... And then, o monks, this *chakra*-jewel, having conquered the Earth, surrounded by the ocean...stopped in front of the royal palace. (Fomin 2003: 309-11)

In the context of the *rājasūya* ritual, the chariot drive is followed by the enthronement of the sacrificer as well as by a ritual game of dice. In the latter the sacrificer gains his kingship, being proclaimed as a victor by a brahman (Heesterman, 1957: 146). We have a vestige of the game of dice in the sutra:

*Cakkaratanaṃ ...rājadhāniṃ paccāgantvā rañño akkavattissa antepuradvāre atthakaraṇapamukhe akkhāhataṃ maññe tthāsi rañño cakkavattissa antepuraṃ upasobhayamānaṃ.* (Carpenter, ed., 1992: 63 §7)

The *chakka*-jewel ... [appeared] at the door of the royal palace of the king-*chakkavattin*, when the winner's share in the dice-game was being defined, [and] stopped in front of the illustrious royal palace of the king-*chakkavattin*". (Fomin 2003: 310-11)

Though the enthronement rite is not explicitly mentioned in the text of the sutra, it may be noted that the royal palace where the royal throne would be located is mentioned twice in the passage; also that the *chakra* is said to be present at the proclamation of the winner of the dice-game, rather than at the enthronement of the *chakravartin*.

This inconsistency can probably be explained as the compiler's attempt to mention as many ingredients of the royal rituals as he was aware of. The rites of *abhisheka*, of the raising of arms, of a chariot drive and of the game of dice, constituting the basis of the royal rituals of the *rājasūya* and *vājapeya*, are all alluded to in our text. The references to all of them, however, are made in such a way that the specifically Buddhist elements become more appealing. In the exposition as a whole, the jewel of the *chakka* is given more prominence than the figure of the *chakkavattin*.

Another crucial element in the depiction of the Universal Conquest, apart from the solar movement of the *chakka*, is the *chakkavattin*'s address to the subordinate kings. Having conquered them peacefully with their consent, the *chakkavattin* instructs them in proper behaviour. This address contains the following moral guide-lines:

*Rājā cakkavattī evaṃ āha, pāṇo na hantabbo, adinnaṃ nā dāttabbaṃ, kāmesumicchā na caritabbā, musā na bhāsitabbā, majjaṃ na pāttabbaṃ, yathābhuttañca bhūñjathāti.* (Carpenter, ed., 1992: 62, §6)

Living-beings should not be killed; that which is not given, should not be taken,<sup>49</sup> wrong things should not be done when taking pleasure; lies should not be uttered; intoxicating liquors should not be drunk and you all should eat that which is suitable for eating. (Fomin 2003: 309)

If we look again briefly at the end of the sutra, it should be recalled that the re-establishment of the rule of a *chakkavattin* and the progress of human beings is due to the observance of certain rules of behaviour – “ten patterns of conduct” (Pāl. *dasa sīlā*) – by humans. Within the religious system of Buddhism the “ten patterns” present a guideline for the righteous behaviour required of every Buddhist monk. In the above instruction of the *chakkavattin* to his subordinate kings we are concerned with the primary rules of Buddhist moral ethics, required of every human being, regardless of whether he is a layman or a renouncer of worldly life. These five precepts are usually called *pañca sīlā*, the five rules of good conduct, and are also called *pañca dharmā*, the five *dharmas*. *Anguttara-nīkaya*, a section of the *Sutta-piṭaka*, the second part of the Pāli canon of Buddhist texts, mentions these precepts in connection with the formula *saraṇaṃ gata*, literally, “[I am] the one, who has attained shelter.” This formula was pronounced by a proselyte who was willing to be converted to Buddhism. Uttering one by one the precepts contained in the formula, the proselyte was supposed to reach the state preliminary to any higher development after conforming to the basic teaching of the Buddha. After pronouncing all of them, the new follower is officially installed and included in the community. Therefore, *pañca sīlā* stands at the heart of Buddhism, and the instruction of the *chakkavattin* to the subordinate kings is

in fact simply an exposition of Buddhist doctrine. The *chakkavattin* is presented as a preacher of Buddhism; his image, however, can by no means be connected solely with Buddhism.

#### THE IMAGE OF THE BUDDHIST RIGHTEOUS RULER (*CHAKKAVATTIN*)

The *chakkavattin* is usually seen in the scholarship (Tambiah 1976: 39-53) as the embodiment of *dhammo* on the plane of society, a righteous ruler of Buddhism. Be that as it may, I am inclined to think that the portrayal of the *chakkavattin* has a certain non-Buddhist stratum, and stems from the depiction of the ideal Indian king, the conqueror (Skt. *vijigīṣu*), described in the Indian treatise on political science, *Arthaśāstra*.

The first evidence in favour of this conjecture is afforded by certain elements in the description of the *chakkavattin* contained in the first paragraph of the sutra<sup>50</sup> and the corresponding passage in *Arthaśāstra*, describing the sphere of activity of the World Conqueror.

*Deśaḥ prthivī || tasyāṃ himavatsamudrāntarasudīcīnaṃ yojanasahasraparimāṇāṃ  
tiryak cakravartikṣetram.* (Kangle, ed., 1969: IX.1.17-18; 1.217)

The place [of his activity is the whole] earth. The field of the chakravartin's activity extends northwards up to the 1000 yojanas, from the sea up to Himalaya.

The next piece of evidence is provided by certain elements in the description of the Universal Conquest, considered above. We have been told that the subordinate kings submitted to the *chakkavattin* with their consent: without fighting or negotiating, but having listened to the latter's instruction in *dhammo*. This agrees with the description of the righteous conqueror in *Arthaśāstra*, who is prescribed as follows:

*trayobhiyoktāro dharmalobhāsurasuravijayina iti || teṣāmbhyavapattiyā dharmavijayī  
tuṣyati.* (Kangle, ed., 1969: XII.1.10; 1.247)

[There are] three types of conquerors: a righteous one, a greedy one and a furious one. 11. The righteous conqueror is satisfied with submission.

The third piece of evidence is the establishment of righteous practices by the conqueror (*vijigīṣu*) prescribed by the Indian treatise on government,<sup>51</sup> and paralleled by the Buddhist sutra. As we have shown, the latter sees them as the rules of Buddhist moral ethics.

Employing the stratagems of the *Arthaśāstra*, the Buddhist scribe was devoid of mere quoting or paraphrasing, and sometimes presented them antithetically. Let us deal, for instance, with the description of how the ultimate goal of the righteous ruler seen as the "beneficial state" and the "happiness of all the people"<sup>52</sup> can be achieved.

According to the sutra, this goal can be attained by following Buddhist *dhammo*, contained in the five rules of proper conduct.<sup>53</sup> According to *Arthaśāstra*, the happiness of the world is achieved only when the king employs the method of punishment (*daṇḍa*).<sup>54</sup> However, in the view of the Buddhist author, the ruler who chooses the law of punishment, and thus follows the Brahminic understanding of the duty of a king (interpreted by the Buddhist compiler as un-righteous) does not last long.

The consequences of this rule, depicted in the second part of *Chakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta* are almost identical to the Irish picture of cosmic disturbance. Entering into

somewhat more detail, we can recall that the rule of a royal warrior, who had turned from the law of *dhammo* to the law of *daṇḍa* by installing the institution of capital punishment in his realms, is destroyed by infertility, poverty and theft, by lack of human confidence in his rule, by the decline of public morals, which go through twelve stages of regress, and by anarchy in his kingdom because of the activity of brigands and marauders.

Contrariwise, the rule of the *chakkavattin*, which comes as the result of the re-establishment of the proper moral behaviour, is peaceful and is characterised by the abundance of fruit and protection of men.<sup>55</sup>

There is of course, a difference between the Irish and Indian data. Buddhist texts see the exercise of the law of punishment by the unrighteous ruler as a primary factor in the degradation of human morals and the destruction of humankind. The Irish saga "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel" (*Togail Bruidne Da Derga*), for instance, presents us with the like picture of the destruction of abundance through the injustice of the ruler. Similarly, the impulse for destruction in the Irish saga, as well as in the Buddhist sutra, is the king's unjust sentence in court.

However, the Irish sources show no mercy for criminals. In *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* the milk-brothers of the king who had been accused of pillaging were sentenced to death by hanging.<sup>56</sup> However, the Irish king Conaire changed his decision and sent them out of the country. The criminals were *not* punished in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, and that is why the peace of the king's realm was destroyed.

One may find a like picture in the Indic tradition of political thought. In ancient India the ideal king was supposed to punish a criminal; otherwise, the sin of committing a crime was due to be passed onto the king himself.<sup>57</sup> However, the Buddhist counterpart of the ideal Brahminic king, the royal warrior, is condemned for the death-penalty he imposed on the thief, and here we are dealing with the Buddhist moral of non-violence and non-killing.

## CONCLUSION

In the course of our exposition we have observed the way Christianity and Buddhism influenced the contents of our texts, and how the subject-matter was organised accordingly. With the advent of Christianity and Buddhism it was inevitable that the depictions of ideal kingship prevailing in pre-Christian Ireland and pre-Buddhist India would change as a result of their exposure to the influence of the new religions, which brought tremendous change into the society on the whole, and, obviously, into the ideology of kingship. However, in order to make their message sound stronger, the new religions used ideological structures already in place, inherited from the old tradition. For the purposes of the fabrication of a new collection of political treatises or texts, the old stratagems were employed by the clerical scribes. This was probably done for the simple reason that ideas expressed by means of an old phraseology would appeal to the audience better than if the terminology was entirely new. But the semantics of the words is now different, and the ethical dimension can be seen as a watershed between the old and the new visions of power.

The conclusions reached in this investigation are important, because for both India and Ireland kingship was the central institution which structured the cosmos of a whole society. Before, it was the cosmos itself that was important in the view of the early ideologists; after the conversion the cosmos acquired an ethical dimension, and that is why it can be described as a moral cosmos.

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## Notes

- 1 For instance, the religious archetype of secular power in the first centuries of Christianity was dominated by the Pauline epistles (esp. Rom. 13: 1-6) and the notion of power was treated as a spiritual entity, implicitly belonging to God; in early medieval Europe a new religious archetype of power was created by St Augustine in his *De civitate Dei*, where he depicted human society divided into two realms or "cities", the City of God and the worldly one. Augustine connected secular power with the latter, and so the opinion that human power was a necessary evil prevailed. In the Orient, the religious archetype of power in early Indian society, for instance, was dominated by the ideologems of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas (cf. *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, XIII.1.5.1ff., on the performance of *śvamedha*), where royal power is portrayed as having a universal aspect; the king is an all-conqueror (*viśvajit*) and the lord of the Earth (*sarvabhauma*). Fuller treatment of the notion of "polity" and related problems is contained in Anderson 1972, Bloch 1962, Geertz 1973, esp. pp. 311-15, Taiwan 2001, Tambiah 1976 and Weber 1956.
- 2 Aristotle, *Politics*, I, 1259b1, ἡ δὲ τῶν τέκνων ἀρχὴ βασιλική, "The rule of the father over the children on the other hand is that of a king." (Tr. Rackham 1932: 58.10-11, 59).
- 3 Behistun inscription of Darius I (Kent 1950).
- 4 Cf., for instance, Isidore of Seville, ed. Lindsay 1911: I.xxix.3, VII.xii.17, IX.iii.4, 6, etc.
- 5 One may argue that the same picture can be found throughout the Indo-European world (see Benveniste 1973: 321, and cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 19.106-14; Hesiod, *Works and Days* 215-35). Similarly to the Irish and Indic sources, early Scandinavian and Greek evidence portrays the just ruler as producing fertility in the country by his righteous rule. On the one hand, the picture obtained from the latter strikingly matches the one in the Irish texts that will be at the centre of our attention later. It is a commonplace in comparative studies to argue for the similar character of the institution of righteous rulership in ancient Greece and ancient Ireland, based upon their common Indo-European ancestry. A comprehensive treatment of the subject is contained in Watkins 1979. On the other hand, the Greek, Scandinavian etc. instances may be treated as examples of the mythological, or archaic, consciousness. I shall present my arguments on this question later; at this point it should simply be remarked that the Irish and Indic evidence has a different character, since, in both cases, it depicts the righteousness of the ruler as depending on his observance of certain rules of moral conduct, associated with the religious ethics of Christianity or Buddhism, and can be treated as reflecting the development of the primitive, or archaic, consciousness into the early historical one.
- 6 This topic is dealt with by Kim McCone in his *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature* (1990: 37), where he criticises the traditional approach to the subject, established in the works of Myles Dillon, D. A. Binchy and Proinsias Mac Cana.
- 7 In Book 4 ("Royalty and its Privileges"). Benveniste (1973: 308) states that "the survival of terms relating to religion and law at the two extremities of the Indo-European world, in the Indo-Iranian and Italo-Celtic societies [is due to the fact that here] we are concerned with

societies of the same archaic structure, of an extremely conservative nature where institutions and their vocabulary persisted long after they had been abolished elsewhere.” His main interest was to establish the original character of the Indo-European institution of kingship, which he regarded as having been preserved in the eastern and western extremities of the Indo-European world. His ideas were extremely popular at the time, and had a great impact on Irish scholars, among them D. A. Binchy, whose theory of “*roi fainéant*” (Binchy 1970: 7-10) once obtained great popularity among the Celticists.

- 8 See, for instance, Ó Corráin 1978; Wormald 1986; Jaski 2000: esp. 75-7, 80-1, 87-8.
- 9 Despite its continental prominence – *De duodecim* survived mainly in continental manuscripts (see Hellmann 1909; Breen 2002: 78-94, esp. 88-9, 92-3) – its Irish origin (or strong connection, at least) has generally been recognised. Hellmann (1909: 3-4, 15-6) and Anton 1982: 568-617, SS. 569-574) as well as Breen (2002: 79, 83) come to the same conclusion with regard to its origin. Aitchinson’s view (1994) is in broad agreement with Anton and Breen as he assumes that the text had been “written on the continent by an Irish scholar”.
- 10 All the translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
- 11 Probably, its antecedent is Virgil’s popular etymology of the word *rex* in the *Aeneid* 7.46: “***Rex arva Latinus et urbes iam senior longa placidas in pace regebat***”. (Ed. Greenough 1976; my bold print)
- 12 On the controversy surrounding its authorship see Clancy and Márkus, eds, 1995: 39-40, and Stevenson 1999.
- 13 In this paper I will not have enough space to do this, but will present my argument at length in the introduction to my PhD dissertation (Fomin 2003).
- 14 The traditional Indian society was divided into social classes (Skt. *varṇa*, Pāli *vaṇṇa*) of priests (in the normal English usage known as brahmins; Skt.=Pāli *brāhmaṇa*), of warriors (Skt. *kṣatriya*, Pāli *khattiyo*), of landowners and tradesmen (Skt. *vaiśya*, Pāli *vessa*) and of servants (Skt. *śūdra*, Pāli *sudda*), and the age-groups (Skt. *āśrama*, Pāli *assama*) of the young students, leading a chaste life (Skt. *brahmacārin*, Pāli *brāhmacārī*), mature laymen (Skt. *gṛhastha*, Pāli *gihī*), anchorites (Skt. *vānaprastha*) and aged religious renunciators (Skt. *saṃnyāsīn*).
- 15 See Tambiah 1976: 54-5, and Vigasin 1999.
- 16 Moreover, Buddha considered following Vedic ritual to be useless and harmful. As is always the case in the Pāli canon, this aspect of his teaching is presented in the form of a doctrinal lecture or, employing the terminology of the sources, of a “sutra”. I refer to the *Sīṅgālovāda-sutta*, “Story about the speech to Singala” (Carpenter, ed., 1992 [1911]: 180-93) containing moral instruction to the laity: “The young householder Sigala was extremely zealous in observing the Vedic rituals. Being asked by Buddha why he was constantly waking up at dawn and paying homage to different parts of the world, he answered that his father had taught him to do so. Buddha explained to the young man that according to his doctrine everyone should pay homage to the parts of the world, but these parts are completely different: paying homage to the east is equal to showing respect to one’s mother and father, to show respect to one’s mentor is equal to paying homage to the south, paying homage to the west means to treat kindly all members of one’s household, paying homage to the north stands for showing respect to one’s friends and acquaintances. Zenith equals respect to brahmins and shramans, nadir – to one’s servants and slaves. All of the aforementioned constitute the six directions that one should pay homage to, Buddha concluded.” Four out of the six forms of respect are contained in the list of ten patterns of moral conduct (*dasa sīlā*) required of a Buddhist which are discussed below.
- 17 See Tierney 1960 and Maier 2000: esp. 2-3.
- 18 See for instance, *Orations* of Dion Chrysostom, XLIX, “the Persians have men known as Magi..., the Egyptians have their holy men..., the Indians have their Brahmins. For their part, the Celts have men called Druids, who deal with prophecy and every division of wisdom.” (eds Koch and Carey 1995: 24; transl. Phillip Freeman and J. T. Koch).
- 19 These topics are very well treated in Küng, von Stietencron and Bechert 1987: 346-60.

- 20 See the works of Breen and Anton, especially Breen 2002.
- 21 See sections CCXXXIV (*De eo quod bonorum regum opera aedificent*) and CCXXXV (*De eo quod malorum regum opera prosperitas mundi destruant*), in Fornasari, ed., 1970: 142-3.
- 22 For the Latin text, see Hellmann 1909: 51-2.
- 23 For another instance of *curare* in the meaning ‘to cure’ cf. the ‘Penitential of Finnian’, §29. *festinemus curare contraria*, ‘let us make haste to cure contraries’ (ed. and transl. Bieler, 1975: 84.8, 85) and of *languens*, ‘sickness’, in the ‘Penitential of Columbanus’, §30. *Ita etiam ab interioribus vitiis et morbis languentis animae abstinendum*, ‘So we must refrain and cleanse ourselves from interior vices and the sicknesses of the ailing soul’ (Bieler, ed. and transl., 1975: 106.29, 107). As far as the injunction relating to food-practices is concerned, it is apparently out of place here. Dr. Dean Miller has pointed out to me that the sin that is referred to in this instance is that of appetitiveness or greed, that is, the just king was supposed not to give way to a wrong and ‘unbalancing desire’. Alternatively, it may well be that it was a direct citation on the part of Ps.-Cyprian who considered worth quoting from St. Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*, which was established as the source of this passage in *De duodecim* by both Hellmann and Breen (Hellmann 1909: 51, *apparatus fontium*; Breen 1988: 169-70) simply because it was an extremely influential treatise of the time on the subject of kingship.
- 24 On the influence of *De duodecim* on the formation of the medieval genre of “the prince’s mirror” (*speculum principis*) see Anton 1982.
- 25 Hellmann (1909: 51-2) has noted the following sources of the passage in his *apparatus fontium*: Ps. 88: 17, Prov. 16: 12, I Pet. 1: 17, Deut. 24: 20, Jer. 7: 6, I Mcc. 3: 8, IV Reg. 23: 24; Breen is in favour of the patristic influence (see Breen 1988: 169), and lists among the sources of the section Reg. Mag. 92, 28-32 and St Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*, 17: 20, and *De doctrina christiana* 2, 23 (35).
- 26 Snyder 1998: 86. In his note on page 299, Snyder quotes Patrick’s *Epistola* 18: “As for lying oath-breakers (*mendacibus periuris*), their lot will be in the lake of everlasting fire”, and indicates the source, Rev. 21: 8; and Gildas’s *De excidio Britonum*, 27: “[The *reges*] constantly swear false oaths, [*crebro iurantes, sed periurantes*], they make vows [*voventes*], but almost at once tell lies [*mentientes*]; ... they hang around the altars swearing oaths [*iurando*] – then shortly afterwards scorn them.” (Winterbottom, ed. and tr., 1978: 99, 29).
- 27 *Plurimas coniuges habentes, sed scortas et adulterantes... sanquinaros superbos parricidas ... et adulteros Dei inimicos, ... ad sidera... efferentes*, “they have many wives – whores and adulteresses, ... exalt to the stars... bloody, proud and murderous men, ... adulterers and enemies of God” (Gildas, ed. and tr. Winterbottom 1978: 99, 29). I owe this and the previous note to my Russian colleague, N. Chehanadskaya, who is strongly convinced that Gildas’s depiction of British kings may have exercised a certain impact on the language and ideology of the first part of the *De duodecim* passage in question.
- 28 Jer 4: 7, 11, 20-29; cf. Jer. 5: 6, which expands the idea of Jer. 4: 7 into the following: *Idcirco percussit eos leo de silva, lupus ad vesperam vastavit eos, pardus vigilans super civitates eorum*, “Therefore, a lion from the forest would slay them, a wolf would ravage them in the evening, a panther guard their cities.”
- 29 There is a loose parallel between *bestiae armentorum et pecorum greges dilacerant* of *De duodecim* (Hellman 1909: 52.16) and *volatilia caeli et bestias terrae ad devorandum* of Jer. 15: 3 which however does not seem striking.
- 30 However, one may argue that our author was not intending to quote Jer. *verbatim*, but giving a re-ordered citation or paraphrase of it in an exegetical context. As an example of this kind of eschatological exegesis, cf. Paulus Orosius, *Historiae Adversum Paganos*, lib. I, prol. 10.
- 31 *Qui vero regnum secundum hanc legem non dispensat*, “Whoever, indeed, does not rule the kingdom according to this law...”; see Hellmann 1909: 52.
- 32 In his latest treatment of the subject, Breen (2002: 81) states that “the concept of *iustitia*... means not only moral righteousness”, and the moral righteousness of the ruler in particular,

- “but the salvific act of God and the grace necessary to respond to it, which is stifled (*suffocatur*) by the aforementioned twelve abuses. The background in patristic theology to the use of *iustitia* in this specific context is complex, and further investigation is needed”.
- 33 *Iustitia vero regis est ... prosperitatibus animum non elevare, cuncta adversaria patienter ferre*, “Truly, the justice of the king is ... not to lift up his spirit in the prosperity, to withstand all adversities patiently.”
- 34 Cf. Gregorius Magnus (ed. Adrian 1971: 334), *Homiliae in Hiezechihelam prophetam, Liber II, Homilia VII*, 20.662-6, *Si itaque, fratres carissimi, et per praecepta dominica et per sanctorum exempla gradimur, ut nos nec prosperitas eleuet, nec aduersitas frangat habere nos ante omnipotentis dei oculos palmam hinc et inde monstramus*. I would tentatively translate: “If accordingly, o dearest brothers, we conduct ourselves and according to the Lord’s precepts and to the models [set by] the saints, so that neither prosperity may raise us, nor adversity may break us in pieces, we show in both cases that we have the palm of the Omnipotent before our eyes”.
- 35 Livy, *Ab urbe condida* (transl. in McCone 1990: 108), V.34.2. *Ambigatus is fuit, virtute fortunaque cum sua cum publica praepollens, quod in imperio eius Gallia adeo frugum hominumque fertiles fuit, ut abundans multitudo vix regi videretur posse*, “There was [a king] Ambigatus, so distinguished by his personal virtue and public fortune, that in his reign Gaul was so fertile in crops and men that the abundant multitude seemed scarcely able to be ruled.”
- 36 As well as any other archaic polity. See note 5 above.
- 37 §12-28 in recension B and §§10-29 in recension A of the text. See Kelly 1976: 6-11, 60-3.
- 38 In the relevant section of my dissertation (Fomin 2003: 130-1, 141, 144-5) I explore the semantics of the OIr. *fír*, “truth”, *firinne*, “justice, righteousness”, and Lat. *iustitia*. I take *firinne* as a vernacular cognate of the Latin *iustitia*, used throughout other OIr. wisdom-texts. Linguistically it is a secondary formation, derived from the noun *fír*, “truth, justice”, of the above formula. On the Indo-European etymology of *fír* and related topics see Wagner 1971.
- 39 Cf. *sína caini*, “fair weathers”, and *talman torad*, “produce of the land”, of *Audacht Morainn* (see Kelly 1976: 62, §25), as well as *temperum aeris*, “mildness of the air”, and *terrae fecunditas*, “fertility of land” in the third part of *De duodecim* (see above).
- 40 Here we have to leave out the complex question of relationship between the vernacular wisdom-texts and their Hiberno-Latin counterpart. It must be said, however, that chronologically this section of *De duodecim* is the oldest surviving text written in Ireland on the topic of ideal kingship. I refer the reader to the second chapter of my thesis where I explore a hypothesis that the relevant section of *De duodecim* should be seen as the forerunner of the vernacular tradition of the “prince’s mirror” genre.
- 41 Lit. “the one who is rolling the wheel (of *dharma*, or ‘moral law’),” Skt. *chakravartin*.
- 42 Carpenter, ed., 1992: 73-7, §§21-22. *Tesam, bhikkhave, sattānam evam bhavissati: yamñūna māyam pāṇātipātā virameyyāma ... adinnā-dana virameyyām a... kāmesumicchācārā virameyyāma, ... musāvāda virameyyām a... pisuṇāya vācāya virameyyāma*. “This thought, O monks, occurred to the human beings: ‘Why should we not abstain from killing living beings ... from the stealing of wealth ... from doing wrong things when taking pleasure, ... from [uttering] falsehood, ... from slander.’”
- 43 This section concludes with exactly the same words with which the sutra began, that is why the following passages, devoted to the description of the Buddha’s birth and the latter’s discourse on the moral practices of the Buddhist monks can be disregarded as a later interpolation.
- 44 Carpenter, ed., 1992: 75, §23. *Ayam jambudīpo iddho ceva bhavissati phīto ca, kukkuṭasampātikā gāmanigamarājadhāniyo*. “India will be flourishing and rich, and abundant in towns, cities, and royal capitals.”
- 45 Carpenter, ed., 1992: 64, §9, *Janapadam pasāsato pubbenāparam janapadā na pabbanti*. “His lands do not fill constantly [with produce].”

- 46 Carpenter, ed., 1992: 64, §13. *Te gāmaghātampi upakkamimsu kātum, nigamaghātampi upakkamimsu kātum, nagaraghātampi upakkamimsu kātum, panthaduhanampi upakkamimsu kātum*. “They came to the village and pillaged it, then they came to the market town and pillaged it, then they came to the city and pillaged it, then they started killing and robbing [people] on the roads.”
- 47 The reference to the “upper mantle” in the *Chakkavatti-sutta* is perhaps an allusion to the *vattha*.
- 48 This is the most important attribute of the Buddhist *chakkavatti*. In the narrative of the *Chakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta*, p. 61, §5, the rim of the wheel constitutes the legitimacy of the royal warrior’s claims to be considered a *chakkavatti* by the fact of its appearance in the sky.
- 49 Fig. “abstain from theft”.
- 50 Carpenter, ed., 1992: 59, §2. *Bhūtapubbaṃ, bhikkhave, rājā daḥhanemi nāma ahosi cakkavatti ... cāturato: imaṃ paṭhavim sāgarapariyantaṃ abhivijīya, ajjhāvasi*. “Once upon a time, O monks, there was a king, Dalhanemi by name, a *chakkavattin*, ... ruling over the four ends of the Earth, [who] ... having conquered this earth surrounded by the ocean, lived.”
- 51 Kangle, ed., 1969: I, 266-7, XIII.5.3. *navamavāpya lābhaṃ paradoṣān svaguṇaiścchādayet, guṇān guṇadvaiguṇyena*. 14. *dharmyavyavahāraṃ sthāpayet*. “After annexation of a new territory he should surpass his rival’s imperfection in his own virtues, and his virtues – in his double virtues. He should establish righteous practices.”
- 52 Cf. *hita sukha*, “beneficial state and happiness”, in the *Chakkavatti-sīhanāda-sutta* and *sarvabhūtaḥito* “beneficial state of all beings”, in *Arthaśāstra*, XIII.5.
- 53 Pāli text contained in Carpenter, ed., 1992: 61, §5. My translation is as follows: “Having *dhammo* as your lord, being its righteous protector, keeper and guard, establish it among your relations, in your army, among the vassal lords, among the brahmins-householders, in the markets and in the country, among the shramans and brahmins, among the wild animals and birds.”
- 54 *Arthaśāstra*, I.4.3, 16. For Sanskrit text and English translation see Kangle 1969: I, 5-6; II, 9-10. I offer an alternative rendering of the passage: “3. Punishment (*daṇḍa*), that is properly applied ... leading to the acquisition and to the preservation of wealth, the protector of the preserved, distributing the protected, and establishing in the law and in the profit that which was grown [under its protection]... 16. People, that are divided into four *varṇas* and *āśrāmas*, protected by a king and his punishment (*daṇḍa*), enjoying their business and their duties (*dharma*) dwell in their houses.”
- 55 Cf. the “protection” litany in *De duodecim: [iustitia regis est...] tutamen patriae, ... munimentum gentis* “[the justice of the king is ...] protection of his native land, ... protection of the nation.”
- 56 This is an echo of the Christian influence on Irish culture, as the death-penalty was instituted by the Church in opposition to the native Irish law-practice of the fine, or paying off of an *ericc*, the material equivalent of the personal social status. See Kelly 1988: 216-17.
- 57 See, for instance, *Narada-smṛti*, III.19. 47. “If the king has liberated the guilty person, it is a sin, and also, if he has punished the unguilty; for the law (*dharma*) is to punish [the guilty]. 56. The thief is liberated from sin [by the king’s sentence], whether he is punished or set free, but the king receives the sin of a thief if he does not punish the latter.” The translation is from the recent edition of the text by Vigasin and Samozvantsev (1998: 141) .

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