

**Tibetan Cosmogonies and Ogham:
A Critical Study in Comparative Mythology**

Rachael Bulla

**MPhil Thesis
Trinity Term
May 5, 2003**

**Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology
University of Oxford**

In Dedication

*All saints revile her, and all sober men
Ruled by the God Apollo's golden mean -
In scorn of which I sailed to find her
In distant regions likeliest to hold her
Who I desired above all things to know,
Sister of the mirage and echo.*

*It was a virtue not to stay,
To go my headstrong and heroic way
Seeking her out at the volcano's head,
Among pack ice, or where the track had faded
Beyond the cavern of the seven sleepers:
Whose broad high brow was white as any leper's,
Whose eyes were blue, with rowan-berry lips,
With hair curled honey-coloured to white hips.*

*Young sap of Spring in the young wood a-stir
Will celebrate the Mountain Mother,
And every song-bird shout awhile for her;
But I am gifted, even in November
Rawest of seasons, with so huge a sense
Of her nakedly worn magnificence
I forget cruelty and past betrayal,
Careless of where the next bright bolt may fall.*

-Robert Graves

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

I. Cultural Models

1) Indo-European Culture

Dumezil's Three Functions

Gimbutas's Kurgan Culture

2) Indo-European Roots in Ireland and Britain

"Celtic" Culture

Indo-European Influence

3) Indo-European Roots in Tibet

History

Cultural Contact with Indo-European Neighbors

Indo-European Cultural Roots

4) "Old Europe"

Gimbutas's Old European Culture

Ireland and Britain

Tibet

II. Comparison of Folk Traditions

5) Folk Cosmology of Ireland and Tibet

Otherworld Beings

Reincarnation

Mountain, Hill and Lake Deities

Conclusion

6) Cosmogonic World-Mountain

World Mountain

The Mystic Banquet and Initiation

Tree-pillar and Mandala

7) The Tibetan Demoness and Ogham

Lake Drainage Myths

The Supine Demoness

Songsten Gampo's Temple Scheme and Ogham
Conclusion

8) Gesar, Arthur, and CuChulainn

Possible Historical Connections

Bardic Traditions

Gesar and Arthur

Gesar and CuChulainn

Conclusion

9) King and Queen

The Irish Sacral King

The Tibetan Sacral King

Irish Goddess of Sovereignty

Guenevere and Sechang Dugmo

The Tibetan Royal Marriage Rite

Marriage Rite also Shamanic?

Leprosy and Royal Death

Symbolic Forms of the Tibetan Goddess

Conclusion

References

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Charles-Edwards, Geoffrey Ashe, Grevel Lindop, Geoffrey Samuel, John V. Bellezza, and Nick J. Allen for their suggestions. I would especially like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Charles Ramble, for his guidance and inspiration. Special thanks also to Ruth Helen Hamill Whiting for her support, and Andrew Evans for his help.

Introduction

This study has several aims, one of which is to reconstruct and compare, insofar as is possible, some cultural elements of pre-Christian Ireland and Britain with those of pre-Buddhist Tibet. Though modern Ireland and Britain would seem to have little in common with Tibet, it is my contention that before the advent of Christianity in Ireland and Britain, and before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, there existed traditions which had similar cosmological views and symbols, such as a veneration of a feminine deity incarnate in the natural phenomena of landscape and trees. Remnants of these legacies are to be found in modern folk traditions, and when folklore and classical myth are interpreted in conjunction with archaeological and linguistic evidence, some observations concerning ancient traditions can be deduced. I would also argue that common cultural traits that this study reveals are not adequately explained as being universal Jungian archetypes or examples of Durkheim and Mauss's systems of "primitive classification", as similarities between symbols and institutions occur in rich, unique detail. What is proposed as an explanation are actual historical roots via the ancient Indo-European invasions (*c.* 5,000-2,500 B.C.), as it will be shown that there is evidence of Indo-European presence and influence in both regions. An attempt to reconstruct Indo-European culture has been made by the mythographer Georges Dumézil and the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas. Gimbutas has also put forth a cultural model of Europe that existed before the Indo-European invasions, or "Old Europe" (*c.* 7,000-3,000 B.C.), which will also be presented and considered. When a comparison between Tibet and the British Isles is made against the backdrop of these two composite cultural models, it becomes evident that Tibet, Ireland and Britain share cultural Indo-European roots. Presenting evidence in support of this hypothesis is another goal of this paper. The third goal of the present study is to illuminate, through this comparison of cultural models, one of the institutions of Indo-European society which Dumézil failed to examine thoroughly: the role of the Queen.

The methodology for this study is a fusion of archaeological, linguistic, mythographic, and ethnological evidence. A comparison will be made between structural cultural models, but with the specific goal of piecing together a historical perspective as opposed to creating a static paradigm, which has traditionally been a failing of structural models. Some mythographic comparison will also be structural, as Dumézil had a structural-functionalist approach:

The function of a particular class of legends known as myths is to express dramatically the ideology under which a society lives; not only to hold out to its conscience the values it recognises and the ideals it pursues from generation to generation, but above all to express its very being and structure, the elements, the connections, the balances, the tensions that constitute it; to justify the rules and traditional practices without which everything within a society would disintegrate (Dumézil 1970: 3).

Dumézil's structuralist approach is comparable to Claude Lévi-Strauss's methodology in that, like Lévi-Strauss, he examines and interprets struggles between opposing forces in myth as being portrayals of endemic structural tensions embedded in cultural ideology.

However, Lévi-Strauss's ultimate aim was to reveal unconscious structures, while Dumézil's goal was cultural reconstruction. Dumézil's work is being continued by Nick J. Allen, whose perspectives will also be considered in this study.

However, much comparison will also focus on symbols, such as the Tibetan mandala. Clifford Geertz defines a symbol as "any object, act, event, quality, or relation which serves as a vehicle for conception" (Geertz 1973: 91). Geertz and Victor Turner have also shown cultural symbols to be complex, multifaceted webs of interconnected meaning. I would further point out that cultural symbols have a historical development, and transform over time but tend to retain a core of meaning to which layers and facets accrue, creating a dynamic kaleidoscope of cultural meaning which grows in complexity over time. Folk traditions will be explicated in terms of symbols, applying Geertz's definition of religion as a system of symbols. Mythic themes such as a hero's otherworld journey will also be considered and compared as cultural symbols in this study.

Before comparisons are drawn, cultural models will be presented individually, and fleshed out historically as much as possible. This will be followed by a comparison of specific elements of folk traditions.

I. Cultural Models

1) Indo-European Culture

Georges Dumézil and Marija Gimbutas use different methods to reconstruct an Indo-European (henceforth IE) cultural model. Georges Dumézil compares mythological works from cultures within the IE linguistic family, focusing mainly on Indian, Iranian, Greek, Roman, and Celtic classical works such as the *Vesta*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Odyssey*, the *Vedas*, and the *Mabinogion*. By comparing common mythic themes, Dumézil deduces what he feels to have been IE cultural elements. Marija Gimbutas surveys the archaeological record of all of Europe and its peripheral regions such as the Balkans and Iran, and delineates patterns of settlement, migration, and cultural transformations among varying complexes. These cultural complexes are identified by archaeological finds of pottery fragments, cave paintings, figurines, weapons, jewellery, bones, etc. found mainly in prehistoric graves, mounds, and temples. She further interprets these patterns in light of mythology and linguistic evidence to paint a composite picture of cultural components and transformations of prehistoric Europe. Dumézil and Gimbutas's models are both illuminating and complementary.

Dumézil's Three Functions

Georges Dumézil felt IE societies to have been tripartite, with the social functions of sovereign lawgiver, warrior force, and agricultural fecundity realised in the roles of the king, warrior and priest. Each function was crucial to the operation and survival of society, and each function was intimately connected with and dependant upon the other two. This interdependence created endemic tensions which are a thematic aspect of the myths he examined.

Dumézil's basic definition of an IE king is a universal sovereign who is a "...civilizer, organiser, beneficiary -- until his sin -- of a special protection from God" (Dumézil 1973: 7). He examines the cognate Vedic and Iranian Kings Yima and Yama and deduces elements of the nature of IE kingship. The Vedic King Yama is the son of the last divine king Vivasvat, the seventh in a genealogy of sovereign gods, who fell to earth through sin. Therefore his son Yama is no longer divine and is therefore unable to offer the gift of immortality to men, but his divine connection still enables him to offer protection and the postponement of death through sacrificial appeasement to the gods. The Iranian Yima's life consists of sin, dethronement, disgrace, and cruel death, and his descendants form social classes. Yayati's merits in agricultural knowledge, religious sagacity, and martial force also correspond to the three functions. Thus Dumézil concludes the role of the IE king as being sovereign protector who appeases the gods on behalf of his realm, and who is an embodiment of all three of the functions. However, his tragic flaw is the tendency to become proud, which sin leads to his downfall.

Why it is crucial for a king to embody the three functions of society is made clear in Dumézil's discussion of the Irish Queen Medb of Cruachan:

the three qualities essential to a king are defined in a negative way in Queen Medb's requirements for a husband. He must be 'without jealousy, without fear, and without niggardliness'. Jealousy would be a fatal weakness in a judge, as would fear in a warrior and niggardliness in a farmer. The higher the status, the more exacting are the standards that go with it, and it is noteworthy that the most reprehensible sin in each class is to indulge in the foibles of the next class below it. Meanness may be excused in a serf, but it is the denial of the farmer's vocation; fear is not incompatible with the peaceful role of the farmer, but it is the warrior's disgrace; jealousy, as we have seen, is a trait of the warrior's character, the correlative of his virtue, but it can undermine the impartiality required in a judge. A king must have the virtues of all the functions without their weaknesses (Dumézil 1973: 2).

Dumézil also notes the role of Medb as being a symbolic representative of sovereignty who bestows kingship upon her various rival husbands. He makes a parallel between Medb and the Indian Queen Madhavi, who also has a series of husbands and seems to transport the gift of sovereignty. The etymology of both the names "Medb" and "Madhavi" derives from a term meaning "intoxicating drink", and mead or liquor is associated with the Irish sovereignty goddess. Thus Dumézil feels the Sovereignty Goddess to be an IE cultural element. However, because Queen Medb of Cruachan is under the tutelage of her father, King Eochaid, Dumézil reasons that the goddess of sovereignty is ultimately subject to a patriarchal order.

The partitioning of land into quarters by a king's sons is another common thematic element in Indic and Iranian myth according to Dumézil. In like manner, Ireland was also traditionally divided into Ulster to the north, Connaught in the west, Leinster in the east, Munster in the south, with Meath, the ancient seat of kingship which preceded Tara, likely to have been a central region. There is an Irish legend in which Fontan is asked by a supernatural being how Ireland is divided, and he replies "'Knowledge is in the west, Battle in the north, Prosperity in the east, Music in the South, Royalty in the centre'" (Dumézil 1973: 11). Dumézil argues that because it is to be found in Indic, Iranian, and Irish tradition, the partitioning of land into quarters with a central region was probably an IE pattern.

By comparing the Indic Kavya Usanas and the Iranian Kai Us, who are cognate, Dumézil elucidates the role and "plight" of the sorcerer in IE societies. Kavya is a *kavi*, who is more like a magician than a sacrificing Brahmin priest. Kavya serves the *deva* demons but maintains ties with the *asura* gods; he is a third being apart from them whose powers are solicited by both sides. His most valued magical secret is restoring the dead to life, a gift so coveted by the *asuras* that they sent their King Brhaspati's son Kaca to learn magic from Kavya. He accomplishes his task by wooing Kavya's daughter Devayani, but because he scorns her marriage wish, she curses him never to be able to use the secret himself, but only to be able to teach it.

Kavya's powers prove to be more far reaching when Devayani is offended by King Brihaspati's daughter, and Brihaspati is so eager to appease Kavya he agrees to give his daughter to Devayani as a slave. Kavya consoles his daughter by assuring her, "Whatsoever is on earth or in heaven, I am its master forever, Brahma was delighted and told me this. I set loose the water, in my care for all creatures, I feed all growing things; I tell you the truth!" (Dumézil 1986: 35). Kavya assures rain and growth of plants and martial success. Kavya also has an enormous amount of wealth that is connected to Mount Meru, and his Iranian counterpart Kai Us's wealth is mountainous also:

In the midst of the Elburz Mountains ...Kai Us had built seven abodes, one of gold, two of silver, two of steel, and two of crystal, and from his fortress he kept a tight reign on the Mazanian demons and prevented them from destroying the world... (Dumézil 1986: 47).

Kavya Usanas also had the power to accelerate or reverse the course of ageing, and Kai Us had the ability to rejuvenate the aged among those who travelled to Elburz.

However, Dumézil is puzzled by Devayani's powerful influence on her father, and notes that *kavi* magicians had to pay heed to their wives, daughters, and mothers. "But this peculiar power of women would have had its reverse side, at least in the 'folklore of the brotherhood', in all ways in which the cautionary tales of any society emphasise the dangers inherent in a government of women, or influenced by women, or affording great freedom to women" (Dumézil 1986: 88). Dumézil interprets Devayani's "intervention" in Kaca's instruction as being an example of the "disastrous" effects that women can cause in the transmission of power from man to man. One could argue that this interpretation reveals a chauvinistic bias of Dumézil's. But I would point out that this observation of Dumézil's is ironically revealing; he does not pause to consider where the notion of female power being a threat to a patriarchal order might have its roots, and where this "peculiar power of women" might also have its roots, since it is apparently not IE. His observations reveal the misogyny inherent in IE societies, which will soon be shown to have been a very key cultural element that Dumézil fails to address.

Dumézil also draws a parallel between the Iranian and Indic mythological war between gods and demons and with the Irish legend of war between Tuatha de Danann and the Fomorians in *Cath Maige Tuired*. In this narrative the Irish have the magical capacity of speedily refurbishing blunted spears, and of restoring heroes back to life through incantations at a well. The Fomorians covet this magical gift, and send Ruadan, son of the god Dagda's daughter, to learn the secret, and he observes and describes it, and they send him back to kill the spear-making smith Goibniu, but he is killed by him instead. The Irish also have a life-restoring cauldron in the *Mabinogion*, which is considered to be a treasure. Though the personage of the sorcerer is absent, other common thematic components imply an IE prototype.

Dumézil feels the role of the warrior in IE societies to be more difficult to deduce than that of the king and sorcerer. Some thematic elements he discusses are the ability to change into animal form, such as a ram or bird, which symbolically represents the hero's animal

nature that manifests itself in battle as a mystical type of rage or *furor*. Odin's male society, *berserker*, are described as behaving like dogs and wolves as they massacred their enemies. The hero is also given a sign, such as a moon depiction, on the forehead after a first victory as a symbol of promotion, such as CúChulainn's (Dumézil 1970: 162).

Dumézil deduces how the warrior relates to the other functions through comparing the Indic tale of the fight between Tritá Aptyá and the three-headed monster Namuci, the Irish hero CúChulainn and the three sons of Nechta, and the Roman hero Horace's role in King Tutullus Hostilius's war against the Veians, the Sabines, and Alba (Dumézil 1970). All three heroes wage war at the behest of either a god, such as Indra in Tritá Aptyá's case, or at the behest of a king and fight a triple adversary with whom they have some type of emotional bond. In Tritá Aptyá's case he and Namuci have agreed to be friends, and in the Roman account the Horaces are the maternal cousins of the Veians and the Sabines. As recourse to this tension between loyalty to the king or god for whom the warrior is fighting on the one hand, and the bond between the hero and his enemy, the hero turns to warrior gods for help. In the Indian tale the goddess Sarasvati restores the hero to health and she and her twin brother give him a thunderbolt weapon which he can use to kill Namuci without overtly breaking their pact of friendship. A theme in the Indian and Roman accounts is that when the hero vanquishes his enemy, he betrays the bond that is between them, which sin produces a stain. Dumézil likens what transpires between Tritá Aptyá and Namuci with the relationship between King Tullus and Mettius. King Tullus is friends with Mettius, who is loyal to Alba but has joined his troops with Tullus through conscription. Mettius vacillates between the two sides and ends up withdrawing his troops in the midst of battle; an act of betrayal for which Tullus punishes him with death. But in doing so Tullus is exacting a cruel punishment which Mettius does not deserve. Dumézil feels that Tullus makes Mettius a scapegoat for his sin of waging war between factions which are matrilaterally related.

Thus the theme that Dumézil deduces to be IE in these accounts is that "heroes will for the sake of the god or king undertake the act which involves or occasions a stain, and who then, passively or actively, have the task of cleansing and continuing to cleanse, throughout all history, all such stains as are like their own" (Dumézil 1970: 44). As such war-heroes become "technicians of purification ...who burden themselves with the sacrificial stain only, in turn, to 'wipe it off' from themselves, to transfer it, through a few or through many intermediaries, onto such criminals as are unworthy of pity and are utterly lost" (26).

In the *Mahabharata*, Indra's three sins correspond to the loss of his powers and to the attributes of the three Pandava brothers whom the gods create from Indra's disintegration. By drawing parallels with Hercules and other myths, Dumézil deduces the motif that "the warrior, by his actual weaknesses, loses his virtual powers, and, from these lost powers, new beings are born." The attributes of these new kings correspond to the three functions (Dumézil 1970: 78).

It is interesting to note that Dumézil makes mention of the theme of the warrior-hero in these accounts as being connected to water in conjunction with a deity. CúChulainn obtains the gift of *furor* which makes him invincible in battle from being dipped in vats of water.

“Aptya” is derived from “ap”, meaning water, and Horace’s name may have been derived from the goddess Hora. From this observation he hypothesises a possible initiatory act of the hero involving water, as “[t]he waters --fertilising, nourishing, healing, cleansing --belong as fundamentally as the earth to the third function” (Dumézil 1970: 17). Dumézil does not seem to make note of the fact that this initiation is also connected to a *female* deity in particular, but in later discussion it will become clear that this is a significant factor. Dumézil does, however, make a most interesting observation concerning the IE role of women when examining the Indic figure of Draupadi: “the team of functional gods is completed by a single goddess, who ideologically is not confined to any of the three functions, but is situated, and operates, within them all. Her nature is thus synthetic” (74).

In the Roman account Dumézil also points out that Alba was conceived of as being the mother of Rome, and that by waging war against Alba, Tullus was committing symbolic matricide. At his execution Mettius accuses Tullus of offending the “‘universal law of both Greeks and Barbarians’, which urges that fathers shall rule over their children and mother-cities over their colonies” (Dumézil 1970: 42). It will be recalled that the warring parties are also all matrilaterally related in this account, a fact that is also considered to be a type of sin or betrayal. Dumézil interprets all this as being merely an example of the inherent tension between sovereign and hero, but in light of Gimbutas’s paradigm it will become evident that the tension a warrior-hero feels between a *patriarchal sovereign* and *maternal loyalty* is likely to be an example of a key thematic element in understanding the spread and development of IE cultures.

Gimbutas’s Kurgan Culture

The picture of IE society Gimbutas paints is also one that has a patriarchal order with social classes of nobility, warriors and labourers. “The philological evidence, based on the vocabulary common to all branches of Indo-European speech, shows that the ‘Indo-Europeans’ tilled (*aro) the land, sowed (*sejo) their seed (*semo), and reaped (*kerpo) their harvests; they reared cattle (*gwows), sheep (*owis), the pig (*sus), the goat (*aig)” (Gimbutas 1997: 6). Gimbutas equates IE peoples with the archaeological record of the “Kurgan” peoples:

The Kurgan culture seems the only remaining candidate for being proto-Indo-European: there was no other culture in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic (copper-stone) periods which would correspond with the hypothetical mother culture of the Indo-Europeans as reconstructed with the help of common words, and there were no other great expansions and conquests affecting whole territories where earliest historic sources and a cultural continuum prove the existence of Indo-European speakers (Gimbutas 1997: 76).

The evidence indicates that the Kurgans were mainly pastoral and adopted more agricultural practices as they conquered. The abundance of horse remains such as bridles and carts found at sites attest to a wide use of horses for riding, as well as for meat and milk. Many flat figurines of horses’ heads in semiprecious stone may have had magical protective powers. They also hunted animals such as the wolf and fox using flint arrows,

and used elk, cattle and boar tusks for tools and as ornaments. There is also evidence of some fishing and use of boats. Their "[p]ottery was crude and unpainted; clay was mixed with crushed shells and sand" with crisscross or cord impression incisions (Gimbutas 1997: 79). They also used oval pots, originally derived from basket shapes, flat dishes, and beakers. Kurgan peoples lived in simple villages and hill forts. "Small villages were located on river terraces and consisted of about ten to twenty small, rectangular, semi-subterranean houses with pitched roofs supported by thin wooden posts" that had stone walled hearths (82). "Hill fort sites were placed on steep river banks, in places difficult of access, usually on promontories at the confluence of two rivers" and had massive stone walls (83).

"Kurgan" is Slavic for "barrow", referring to a burial practice which is a unique cultural trait. These barrows are timber or stone house graves covered with a mound and topped with human shaped stone stelae, sometimes with male attributes carved on it, such as a figure holding an axe or mace. "From graves we know that these people had very strong beliefs about life after death, which had to continue in the same way as life on earth. Therefore graves imitated houses ...and the dead needed their weapons, tools, pots, ornaments, and even vehicles. Animal graves and offering pits or animal bones show the importance of cults and indicated sacrifices of oxen, sheep, horses, stags, boars, dogs, bears, sheep, goats, birds, hares" (Gimbutas 1997: 91). Human sacrifice "is evidenced by the disposal of separate human bones in pits close to the grave, in some cases mixed with animal bones" (91). Members of the royal class had vast amounts of precious stones and ornaments interred with them. Central royal grave were also male, while women's and children's graves "occupy secondary positions" (89). Hammers or battleaxes made from antler, semiprecious stones, or copper were found frequently in male graves, with incised patterns of zigzags, rays, and other motifs; she explains "[t]he fact that the Kurgan people engraved the sun or wheel symbol on almost every ritually important object speaks for the prominence of the sun cult and the significance of the symbolism in connection with the rotation of the year" (92-3). She also hypothesizes the possible existence of a water cult: "[t]he abundance of ochre, charcoal, and ashes in the graves indicates the ritual significance of fire and of the red color of ochre. Metal cauldrons and other containers may have been used in rites connected with the water cult" (94). This observation coincides with Dumézil's notion of a possible water initiation for warriors.

Gimbutas draws particular attention to the patriarchal structure of the Indo-Europeans: "The old Indo-European custom that the house master had unrestricted right of property over his wife and children and that the wife should die with her husband is indicated archaeologically by frequent double graves of man and woman, and of adult and one or two more children buried at the same time" (Gimbutas 1997: 90). She further notes that "[s]tudies in Proto-Indo-European kinship have shown that Proto-Indo-European culture had patriarchal, patrilocal families that probably lived in small houses or huts... *The whole system seems to be typical of the patrilineate in its most highly developed form.* Archaeological data ...supports it" (112, emphasis added).

According to Gimbutas, Kurgans expanded across Europe and parts of the Balkans and the Near East, conquering as they went. "The increasing herds and population, the appearance

of vehicles and fighting carts, and the use of horses for riding obviously were decisive factors for the expansion of the Kurgan warrior nobility" (Gimbutas 1997: 112). This occurred gradually in four waves between the fifth and third millennium B.C. Gimbutas locates their original homeland as "the lower Volga-Kazakhstan steppes" (96). From there they gradually expanded north-west and south-west across the continent of Europe, and "...the common Indo-European language was disseminated from a limited area to the whole continent of Europe and many parts of the Near East. During the period of wanderings their language must have gone through a process of increased differentiation and during late Kurgan times, we may guess, there existed many dialects and even languages. Europe and parts of the near East became culturally transformed. The next stage was the formation of individual cultural units, many of which continued Kurgan characteristics up to historic times and continue to the present period" (110). Towards the end of their expansion, royal tomb findings of this period "suggest that the Indo-European kings were efficient rulers among the peoples who spoke other languages and who were of different cultural backgrounds" (102).

2) Indo-European Roots in Ireland and Britain

“Celtic” Culture

Although “Celtic” is an umbrella term for a mix of ethnic groups and varying customs, Miranda Green feels that it is a useful term. She points out that “[a]rchaeological research has demonstrated that by the fifth century B.C. large tracts of Europe -- from Britain to the Black Sea, and from North Italy to Yugoslavia to Belgium -- shared a number of elements... Whilst it is impossible to speak of a nation of Celts, processes of trade and exchange, folk-movement and convergent evolution, caused the peoples inhabiting barbarian, non-Mediterranean Europe to develop a degree of cultural homogeneity” (Green 1986: 2). Generally speaking, “Celtic” culture refers to the seventh century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D. or thereafter in the Britain, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and parts of France. Evidence for the existence of Celtic societies and cultural traits come from archaeological findings and descriptions by Greco-Roman authors, such as the historian Tacitus, and most especially Caesar. Celtic societies had a number of influences and underwent several transformations. The Halstatt cultural complex, named after a site in Austria (c. 700-500 B.C.) had a significant impact on Bronze Age Britain, and archaeological finds of iron harnesses and elaborate chariot burials reveals this group as being raiding horsemen with a rich elite. Southeast Iron Age Britain had considerable contact with Gaul, and there is also archaeological evidence that this complex also underwent cultural change in the first century B.C. during which time “La Tène” culture (c.500 B.C.), named after a site in Switzerland, was introduced, exemplified by the introduction of coinage and wheel-thrown pottery. Generally considered the “first truly Celtic culture”, La Tène society had a warrior horse-riding elite whose accoutrements were decorated with intricate workmanship. La Tène societies also lived in large “proto-town” hill fort settlements or *oppida*.

Celtic cultures in Britain also underwent considerable transformation during the period of Roman contact from 43 to 409 A.D., when so-called “pagan” folk traditions were

suppressed in favour of Roman religious cults such as Mithraism and the worship of Jupiter. Jupiter "...combined the functions of sky and father-god. Jupiter was traditionally represented in iconography as a majestic, bearded, mature male and was accompanied by the emblems of eagle, sceptre, and thunderbolt" (Green 1986: 39). Ireland, however, did not undergo Roman conquest, and it retained archaic Celtic cultural elements until Christian conversion in the fifth century A.D. In the late eighth and ninth centuries the Vikings made a cultural impact on Celtic Britain, and in the eleventh century Normans invaded Britain.

A composite model of Celtic social structure has been put forth by Carole Crumley based on Classical Greek descriptions and archaeological studies of sites in France. Celtic societies were generally composed of an aristocracy, a merchant class, serfs, and slaves. Bards, druids, and knights formed part of the aristocracy. Lucan and Strabo describe the functions of bards as being to "entertain, inform, and to exert social pressure using wit and ridicule" (Crumley 1974: 17). The power of the knights was political and military, and only they commanded in wartime. Each knight had liegemen and dependants, and knights in the Sotiani Celtic tribe pledged a vow to both the king and their clients, the commoners. According to Caesar, Diodorus, Lucan and Strabo, the druids were a class of aristocratic priests who performed sacrifices, interpreted ritual, and who decided all public and private disputes such as murder cases or boundary questions. They also acted as arbiters during war. Young men trained for twenty years to become druids, and teachings were orally transmitted in order to cultivate memory and protect sacred doctrine. The role of the aristocracy was primarily administrative, and it replaced a prior system of kingship. Patron-client relationships existed between members of the aristocracy and serfs, in which "the patron offer[ed] economic assistance and protection from legal and illegal authority, while the client offer[ed] demonstrations of esteem, information on the machination of others, and the promise of political support" (19).

According to Tacitus and Ammianus women held considerable power in Celtic societies, fighting alongside men and sharing in inheritance. Women may also have been druids, and Tacitus goes so far as to say that there was an absence of sex distinctions among elite rulers. However, men had power of life or death over their wives and children.

The Celts lived mainly in hill forts which were usually located at the intersection of rivers or near bodies of water, though the existence of farm villages was also likely. These hill forts often became centres of trade and townships. For example, the Rhône corridor site in France reveals complex social stratification moving towards statehood, composed of three to four social classes: 1) a governing aristocracy; 2) a merchant class; 3) civil employees/skilled workers and agriculturists; and 4) a class of refugees/destitute (Crumley 1974: 70-71).

Crumley concludes: "At the beginning of the period under study, ascribed status was more important than achieved status and political and social organisation were solidly kin-based. As increased trade made wealth available to members of all classes and the patron-client relationship replaced kinship as a basis for political integration, social mobility was increased, and achieved status...became a more common basis for social stratification"

(Crumley 1974: 76-77). There is evidence that at the time of Roman conquest the Celts were undergoing political consolidation towards a constitutional government, overseen by druids, who met annually in Gaul and were said to have had a chief. Crumley argues that the catalyst for this change in social structure was likely due to the rise of a merchant class as a result of increasing world trade.

The former institution of Celtic kingship Crumley refers to is exemplified by the Irish system according to Charles O'Donnell. This consisted of a series of tribes or *tuath* which were composed of family units of *derbfine*, each of which traced descent four generations from a common great-grandfather. Each *tuath* was ruled over by a king, an institution in early Ireland that "was sacred, the inauguration of kings was involved in ritual, and the king's job was to exercise rule and judgement. If he made a wrong decision the whole tribe would suffer, and his own fate would be sealed by the gods" (Laing 1995: 19). However, warrior heroes were the "most prominent members of society in the popular mind" and engaged in warfare for the aim of glory. Warriors constantly vied for attention, and the "hero's portion" of allocated beef or pork at feasts was sought after. Druids and bards were present at royal courts, and the bard would compose poetic performances.

Indo-European Influence

The so called "Celtic" peoples did not appear in the seventh century; Miranda Green aptly points out that "...the people recognised as [Celtic] by Greco-Roman authors were in fact the lineal descendants of generations stretching as far back as the Neolithic farmers of the fifth-fourth millennium B.C." (Green 1986: 1). IE influence is certain; the presence of druid priests, sacral kingship, and warrior heroes would be cognate with Dumézil's IE functions, and Celtic *oppida* also strongly resemble Kurgan hillforts. There is also archaeological evidence for IE invasions and cultural change in Britain and Ireland between 3,000 and 2,800 B.C. in Ireland and Britain. Gimbutas depicts this time as infiltration of the "Bell Beaker Complex" cultures which was part of the last wave of Kurgan invasions across Europe (Gimbutas 1997: 321). Gimbutas describes these people as being "vagabondic horse riders and archers" who traded in copper and amber and who influenced the local pottery style (Gimbutas 1997: 104, 7-8). "Bell Beakers" are "...thin-walled vessels, manufactured from fine clay containing a high amount of iron, reddish or brown in color...a base which is generally flat, and a regularly curved, s-shaped profile. The Bell Beaker is decorated with incised or impressed geometric patterns in horizontal zones" (Besse and Strahm 1998: 105). The British Isles are replete with Bell Beaker complex finds; in 1993 the archaeologist Humphrey Case compiled a study of Bell Beaker finds in Britain and Ireland which cover virtually all parts of both islands. For example, findings in Dorset, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire consisted of Bell Beaker pottery that shows "...little affinity with indigenous Late Neolithic repertoires..." (Case 1998: 363). These findings date from the third to second millennium B.C. Since this type of pottery had little in common with indigenous Neolithic patterns, and since other objects found with the pottery were weapons, Case's findings would support Gimbutas's claims.

Similarities between Kurgan burial practices and some grave findings in Britain and Ireland also serve as evidence of IE infiltration. Gimbutas outlined the following as being typical elements of Kurgan burial:

- 1) A mortuary house-like structure made of wood or stone
- 2) The grave covered with an earthen mound (kurgan) frequently surmounted by a stone cromlech, timber uprights, and/or topped with stone stelae
- 3) The central burial is that of a male with secondary position given to children or females
- 4) The presence of suttee-wife [sic] or ancestors
- 5) Burial of animals in separate graves
- 6) Human and animal sacrifice
- 7) Class distinction by the inclusion or absence of grave equipment
- 8) The dead placed on the floor of the grave in a contracted position and orientation changing over time (Jones-Bley 1997: 197).

Celtic burials tend to display many of these qualities; Karlene Jones-Bley points out that there are a great number of Halstatt and La Tène burials in which a male hero or chief is the central figure, and two small bronze horses were found in the Hochdorf burial (1997: 202). Class distinctions are evident at the Halstatt cemetery, even within the lower classes, from differences in the amount wealth found in the graves. She also remarks that, “[b]oth Celtic and Scythian burials have produced vast amounts of gold, bronze, silk, and other costly objects” (208-9).

Even more convincing evidence of IE burial is Jones-Bley’s description of mound Drimnagh in Dublin. The mound has two layers, with the lower mound dating to *c.* 3200 B.C. and the secondary one dating to the Bronze Age. It is located on a high spot and is oval in shape, with an “enormous number of burned tree trunks and a stone cist grave, with inward leading stones, containing a male inhumation lying on his right side, extended to his thighs and lower legs drawn up behind. The only grave good was a hanging bowl, but it was elaborately decorated on all outside surfaces and unique for the then known material in Ireland. The entire mound had been carefully constructed in order to burn with the tree trunks leaning on each other in a tee pee-like fashion...” (Jones-Bley 1997: 213). The surveyor, Kilbride-Jones, deduced that the man in the burial was of high social status as the mound had been kept grass-free until the second mound was constructed during the Bronze Age, and a Cinerary Urn placed on top of it. Jones-Bley concludes that Drimnagh fits all items on Gimbutas’s list except that there is no evidence of sacrifice and no separate animal burial, though bones of ox, pig, and sheep were found within the mound.

IE presence in the British Isles is also attested to by linguistic evidence. Languages with IE roots include Anatolian, Germanic, Greek, Armenian, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Iranian, Slavic, Celtic, and Albanian. Paul Kretschmer marked archaic marginal glosses between the Celtic, Italic, Sanskrit, and Iranian words **reg-s* “king”, **reg-nih-* “queen”, **kred-deh* “to believe”, **pi-ph-e-t-i* “he drinks” (Schmidt 1996: 14). Professor J. Gonda “...has shown that **reg-s* is itself a root-noun associated with the verb *reg-*, which appears as Sanskrit *rjati*, Latin *regere*, Irish *rigid*. In his view the primary meaning of this verb is ‘to stretch forth, later ‘protect’, ultimately ‘rule’” (O’Donnell 1970: 2). It has been observed that these archaic correspondences mostly refer to religious phenomenon. Schmidt also explains that

Celtic languages also lack a verb for "to have" and a fully developed infinitive category, "which 'deficiencies' correspond to the Indo-European reconstructed model" (1996: 16). There is also evidence that there existed "...a future system which Proto-Celtic had in common with the eastern-Indo-European languages" (Schmidt 1996: 23). Henrich Zimmer observed some correspondences between Old Irish future and Indo-Iranian which..."may be taken as proof for early contact" (Schmidt 1996: 24). There is also common use of the relative pronoun *yos in Indo-Iranian, Greek, Phrygian, Slavic and Celtic (Schmidt 1996: 25).

Thus the archaeological record in conjunction with linguistic and mythographic evidence reveal a certain deeply-embedded IE inheritance on the part of the Celts. This inheritance is reflected in the use of weaponry, pottery finds, Kurgan-like burial practices, Kurgan-like hillfort townships, language, and the presence of Dumézil's three IE functions.

3) Indo-European Roots in Tibet

History

Before discussing possible IE cultural elements in Tibet, it is necessary to outline a brief history. Before the seventh century a Kingdom called Zhang-zhung was said to have existed in the west. While the existence of Zhang-zung is in doubt, what can be said of it is a confused mixture of myth and history. The time period when myth is generally held to crystallise into verifiable historical events is the time of King Namri Songsten's reign in the seventh century, followed by his son Songtsen Gampo (609 - 649 A.D.), who unified warring tribes, annexed the Zhang-zhung kingdom, and introduced Chinese and Indian forms of Buddhism, creating a powerful empire. Songtsen Gampo decreed the suppression of indigenous beliefs in favour of Buddhism, and built Buddhist temples and invited religious teachers from China and India, and oversaw the formation of a Tibetan script. From the seventh century onwards Tibet became a military power to be reckoned with. Tibet was divided into military districts and in 733 the four regions or "Horns" of Tibet was completed by the addition of the horn or *ru* rTang-chen to the three original horns dBu-ru, gYo-ru, gYas-ru, and Ru-lag. Tibet was especially a threat to the Chinese, and the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an (Sian) was captured. Buddhism continued to prosper under King Trisong Detsen (742 - c. 797 A.D.), the second of the three great religious kings or *Dharmaraja*, who built Tibet's first monastery, Samye. Following the rule of the third of the *Dharmaraja*, Ralpachen (815 - 836 A.D.), and his brother Langdarma's rule after his assassination (803 - 842 A.D.), the Tibetan empire fell and there was a dark age of 150 years of feuding about which know little.

This dark age ended in the tenth century when King Ye-shes-od repropagated and reformed Buddhism, inviting teachers from India and issuing an edict condemning many folk practices and tantrism, beginning the "Second Diffusion of Buddhism". In the thirteenth century Tibet began a priest-patron type of relationship with China under the rule of emperor Kubilai Khan, in which Tibet was treated as a land of religion under Chinese protection. The Gelugpa school eventually gained prominence, and in 1578 the abbot of the Gelugpa monastery of Ganden, Gendun Drup, Sonam Gyatso, was given the title *dalai*,

meaning "ocean" by the Mongol chief and Buddhist convert Altan Khan. Thus Tibet began to be ruled by Dalai Lamas instead of kings or chieftains. The fifth Dalai Lama (1617-82) was a very pivotal figure. After defeating the lineages in power, he established ties with the new Manchu dynasty and introduced some Chinese governmental reforms. He also began building Potala palace in the capital Lhasa. Tibet did not see another powerful Dalai Lama, however, until the thirteenth one (1876 -1933) who re-established Tibetan independence and expelled the Chinese garrison in Lhasa. However, he predicted the future destruction of Tibet and Buddhism. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Tibet became isolationist, with the exception of the establishment of three trading posts by the British in 1904. In 1950 the thirteenth Dalai Lama's prediction was realised when Communist China sent an army to Lhasa and the fourteenth Dalai Lama (1935 -) fled to India in 1959. The Tibet Autonomous Region was established in 1965. Buddhism was severely persecuted and many refugees fled to India, Europe, and America.

Cultural Contact with Indo-European Neighbors

Having established a historical background, we can examine Tibet's prehistory. Though what existed in Tibet before the seventh century is shrouded in mythic "pseudo-history", there is evidence for IE influence. Since Sino-Tibetan is not generally considered to be within the IE family of languages, evidence for IE influence might at first glance seem negligible. However, since Tibet was surrounded on *three sides* by IE speaking peoples up until the first millennium B.C., unless Tibet remained completely isolated up until that time, some influence would have likely infiltrated through trade and socio-political relations. And if Tibet had been isolated up until the first millennium B.C., this would have been a serious aberration in comparison to what is known to have occurred in early historic times. In early historic times there is ample evidence for active relations and trade between Tibet and its neighbours. According to Christopher Beckwith, trade routes were active in Tibet during an early medieval Eurasian cultural florissance (c. 600-840 AD) in which Tibetan, Turco-Uighur, Chinese T'ang, Arabo-Persian and Greek Byzantine and German Frankish empires emerged (Beckwith 1977). According to Beckwith, rather than being a time of economic depression, this was a time of cultural change and economic growth which entailed the advent of literacy and international trade of luxury items. Early Tibetan Ch'iang tribes engaged in international trade, and early Tibeto-Burmans traded their musk to India, which went as far as Rome (96). And as previously noted, in the seventh century Tibet formed its own script and adopted Buddhism from India and China under King Songtsen Gampo. China accepted gold ornamental objects from Tibet; apparently "Tibetan goldsmiths were the wonder of the medieval world" (99). Tibetan embassies sent to China in the seventh century is also evidence of active relations, which were related to trade routes near Turkey which Beckwith suspects the Tibetans and the Chinese may have been vying for (Beckwith 1987: 17).

There were also Silk Road trade routes controlled by Jews, Norse, and Sogdians from west central Asia to the Atlantic and from the Black and Caspian Seas to the Baltic and North Seas (Beckwith 1987: 180). But exchange along some of these trade routes in Tibet may have included more than luxury goods; some Sogdian inscriptions in Lakdah and Gilgit are accompanied by carvings of crosses - evidence for a possible Nestorian presence in Tibet (Uray 1983: 404-7). Indeed, Tibet's contact with its neighbours in early historic times

went well beyond trade of goods. Beckwith also points out that there were a lot of foreign artisans, scholars, and monks in King Songtsen Gampo's court, and that many Chinese moved to Central Tibet after the king's marriage to the Chinese princess Wen Cheng (Beckwith 1977: 102). Tibetan nobles also sometimes sent their children to China to be educated. Per Kvaerne also feels that the direct source of the Greek medicinal tradition was probably Iranian, since in Tibet's royal court there was a certain physician named Galenos, who was most likely the Greek Galenos, and "at the Tibetan medical court the Greek medical tradition was sufficiently well known to be esteemed more highly than either the Indian or the Chinese religion" (Kvaerne 1987: 164). He also notes that R.A. Stein traces the use of the lion in Tibetan myth and ritual to Iranian New Year rites.

Therefore the notion of prehistoric cultural contact between Tibet and IE speaking neighbours would seem feasible in that it would simply extend evidenced patterns of contact further back in time. There is some supporting archaeological and linguistic evidence to indicate that this was the case. John Vincent Bellezza, who has surveyed numerous archaeological sites in northern and western Tibet, surmises that shrines, stelae and graves "from northern and western Tibet suggest Euro-Asiatic steppe influences" (Bellezza 2001: 46). Finds of metallic artefacts are also similar to Tibet's northern and western neighbours; for example, he likens Tibetan bronze fibulae to Luristan bronzes, explaining that those of Luristan are probably older, indicating a likely Iranic cultural influence during the first millennium B.C. Some designs found on Tibetan metallic talismans called *thog lcags* can be traced to Turkic tribes, ranged on north east borders. Bellezza also points out that George Roerich noted "similarities between the animal art of the Byang thang and the steppe regions, a style characterised by heraldic pairs of animals often with their heads swung back to face their bodies." Although lithic remains and cave paintings are difficult to date with exactness, all of these pieces of evidence indicate contact with IE speaking neighbours dating back at least as far back as the first millennium B.C., if not earlier.

Indo-European Cultural Roots

What is perhaps the most striking evidence actually derives from linguistic studies. Tibetologist Christopher Beckwith points out that "[s]ome of the peoples inhabiting ancient north west China --the most likely homeland of the Proto-Tibetan speakers --were Indo-Europeans" (Walter and Beckwith 1997: 1037). He further explains that Old Tibetan contains many Indo-European words which were socio-political, economic and religious in nature, such as the IE root word **reg* which denotes king or royal rights (1052). And although Chinese is generally assumed to have had a major impact on the formation of Tibetan languages, close examination reveals that there are few words in Old Tibetan which are Chinese. "The richness of the Old Tibetan vocabulary that is demonstrably of Indo-European origin, its productiveness in the language, and its regularity in both phonology and semantics vis-à-vis Proto-Indo-European, attest to its very great age, to the intensity of the original contact, and to the relatively coherent periodization of that contact (*i.e., more or less due to one major event, such as a conquest*). By contrast, the relative paucity of Old Tibetan vocabulary that is demonstrably and exclusively of Chinese origin ...indicates the relative lateness of the Chinese influence on both the language and the culture of Tibet" (1053, emphasis added). In other words, Tibetan is closely related to

or possibly a branch of an early IE daughter language, indicating very ancient and deeply rooted IE influence.

And there is evidence that this influence was much more far reaching than linguistic. Michael Walter explains that Old Tibetan texts and Tun-huang document descriptions of ancient Tibetan kings or *btsan-pos* have similarities to Germanic and Scythian tribal kings. Walter feels that Dumézil's IE function of king was present in ancient Tibet, and that Tibetan royal burials were very similar to *kurgan* and Scythian burials. "These dead leaders were 'enthroned' in *kurgans* and *bang-so* after death, in a quadrangular structure replicating a court ... The ruler's close family, advisors, and their horses and personal possessions were buried with them" (Walter and Beckwith 1997: 1042). Both Scythians and IE waited a time before burying, and Tibetan burial in upright posture symbolised continuity of rule after death. Thus it would seem that ancient Tibet adopted many IE cultural elements at a very early stage in IE migrations. Walter and Beckwith conclude: "It is our contention that, at a much earlier date, at an early stage of the Indo-European migrations, *speakers of ancient Indo-European language invaded Tibet*, conquered the Proto-Tibetans, or Proto-Tibeto-Burmans, and contributed a great number of concepts and loan words to them" (1037, emphasis added).

Walter also makes mention of the Tibetan attitude of being at war with lands in the four cardinal directions, or *phyogs-bzhi*, as being most likely IE in origin, since the Chinese attitude towards the four quarters is more passive (Walter and Beckwith 1997: 1040). Dumézil's observations concerning the IE trait of partitioning land into quarters by a king as gifts to his sons will be recalled. Eric Haarth explains that the "[f]our districts Yar-lu, Ñan-po, rKon-po, and sPo-bo (or Dwags-po) ... constitute one of the most ancient territorial ideas of Tibet and ... the prototype of the Tibetan image of the world" (Haarth 1969: 271). These territories were said to have been divided among the sons of King Gri-gum, an ancient ruler who is an important quasi-historical figure. Not only does this theme present itself in Tibetan cosmogonic myths, but there is also anthropological evidence that early Tibetan peoples considered quadruple social structure to be an ideal model by which they organised themselves. According to Nick J. Allen, vestiges of this type of social structure exists among Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples in Nepal. The Rai, Gurung and Serwa ethnic groups all believe themselves to originally have been organised into four clans consisting of a royal clan, a priestly clan, ministers, and some type of servant class (Allen 1978: 10-12). Allen remarks "[t]his fourfold classification must have come from Tibet..." (1978: 15). Concerning Tibet's four "horn" districts in the seventh century, Eric Haarth explains that *rus* denotes bone/ family/lineage/ tribe. Haarth feels that there were originally three progenitor tribes who were totem clans, which divided into four and then six (Haarth 1969: 271).

According to documents found in Chinese Tun-huang caves, and in ancient Tibetan fortresses Mazar Tagh and Miran in Khotan, in the second half of the eighth century, Tibet's Four Horns were military districts that were subdivided into eight districts of one thousand households, which were further subdivided into sixteen districts of five hundred households (Uebach and Uray 1994: 1001). Individuals were referred to by their thousand-district, their clan, and individual name. Clan members were assigned to different thousand

districts, which was most likely an attempt to prevent lineages from consolidating and gaining too much power (915). It would seem, then, that up until that time power had been vested in ancestral lineages, and I would argue that a military organization had been imposed on a pre-existing clan-district pattern. But this attempt failed, as rivalry among aristocratic clans led to the downfall of the empire; apparently such deeply-rooted traditional forms of power could not be suppressed.

What is also interesting to observe concerning the rocky historical development of Tibet's social structure are pieces of evidence that when taken as a whole suggest the underlying presence of IE functions. That Dumézil's kingly function existed in ancient Tibet has already been remarked upon, as evidenced by royal tombs. Haarh argues that there is evidence that the King was member or royal trinity of king, Bon po priest, and minister (Haarh 1969: 108). Though not much is known about ancient Bon po priests, Per Kvaerne explains that "...one of their main functions seems to have been to perform the burial of and to carry out the cult connected with dead kings" (Kvaerne 1995: 27). "Bon" means "invoker" or "to invoke"; it also means "seed"; and it is also glossed by Zhang-zhung term *gyer*, "to chant" (Kvaerne 1995: 31). Could the "seed" meaning be a reference to agricultural fertility, the ensurance of which Dumézil argues is part of the role of the IE priest? Early Tibetan peoples are also conceived of as having been war-like; modern Tibetans refer to their ancestors as being "red-faced flesh eaters," which recalls the Bon po notion of being at war on all sides. "Red-faced" could possibly be a reference to the use of ochre; Songtsen Gampo's Chinese wife Wen-ch'ang banned the painting of faces with red ochre as part of their Buddhist reform. In bKra shis do in northern Tibet, red ochre cave paintings were found depicting "battle and duelling scenes, sacred symbols, dancers, and what appear to be supernatural beings and events" (Bellezza, 2001: 200). The red ochre--*bstag*--which had been used "...appears to have been mined locally at a pit named after the most important tantric Buddhist deity inhabiting gNam mtsho: rDo rje Phag mo. The high quality ochre (iron oxide) found in this mine is said to represent the blood of the goddess." He also explains that traditionally the people in this region --the '*brog pa*-- are a martial people, their cults connected with *btsan* red martial ancestral rock spirits. This evidence hints of the possible existence of an ancient warrior tradition in connection with a goddess, which not only echoes Dumézil, but also calls to mind red ochre and battle-axe findings in Kurgan burials.

Apparently aspects of this ancient social structure survived up until modern times. Nick J. Allen refers to Aziz's description of pre-Communist Tibet; there existed "four basic endogamous groups... *sger-pa* (aristocracy), *sgags-pa* (hereditary priests), *mi-ser* (including agriculturists, nomads, labourers, traders) and the *yawa* (outcastes)" (Allen 1978: 15). And rule by a Dalai Lama could arguably be a mixture of priestly and royal functions, as Tibetan kings were anciently religious symbols attended to by priests, like the Dalai Lama.

4) "Old Europe"

Gimbutas's Old European Culture

According to Marija Gimbutas, before the IE invasions there existed a cultural complex across Europe which she terms as “Old Europe” (c. 7,000-3,000 B.C.). Old Europe has its beginnings in the seventh millennium B.C. when access to obsidian sources induced cultural exchange through marine navigation, and finds of cultural complexes appear in coastal Greece and Italy, southern Anatolia, Syria, Palestine and the Fertile Crescent (Gimbutas 1997: 120-21). Thereafter, “Old Europe took its own course, producing a series of cultures which by their similarity, their mutual relationships, and their achievements, unify and distinguish a civilisation” (121). In the sixth millennium B.C., contact between the Balkans and Anatolia, bridged by the Aegean islands, produced south eastern European cultural complexes which had close affinities with Anatolia, Levant, and Mesopotamia. Findings include ritual artefacts such as human and animal figurines, vases with reliefs of masked divinity, and seals with ideograms (122). “By 5000 B.C., Old European culture crystallised into many regional variants displaying well-developed traditions in ceramic art, architecture, and cult organisation and justifying the term 'civilisation'. The Old Europeans formed population aggregates often amounting to small townships --a situation with the unavoidable implications of religious and governmental institutions. They also discovered the use of metal and worked gold and copper for the manufacture of ornaments and tools” (124). Seven main traditions appear during the Chalcolithic Period (c. 5300-3500 B.C.): 1) Aegean; 2) Central Balkans; 3) Adriatic; 4) Middle Danube; 5) Tisza (Southeast Hungary); 6) Eastern Balkans; 7) Moldavian-West Ukrainians. “Shrines, temples, and cult equipment evidence an organised religious structure and highly developed ceremonialism” (125). For example, in Romania near the Danube River was found a temple with red and green painted spiral designs on its walls, with two intricately designed pillars within the shrine. Gimbutas also explains that Old Europe also saw the emergence of a script, with symbols such as chevrons, triangles, and crossed lines (127-28). At the Vinca site in Yugoslavia, hundreds of miniature vessels, spindle whorls, and ex-voto dishes or cups “exhibit linear signs which are quite distinct from ...ideograms. These items testify to the existence of a script. The Old European script is some 2,000 years older than the Sumerian. It was presumably associated with religious functions, serving to record, to dedicate, to commemorate.”

Old European cultures were primarily peaceful, as findings of weapons and hill forts are rare (Gimbutas 1997). Gimbutas also feels that they were likely egalitarian, as sites do not seem to reflect much in the way of social stratification. Central to Old European culture was the worship of what Gimbutas calls “The Great Goddess”, as findings of figurines and depictions on pottery shards and frescoes attest. The most ancient depictions of her are in animal form, such as the doe, toad, bee, butterfly, bear, snake, and bird. Figurines depicting birds such as cranes, owls, and ducks are often leaning forward, with stump-like arms and chevrons decorating the body. Snake figurines have parallel or zigzag lines, dotted bands, and spirals covering the body, with the hair in spiral patterns. The toad was another common motif; Gimbutas explains that its parted legs and emphasised pubic triangle is an obvious depiction of the goddess as life-giver (174). She also reasons that the notion of new life emerging from death in the birth of the butterfly from a cocoon and in the regeneration of deer’s antlers were likely inspirations for goddess figurine depictions in these forms (171, 183).

Gimbutas argues that animal forms would be a reflection of a fisher-hunter culture which likely has its roots in the Palaeolithic era, and that “[w]ith the inception of agriculture, farming man began to observe the phenomenon of the miraculous Earth more closely and more intensively... A separate deity emerged, the Goddess of Vegetation, a symbol of the sacral nature of the seed and the sown field, whose ties with the Great Goddess are intimate” (Gimbutas 1974: 237). The Vegetation Goddess is often enthroned, having a nude pregnant belly with dots and diamonds or crosses, symbolising a sown field, often flanked by male animals such as the dog or he-goat. Images of the Vegetation Goddess are also composite with animal imagery from pre-agricultural eras, and eggs, crescents, horns, and snakes are also incised on her belly. She also came to be associated with the pig, as “the fast-growing body of a pig will have impressed agriculturists; its fattening must have been compared to corn growing and ripening, so that its soft fats apparently came to symbolise the earth itself, causing the pig to become a sacred animal probably no later than 6000 B.C.” (211). The evidence also portrays the Goddess as having originally been androgynous, with masculine and feminine elements being intertwined rather than polarised (196). The oldest figurines often have, for example, a volumptuous female body with a pillar-like, phallic neck (39).

With the birth of a Vegetation Goddess a separate “Year God” consort was born, representing “a male stimulating principle in nature without whose influence nothing would grow and thrive” (Gimbutas 1974: 216).

The Year-God cycle starts with the birth of the Divine Child. The masked goddess in the shape of a bear, snake or bird nurses the baby... The infant appropriately appears in the shape of a cub, baby snake, baby bird --all symbols of young life in nature. Masked figurines holding and feeding babies, or figurines with sacks on the back or with a hump... and their portrayals as parts of ritual vases, occur frequently enough to attest to a ritual-re-enactment of myth of the birth and maturing of the Infant (Gimbutas 1974: 234).

He is often represented with an animal mask, or as a goat-man or bull-man, or sometimes as an ecstatic dancer. The Greek Dionysus is a vestige of this type of figure. Though he is a separate entity, in Old European complexes he was intimately connected with the Goddess. Bees were anciently believed to be born of bulls because they swarm around a putrefying corpse; a reflection of the interconnectedness of the Goddess and God. And the symbol of the bull was not entirely masculine in the Neolithic; the bull was also connected with the fertility of the Goddess, a likely reason being that a bull’s head and horns resemble the uterus and fallopian tubes. “In the temples of Çatal Hüyük, on a series of female forms there are actually depicted bucrania where the uterus fallopian tubes should be” (Gimbutas 1999: 35). Male bull-God figures often have large buttocks, and are sometime enthroned or in shape of a vessel.

Phallic portrayals are also found throughout Old Europe, “fashioned in all sizes from the miniature to the exaggerated. Their decoration and shape range from naturalistic to fantastic: some have a ‘cap’ or a circumcision and an opening on top; others are

geometrically decorated by painting or incision; still others spiral upwards like snakes” (Gimbutas 1974: 216-17).

Another Old European male motif is what Gimbutas terms the “sorrowful god”, depicted in “figures of a squatting or seated man on a stool or throne; his arms either rest peaceful on his lap, or they are propped on his knees to provide a support for his head. He shows no signs of emotion and is not animal-masked; his attitude and the facial expression of the mask he wears imply contemplation and worry” (Gimbutas 1974: 247).

Worship of the Goddess and Year God took the form of seasonal dramas or festivals enacted through the medium of the figurine, as findings of ritual masks, festive attire, depictions of dancing, musical instruments, evidence of sacrifices, and ladles and drinking cups attest. Decorative motifs on Vinca and East Balkan figurines depict female ritual costume: hip belts made of leather, large beads or clay discs; medallions with a circular pendant hanging in middle of the chest; bead necklaces made of stone, bone copper or clay; and long, fitted V-neck gowns with a spiral motif above the shoulders, with parallel incisions and crisscross patterns below. Men are usually depicted as nude standing or sitting, sometimes with emblems, pendants, and collars, with masked faces and long hair falling behind. In Vinca sites, masks had facial triangularity or pentagonality, protruding angular cheekbones, spiralled ears, sometimes with large eyes and horns, and some may have also had plumes. “The richly clad figurines are probably not meant to depict ordinary villagers; they are more likely to personify specific goddesses or gods, or represent worshippers or priests attending rites, garbed appropriately in masks and festive costume” (Gimbutas 1974: 55). Clay models of temples found in all parts of Old Europe attest to the existence of rectangular sanctuaries where these ritual enactments likely took place. Domestic shrines may have been a reflection of communal ones, in which rectangular houses were divided into two rooms with an oven, altar and a separate sacrificial space. Clay figurines were usually found at the end corner close to the oven, near the entrance or by grindstones. Figurines with inscriptions were also found in sacrificial burials as gifts to divinities.

Gimbutas explains that with the onset of Kurgan invasions, different values such as patriarchy, social stratification, and war were introduced by Indo-Europeans, but Old European mythical imagery and values remained in the substratum, and two very different cultures merged. “The Old European creations were not lost; transformed, they enormously enriched the European psyche” (Gimbutas 1974: 238). The subjection or replacement of Old European goddesses with male IE gods took place, and the IE adopted and reinterpreted symbols, such as the bull motif becoming a purely male symbol of strength. But the Neolithic Vegetation Goddess survived and transformed into “the Indo-European Earth-Mother, who is the impalpable sacred earth-spirit and is not in herself a creative principle; only through the interaction of the male sky-god does she become pregnant” (196).

I would suggest that the Old European vegetation god transformed into or was fused with the IE sacral king. I would also argue that aspects of the IE Earth-Mother was also realized in the role of the IE sovereignty goddess-queen, which will be discussed later.

Ireland and Britain

There is some evidence of the presence of Gimbutas's Old European culture in Ireland and Britain. That Neolithic communities existed in Ireland and Britain is clear; Neolithic Linear Pottery communities expanded up the Danube and down the Rhine, reaching Ireland and Britain, as pottery finds and finds in cemeteries attest (Battaglia 1997: 49). Frank Battaglia has also linked Linear Pottery culture with passage tombs in the British Isles (Battaglia 1997: 50). The Neolithic Irish passage tomb of New Grange and its neighboring village of Knowth has double spiral designs which resemble motifs on figurines described above, which some scholars interpreted as being an eye goddess motif (Battaglia 1997: 55). Newgrange has also been identified as being specifically non-Indo-European, as Jones-Bley, referring to Gimbutas's criteria for IE burial argues: "There is no individual burial, house-like structure, central burial of any kind, nor evidence of sacrifice. Moreover, there is evidence that the tomb was used for repeated ritual purposes." (Jones-Bley 1997: 212). Two chalk figurines were found in a Stone Age ditch near Windmill Hill, overlooking Silbury. Other such figurines have been found in Neolithic sites at Maiden Castle, Dorset, the Trundle, Sussex, and Somerset. Michael Dames explains that "[t]he sacred role of Neolithic figurines is frequently underlined by their settings in shrines, eliminating the possibility that they were made for merely decorative reasons" (Dames 1992b: 52). Michael Dames also argues that Neolithic Silbury Hill is a form depicting a goddess.

Miranda Green argues that since the Celts practiced an agricultural way of life, a focus on fertility would have been natural. "She therefore looked back to the Neolithic -- the "New Stone" period which invented horticulture, stock rearing and pottery in the final epoch of the stone age -- to find the origin of Celtic belief systems" (Battaglia 1997: 48). Battaglia also explains that Anne Ross describes the Celts as being "concerned with the concept of a mother goddess who presides over mortals, but they also visualized the gods themselves as belonging to and controlled by a great divine mother, nurturer of the gods and of the land" (Battaglia 1997: 51). The Celtic goddesses Bride, Anu, and Danu predate the gods and are associated with fertility according to Ross (Dames 1992b: 92). The Celts also personified the sacred feminine presence of the land as being a goddess of sovereignty and queen with whom the king, a type of vegetation god, mated, which will be further addressed later. These pieces of evidence indicate the presence of a Neolithic community with non IE cultural elements, and who venerated feminine deity.

What's more, vestiges of Old European culture are still alive in Ireland according to Gimbutas: "Old European monuments stand here in all their majesty. In its legends and rituals, this country has preserved many elements which in other parts of Europe vanished long ago. Much that stems from pre-Indo-European times ...is still very much alive in Ireland. I would say that the ancient spirit of Ireland is closer to the Old European, despite the rather early appearance of Indo-Europeans here" (Dames 1992a: 11).

Tibet

Tibet is obviously not included in Gimbutas's model of Old Europe. However, when Tibet is considered in light of the general model of IE as being harbingers of brutal patriarchal cultural change to preexisting peaceful cultures which had reverence for a feminine deity,

the question arises as to what indigenous beliefs existed in Tibet before IE influence. It is interesting to note that the Asian portion of Tibet's neighbor, Turkey, (i.e. Anatolia), is the eastern periphery of Gimbutas's model of Old Europe and was a key element in its early cultural formation. Since Anatolia actively traded with peoples across the Aegean in Neolithic times, to argue that trade and cultural influence could also have taken place in the other direction seems feasible. It has been established that Tibet had active relations with Turkey in early historic times; how far back these relations date to remains to be seen. Archaeological excavation has barely begun in Tibet, and scholars are only just beginning to piece together Tibet's prehistory.

A connection with Anatolia would link Tibet with Old Europe's eastern periphery, opposite to its western periphery of the British Isles and Ireland. Evidence has also been presented indicating that Tibet and the British Isles are the eastern and western peripheries of a series of IE invasions across Europe. The IE linguistic scholar Meillet put forth a "marginal theory" concerning the evolution of IE languages: "The languages which occupy the extreme areas of the Indo-European domain are likely to have been taken there by settlers who first left the bulk of the 'Indo-European' nation and, as a consequence, have preserved archaisms unknown to settlers whose linguistic tradition is continued in the central areas" (Schmidt 1996: 13).

It would seem reasonable to extend this argument to a cultural level; that is to say, areas along the periphery of the IE geographical area of expansion have preserved the most archaic cultural elements. And given Gimbutas's model of pre-existing Neolithic peoples, the category of "archaic" might also be extended to refer to pre-IE cultural traits. Vestiges of these archaic elements survive in folk traditions, as will be shown. And given the fact that Tibet and Britain and Ireland are so culturally different now, I would also argue that any commonalities which come to the fore in comparing folk traditions would stand out with such force as to be easily identified as being vestiges of common cultural roots.

II. Comparison of Folk Traditions

5) Folk Cosmology of Ireland and Tibet

Tibet and Ireland both experienced religious takeovers which undermined and absorbed indigenous beliefs of ancient derivation. Ireland converted to Christianity in the fifth century A.D., and Tibet converted to Buddhism in the seventh century A.D. The Irish St. Patrick and the Tibetan tantrist magician Padmasambhava tamed indigenous folk traditions; the Tibetan landscape was purged of demonic forces while the Irish pagans underwent exorcisms and were reborn into a more enlightened way of life through baptism. Buddhist monasteries were erected on sacred landscapes and Christian churches were built on sacred groves.

Aspects of pre-Christian Ireland and pre-Buddhist Tibet are still alive in folk traditions. In modern Tibet, folk beliefs in spirits and elementals permeate Bon and Buddhist traditions, but folk beliefs also have retained a degree of autonomy separate from ecclesiastical traditions, which R.A. Stein refers to as the “nameless religion”, and what G. Tucci calls “folk tradition.” Folk traditions are especially alive among nomads, as their lives are closely connected with nature, and reverence for nature is reflected in their spirituality:

Three pieces of ice put on sheep or yak yarn are offered to the sky, earth and gods as they wish for the prosperity of their livestock. When nomads drink tea or barley beer or have a meal, they flick some of the food or drink skyward three times with their fingers as an offering to the gods in the sky, earth, and water; when they pass a crossroads, they place a pebble on a pile of stones and hang a string of prayer flags to worship the road god; on the salt lakes, they set up an altar made up of sheep’s wool to express their sincere thanks to goddesses, while the symbol... (representing sun and moon) painted on their tents expresses their worship of everything on earth and sky (Lihua 1990: 193).

Otherworld Beings

Classification of these Tibetan spirit entities is outlined in Philp Cornu’s translation of *Nyingmapa* texts:

The *lu* [or *klu*] are aquatic deities... They live underground, in springs, lakes and rivers... [They] can be vindictive when their natural home is disturbed. The pollution of water, the construction of barrages and dykes, irrigation works, [and] altering the course of rivers are acts that can lead to illness if not carried out at the astrologically correct time. The nagas can take revenge by sending diseases such as leprosy to the responsible human beings.

The *nyen* are spirits, generally badly intentioned, who live in the atmosphere or on the earth's surface, on plains and in forests. One should be careful not to cut trees on certain days indicated in the astrological almanacs. The *nyen* cause many illnesses, and certain cancers were attributed to them. They are described as having animal form, of bovine type, yellow or green in colour.

The *sadag* are 'lords of the soil'. In general neutral, they can become irritated when one 'wounds' the soil, their domain, through work, excavation, or building...

The *tsen* [or *btsan*] are red spirits who live in the rocks. They are all male, and are spirits of past monks who have rejected their vows. *Tsen* who have been tamed by great practitioners often become protectors of temples, sanctuaries, and monasteries. One makes red offerings to them.

The *gyelpo* or 'king-spirits' are said to be the spirits of evil kings or of high lamas who have rejected their vows. They are white, often carry armour and are frequently local gods of great importance, as mountain deities.

The *dud* are spirits who are openly malevolent... These are beings who were violently opposed to the dharma in their past life. They create obstacles for the practice of yogis and they feed on human flesh. Their colour is black.

The *mamo* consist of a very numerous class of ferocious female deities...they pre-existed Buddhism... These black goddesses personify natural forces that can be devastating when they are disturbed...

The *sa*... are malevolent planetary deities who cause illness such as epilepsy...

The *nodjin*...are guardian deities of the natural riches of the soil. Vaisravana, the guardian king of the north, is their chief. He is a deity of prosperity. They are also associated with medicine...

The *lha* proper, finally, are a class of white deities, well-disposed towards human being. (1990: 226-29; quoted in Samuel 1993).

The Irish also have retained folk beliefs concerning spirits in nature, generally referred to as "fairies." In 1911 W.Y. Evans-Wentz travelled the British Isles and collected accounts of fairy lore from people of different backgrounds and social types, from tailors and schoolmasters and housewives to college professors, clergymen, and seers. Inclusive in Irish fairy lore includes beliefs in various tribes or races of fairies, elementals, and spirits of the dead. Reverend Father Kenney from Kilmessan describes some of the types of fairies in Ireland: "The leprechaun is a red-capped fellow who stays round pure springs, generally shoemaking for the rest of the fairy tribes. The lunantishees are the tribes that guard the

blackthorn of trees or sloes ...If...[at an inauspicious time] you cut a blackthorn, some misfortune will come to you. Pookas are black feathered fellows mounted on good horses; and are horse dealers... The *gentry* are the most noble race of all; and they are a big race who came from the planets-- according to my idea; they usually appear white..." (Evans-Wentz 1977: 52-53).

At first glance, Irish fairies would seem to have little in common with Tibetan folk beliefs. However, in Irish lore fairies can be violent and cause illness such as paralysis, blindness, and death, often by drowning. They can also be warlike. Reverend Father Peter Kenney describes fairies as marching in war processions around Tara Hill (Evans-Wentz 1977: 53). He also makes mention of a "tribe of little red men." There are also accounts of fairy hunting parties riding horses with hound dogs, and of soldier fairies. These might be comparable to Tibetan *btsan* spirits, who are always associated with the colour red and with warfare. Like Tibetans, in medieval times the Irish were also cautious concerning the felling of trees, and in the *Triads of Ireland* the death penalty is demanded for the unlawful felling of the chieftain trees hazel and apple: "Three unbreathing things paid for only with breathing things: an apple tree, a hazel bush, a sacred grove" (Graves 1997: 198). This is due to the belief that divine entities are incarnate in trees, which has persisted up until modern times, as an Irish seer relates, "The wood beings I have seen most often of a shining silvery colour with a tinge of blue or pale violet, and with dark purple-coloured hair" (Evans-Wentz 1977: 64). Fairies are also believed to control crops such as corn and turnips and their ripening, and they also accept food offerings, and are angered when their "fairy portion" is denied. It is also interesting to note that while Tibetan *btsan* spirits are given red food offerings, fairies are often given white offerings, such as milk, butter, and cheese. These same offerings are given to Bridget on St Bride's Day or the pagan festival of Imbolc. In Tibet, mountain and lake deities are associated with agricultural fertility, and are also given food offerings. And like Tibetan spirits, fairies dwell in magical forts, rocks, trees, bodies of water, mountains, and in the wind, which to the normal human eye are natural phenomena but to the mystic are also enchanted castle-like realms. In both Tibetan and Irish folklore, the spirit world is vibrant with activity and is invisible to normal human awareness, but is visible to the seer or medium, who can see both terrible and paradisaical forms. In Irish lore the ability to see fairies is a gift that can be obtained from rubbing an eye with magical water, and if fairies do not like individuals being able to see them, they can make the gifted eye blind by blowing into it. Both Irish and Tibetan spirit-forms can either be malevolent or benevolent, and can be appeased to a certain extent, but can also be unpredictable.

Perhaps the most prominent parallel is between the Tibetan *lha* order of white, heavenly beings and the Irish *gentry* race of fairies, who are often equated with the *Tuatha de Danann* and the *Sidhe* from classical literature. The *gentry* are white, radiant, extremely tall (a seer describes them as being fourteen feet in stature), and have a much longer life-span than humans. They dwell in castles and kingdoms and play beautiful music. A seer claims to have seen them while lying on a hillside and hearing music and the sound of bells:

there was at first a dazzle of light, and then I saw that this came from the heart of a tall figure with a body apparently shaped out of half-transparent or opalescent air, and throughout the body ran a radiant, electrical fire, to which the heart seemed the centre. Around the head of this being and through its waving luminous hair, which was blown all about the body like living strands of gold, there appeared flaming wing-like auras. From the being itself seemed to stream outwards in every direction; and the effect left on me after the vision was one of extraordinary lightness, joyousness, or ecstasy (Evans-Wentz 1977: 61).

Though the *gentry* are both male and female, female forms seem to more commonly appear than male forms, and they often wear green, and sometimes offer gifts of jewels or are associated with treasure. Green is specifically considered to be a fairy colour. Many of these same motifs are associated with Tibetan female deities, such as Buddhist *dakinis* who protect spiritual “treasures” (often in the form of sacred texts), and the Buddhist goddess Tara’s association with the colour green. An example of a Tibetan *lha* deity is the goddess Lha mo Kun dge ma, who has a green complexion, a head ornament that is a resplendent wheel, holding a wheel in her right hand and flaming jewel in her left. And interestingly enough, Alexandra David-Neel refers to *dakini* spirits as fairies: “The fairies that they imagine are not little fantastic people, young and beautiful, as those in our tales; but grave and learned ladies, who sometimes incarnate on our earth for very serious reasons” (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 36).

Female spirits can also have malevolent forms in Tibet and Ireland, with similar imagery in some cases. For example, in the Tibetan *Book of the Dead*, on the eighth day, eight terrifying “witches” appear, and one of them, a Kalamukha, is black and crow-headed, holding a blood-filled skull cap in her left hand and a sword in her right hand while she gnaws at human heart and lungs (Hodge 2000: 104). This imagery would be roughly comparable to the Irish Morrigan, who is a raven war goddess who collects bones on the battlefield. However, in Ireland, white rather than black remains a prominent colour association of female death forms, as in the case of the *banshee*, which is a white fairy woman or ghost, often crone-like, whose hair-curdling wail predicts imminent death.

Reincarnation

The *gentry* are also known to kidnap young men and women they like, or infants, replacing them with unwanted babies who are deformed, or *changelings*. Persons can dwell in fairyland for a number of hours or years. The spirits of the dead and of ancestors are also believed to dwell with the *gentry*. An Irish peasant seer relates: “They take the whole body and soul of young people who are interesting, transmuting the body to a body like their own. Once they take you and you taste food in their palace you cannot come back. You are changed to one of them, and live with them for ever” (Evans-Wentz 1977: 47).

Tibetans believe that human beings can become *lha* gods in a future life if they acquire good karma (Samuel 1993: 163). This notion is most interesting in light of the following seer’s account:

In whatever country we may be, I think we are forever immersed in a spirit world; but most of us cannot perceive it because of the unrefined nature of our physical bodies. Through meditation and psychical training one can come to see the spiritual world and its beings. We pass into the spirit realm at death and come back into the human world at birth; and we continue to reincarnate until we have overcome all earthly desires and mortal appetites. Then the higher life is open to our consciousness and we cease to be human; we become divine beings (Evans-Wentz 1977: 84).

Though this may sound like a Tibetan lama speaking, it is an Irishman from County Kerry. An old woman from Belcare, Ireland also told Evans-Wentz that people she knew as a girl believed in having lived on earth in a previous life, and that ““disease and misfortune in old age come as a penalty for sins committed in a former life,”” though they were secretive about their beliefs (Evans-Wentz 1977: 384). Another of Evans-Wentz’s interviewees, the Reverend T. M. Morgan, Vicar of Newchurch Parish in Wales, relates the following:

My father said there used to be expressed in Cardiganshire before his time, a belief in rebirth. This was in accord with Druidism, namely, that all human beings formerly existed on the moon, the world of middle light, and the queen of heaven; that those who there lived a righteous life were thence born on the sun, and thence onward to the highest heaven; and those whose moon life had been unrighteous were born on this earth of suffering and sin. Through righteous living on earth souls are able to return to the moon, and then evolve to the sun and highest heaven; or, through wrong living on earth, souls are born in the third condition, which is one of utter darkness and still greater suffering and sin than our world offers. But even from the lowest condition souls can work up to the highest glory if they strive successfully against evil. The Goddess of Heaven or Mother of all human beings was known as *Brenhines-y-nef*. I am unable to tell if she is the moon itself or lived on the moon. On the other hand, the sun was considered the father of all human beings. According to the old belief, every new moon brings the souls who were unfit to be born on the sun, to deposit them here on earth... (Evans-Wentz 1977: 390).

In like manner, in both Bon and Buddhist traditions there is a cosmological hierarchy of spirits worlds that one can be born into and that one can progress from the lowest hell realms to heaven.

There is also evidence of reincarnation in Irish and Welsh literature. According to classicist Eleanor Hull, “There is no doubt that all the chief personages of [the Ulster]cycle were regarded as the direct descendants, or it would be more correct to say, as avatars or reincarnations of the early gods”(Evans-Wentz 1977: 368-369). She gives as examples the goddess Etain becoming the wife of a king of Ireland, and CúChulainn as being an avatar of Lugh Lamfada (long-hand), a sun deity .

Mountain, Hill and Lake Deities

In Tibet, ancestral spirits or gods are supplicated through food offerings and pilgrimage. Adepts circumbulate a mountain, offering libations and prayers along the way. Mountain protector gods, or *yul lha*, are also associated with ancestral rulers. Though the same cannot be said of the modern Irish, there is evidence that in former times the Irish did engage in pilgrimage and supplicated spirits. According to a passage in *Book of Lismore*, three sons of an Irish king who were denied inheritance went to the Daghdha's palace at New Grange and fasted, and a son of the Daghdha appeared to them and offered them wives, who in ancient Ireland were associated with land and riches. Evans-Wentz explains that

The passage evidently describes a cult of royal or famous ancestral spirits identified with the god-race of the Tuatha De Danann, who, as we know, being reborn as mortals, ruled Ireland. These ancestral spirits were to be approached by a pilgrimage made to their abode, the spirit-haunted tumulus, and a residence in it of three days and three nights during which period there was to be an unbroken fast. Sacrifices were doubtless offered to the gods, or spirit ancestors; and while they were 'fasted upon', they were expected to appear and grant the pilgrim's prayer and speak with him (1977: 413).

In Tibet, female lakes and male mountains are conceived of as being divine couples who protect and ensure fertility. In Ireland, enchanted lakes, wells, and streams have life-giving, healing properties and are often associated with a female deity. Irish fairy-mounds and mountains are also commonly associated with fairy-women, but legends surrounding hills and lakes are also often in connection with a husband, father, or brother. Mountains in Ireland can also be male, such as CúChulainn's mountain in Slieve Gullion, famous from the tale of the "Cattle Raid of Cooley", that is believed to be enchanted with spirits of the dead who were taken by fairies (Evans-Wentz 1977: 75).

In Ireland, sacred hills are often also associated with bodies of water. Knoc Aine in Munster, a hill said to have been made by the sun goddess Aine, is mythically connected to a nearby lake, Lough Gur. On St John's Day straw fire torches are lit around the hill and on its summit, Aine's fairy retinue gather, and she sometimes appears. Aine also has a retinue of poets associated with Lough Gur, believed to have been descended from gods. She is also conceived of as being incarnate in the hill and lake itself, and her sun-rays are reflected in the waters, sometimes conceived of as her eye. "Ain" can mean "in my womb," and "guaire" can mean on the point of childbirth, and on Lughnasa, a harvest celebration, she is believed to sit on her chair and waits for the dawn or birth of her son, the sun god Lugh. She is also mythically the wife of both the sea god Manannan and Echdae the sky horse, and in her solar journey from the sky to the sea she beds them both in turn, and dwells in Knoc Aine, connecting land, sea and sky. Aine also has a tree-trunk father and foliage brother, Eogabala and Uanide. Lough Gur is believed to be a place where several worlds meet, and is enchanted and dangerous. The night air sometimes reputedly filled with unearthly fire, and Fitzgerald wrote "...in the past, no minstrel, piper, or poet would willingly spend a night within a mile of its shore, such is its fearful reputation and potency..." (Dames 1992a: 73). Aine appears around the lake as an old woman, a young

princess, a mother, or a mermaid combing her hair and wearing a magical green cloak. Her lake also has healing properties; "On the night of the full moon, the people brought their sick close to the lake so that the moonlight shone brightly on them. The old people called this night 'All Heal', and if a sick person was not better by the 8th or 9th day of the moon, he would then hear the *Ceol Side* which Aine would sing to comfort the dying..." (80). But Lough Gur can also be treacherous, and it is believed that a person drowns in it every seven years. The poet Gearoid MacGearailt drowned there, and according to legend, Aine was sitting knitting and watched him drown. Lough Gur also reputedly disappears once every seven years, revealing a sacred tree. In the middle of the lake is a small island, which is the home of the god Crom Dubh "the dark bent one" who carries sheafs of the first harvest on his back. Dames believes that there is likely a connection between Crom Dubh and the phantom bull believed to guard a treasure of gold said to be buried in the area (100-05). Ox bones, prehistoric bronze chariot fittings, old weapons and vessels have been found in lake, and were likely votive offerings. Knockadoon caves are believed to be an entrance to the Irish fairy paradise Tir Na n'Og. Aine is also said to have an underwater mansion, and a local, Sean O' Shea is said to have visited her palace one night. He ate at in a luxurious banquet hall, and Aine gave him a purse of gold at the end of the night, but when he awoke it only contained furze flowers (98).

Knoc Aine and Lough Gur are roughly comparable to Dang ra g.yu mtsho and rTa rgo rin po che, a paired lake and mountain in Byang thang in northern Tibet held sacred in the '*brog pa* folk tradition. Dang ra is a fertility goddess and Queen of elemental beings such as the *klu mo* in the lake. Like Aine, Dang ra has retinues of male and female servants, four of whom are a sisterhood of goddesses who hold coloured flags and ride fantastic animals like aquatic horses. Dang ra is also present in the lake itself, and small lakes closeby represent her eyes and are pilgrimage sites with cairns. Bellezza notes, "in Tibetan belief, the eye is the sight of the deepest psycho-spiritual energies, and liberation through sight is an important means to enlightenment..." (Bellezza 1997: 336). If Dang ra doesn't freeze in winter, tragedy will strike, and the colour of lake indicates incoming weather, and its waves predict the future. She is connected with healing by manifesting from the medicinal spittle of the healing goddess gNam phyi gung rgyal. In an assembly hall, Dang ra is depicted as wearing a green robe, which recalls Aine's cloak. In her peaceful form, "her face and body are golden white, like a full moon. In her left hand, she holds a golden vase full of nectar and, in her left, a *me long* [mirror] reflecting all the visions of existence... In her expanding or conquering form (*rgyas pa*) her body is golden-turquoise-like golden green. In her right hand, she holds a silver vase full of nectar and, in her left hand, she holds flowers..." and she is also depicted as coral-colored and black in her dakini and wrathful emanations (342).

There are also caves in the vicinity, and one cave contains a wolf-like head image symbolising the central goddess in a sisterhood of tantric dakinis of whom Dang ra is a part. These goddesses have "frightening mask-like faces, red, white, dark blue, and yellow and green in colour, wear cemetery ornaments and hold curved swords and skull caps" (Bellezza 1997: 337). There is a belief that they reside in a jewelled fort on a turquoise rock by rTa rgo:

It is a lofty, pleasant land with a multitude of medicinal waters and rows of mountains resembling the teeth of a tiger. mTsho mo (Dang ra) looks like the spread wings of a khyung and the scattered forests like springing 'brong. The slate mountains look like the crossed wings of the khyung and the red rocks like flickering flames. Birds chirp sweetly here (Bellezza 1997: 344).

Dang ra is also said to dwell in a fort paradise in the vicinity.

rTa rgo is one of Bon's most holy mountains, conceived to be Dang ra's husband or brother. He was the ancient guardian of the Zhang-zhung, and he protects from hail, maintains health, is a good road and guide, ensures agricultural fertility, and conquers enemies. He also opens golden treasures, which recalls the oxen guardian of Aine's gold treasures, though rTa rgo's animal forms are rather a white yak and a bear, and he is considered to be the lord of animals. His animal forms may be connected with shamanic traditions; Bellezza explains that the yak in pre-Buddhist rites guides the dead to the afterlife, and that "[b]ear skin robes are an attribute of pre-Buddhist deities. Bear's teeth, bile and brains are used medicinally, and bear flesh is believed to be useful against diseases caused by evil spirits" (Bellezza 1997: 306-07). Though he can be a fierce protector, rTa rgo also "has a peaceful nature and smiling countenance, is red and white in colour, and wears the white hat of Bon... In his right hand, he holds the golden gshang, the king of 100,000 sounds, and, in his left hand, a phur ba [dagger] which he ritually rotates" (304). He is the leader of a brotherhood of eight or nine gods in a mountain range, depicted as wearing helmets and riding coloured horses holding banners, each having their own retinue of soldiers. Inhabitants of the rTa rgo region believe an individual's health in the community is related to the mountain's vital essence, or *srog*. rTa rgo "possesses a srog of enormous proportions harbored deep in the mountain in a secret and unassailable place and he mediates in state of health of all beings in domain" (301).

Though Dang ra is generally considered to be the consort of rTa rgo, one text favours Dang ra over rTa rgo. Bellezza explains that "...this bias towards the lake may have a historical basis in that Dang ra as a female deity was more significant than her mate rTa rgo before the advent of assimilated Bon" (Bellezza 1997: 345). It is also interesting to note that the goddesses Dang ra and Aine have more in common than rTa rgo and Crom Dubh, which would seem to imply that the goddesses are older. Both Dang ra and Aine are incarnate in lakes, associated with healing and fertility, wear green, have retinues of magical creatures and are believed to reside in a paradise fort or castle associated with treasure. And what rTa rgo and Crom Dugh do have in common is that they are both have animal forms, are guardians of golden treasure, and are associated with agricultural fertility.

Conclusion

Tibet and Ireland share folk beliefs in a spirit world inhabited by a vast array of beings, which permeates the natural landscape and can only be perceived by mystics. The most prominent common element in Tibetan and Irish folk spirit-lore are the existence of female otherworld entities, often in relation with bodies of water, who are white and green or turquoise and are associated with treasure. These female beings are often affiliated with a male animal-god of agricultural fertility linked to a hill or mountain. In conjunction with

these beings is a belief in reincarnation. In light of the historical cultural models previously presented, I would suggest that these commonalities are likely to be explained as being IE cultural traits.

6) Cosmogonic World-Mountain

World Mountain

rTa rgo is also considered to be the king of all the deities of the three realms of existence, and the mountain acts as sacred pillar integrating the realms. His peak is in the celestial sphere, and in the primordial past "has been covered with a crystal tent of snow" (Bellezza 1997: 303).

The mountain of Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar is also conceived of as a wondrous Zhang-zhung paradise with three realms, ruled by the "King of Bon":

Its foundations are made of gold, and its four sides of silver. Its main portals are of iron, and its four doors are of silver. Its four edges are made of sardonyx, and its beam-ends of copper. Its pinnacle reaches the 13 levels of the sky; storm clouds swirl about it, blue dragons sleep on it and garudas soar around its sides. It contains 108 chambers. The upper third of it is occupied by the gods. Slates, crags and glaciers tower on high. Three [kinds of illumination, including] rays and lightening, shine out. Fierce *ge-khod* divinities dwell there. The [middle] third is occupied by priests (*gshen*). There are three [kinds of livestock, including] the cows of wild and domestic yaks; horses, sheep, and cattle range there; drums, flat bells and conches are sounded; the [people] exclaim "bSwo!" And call upon the wrathful divinities and the priests (*bon*). The *gyer-gyung* divinities of Zhang zhung live there. The lowest third is occupied by the serpent spirits; there are many turquoise lakes and frequent mists. The three [kinds of marine creatures, including] sea sprites and conches, roar, and the [three kinds of water animals, including] young serpent spirits and otters, play. [The king of the serpent spirits], Mi-mgon dkar-po, dwells here (Ramble 1999: 10, quoting a thirteenth cent. Tibetan source).

rTa rgo and Khyung-lung's mystic imagery are exemplary of the Tibetan cosmic world-mountain theme in which the world is conceived of as a mountain revolving like a mandala-wheel on an axis. Living beings in all realms from the hell regions below to the heavenly regions, revolve in a cycle of rebirths until they reach enlightenment. The mountain is in the midst of an ocean surrounded by four continents and eight subcontinents, with the human world being the southern continent *Dzambuling* (Samuel 1993: 158). (Division into four continents calls to mind Tibet's four proto-clan districts, which Eric Haahr connects with Tibet's Four Horns, which were also further subdivided into eight). The world-mountain was also conceived as being a pole connecting the world with sky, which was likened to a tent which "...has eight ribs giving the sky, which revolves about the pole, the appearance of a wheel with eight spokes ...The pole of the Tibetan tent of the world was imagined as the glacier mountain of Ti-se, the top of which

passed through the central hole of the tent or heaven-- called 'gun'. *Sun sübin* denotes deep space below and may be analogous to the earth. Dalai, ocean may be analogous to underworld, aqueous world of kLu." (Haarh 1969: 141).

The Bon po land of paradise, Ol-mo lung-ring, is also depicted as a cosmic mountain, Mt. gYung-drung dgu-brtsegs, and is said to be part of sTag-gzig, or Persia. It also has a crystal monolith on its peak, which probably refers to a glacial summit. Four rivers flow from its base that proceed from the mouths of a lion, horse, peacock, and elephant. There are temples in each of the cardinal directions, the southern palace of Bar-po so-brgyad being the birthplace of gShen-rab, the founder of the Bon religion, and his two wives and children residing in other temples. There is an intermediate region of twelve cities, four of which are at cardinal points. The mountain is in the midst of an ocean enclosed by circle of snowy mountains (Karmay 1998: 173).

The Tibetan Buddhist land of Shambhala is similarly described:

According to Tibetan legend, Shambhala is a land of peace and harmony, where a dynasty of enlightened kings protect the most secret teachings of Buddhism against the time when all civilisation and culture in the outside world is destroyed by war. Then ...the King of Shambhala will ride out, defeat the forces of evil and establish a Golden Age ...Shambhala itself is surrounded by a protective ring of snow mountains, within each lie eight principalities 'like the petals of a lotus'. In the centre, ice mountains surround the jewelled palace of the King of Shambhala. The golden pagodas of the cities of the kingdom glow among fertile fields, lush forests and beautiful parks. The inhabitants live long and happy lives, free from hunger or sickness. They are intelligent and beautiful, wearing long flowing white robes. Each has great wealth, but never needs to use it... Ancient texts tell how the Buddha taught the Kalachakra to the first lineage of the Kings of Shambhala. The wisdom of these teachings has been passed on by each King, who, in turn, guides his subjects through the practices (Brook 1996: 2-3).

Geoffrey Samuel explains that Tibetans have a conception of the universe similar to the Indian Buddhist conception of Mount Meru (Samuel 1993: 158). The mythic Mt. Meru or Sumeru is associated with Mt. Kailash in India, which is Mt. Gang Ti-se in Tibetan. However, The Indic Mount Meru is not the ultimate "world mountain" prototype, according to Dumézil. He explains that the source of the Indic Kai's wealth is mount Meru, but cognate with Kai is the Iranian Kaus, who

built a residence on Mount Elburz and wore out the divs by his work. He ordered them to cut into the cliffs and to construct two palaces on top of them ...He had stables hewn into the rock where all the bars were of steel, all the pillars of hard stone, and to them were tied his war horses and his dromedaries for racing and carrying. He built a palace of crystal which he encrusted with emeralds: this was the venue of his festivals and feasts, the place where he took nourishment that sustained his body ...He erected a palace of gold to live in. It was one hundred twenty palms high, covered

with figures encrusted with turquoises, with a reception hall decorated with rubies... (Dumézil 1986: 47).

Dumézil feels that the Indic and Iranian traditions have in common elements of a preexisting prototype which was at least Indo-Iranian, if not IE (49).

I would argue that it was IE, since traces of the world-mountain theme can also be found in Irish literature. In *Fled Bricrend* the sun-storm god Curoi's fortress is depicted as "revolving as fast as a mill-stone after his departure by night, is the sky, revolving around a pole, with its myriad stars" (Loomis 1956: 137). In "The Spoils of Annwn" the Celtic otherworld Annwn is rendered a sea girt island on which stands a magical castle with treasures which Arthur and his men raid, and only seven of them survive. Roger Sherman Loomis feels that it contains pre-Christian elements, and that parallels occur in the French poems *Perlasvaus* and *Sone de Nausay* (13th cent.) which imply an older common tradition. Here are some excerpts from Robert Graves' translation:

...In Caer Pedryvan four times revolving,
The first word from the cauldron, when it was spoken?
By the breath of nine damsels it is gently warmed...

...In the four-cornered enclosure, in the island of the strange door,
Where the twilight and the black of night move together,
Bright wine was the beverage of the host (Graves 1997: 104-105).

That it is four-cornered and revolving in a twilight state in the midst of the ocean has echoes of the world mountain. The "strong door" Loomis equates with diamond door of the fortress of the Island of Maidenland presided over by a queen who has been identified with Morgain la Fee. This island had properties like Avalon (which is often equated with Annwn) and a diamond door was a gate. The stolen treasures are supposed to have been taken to Glass House in Bardsey where they still are. "A structure of glass was certainly one of the persistent elements in the Welsh concept of the Other World..." (Loomis 1956: 61). It will be recalled that in his mountain paradise of Elburz the Iranian Kaus built a palace of crystal, and crystal and glass are similar enough in appearance. It will also be recalled that Mt. Gang Ti-se has the form of a crystal stupa according to a Buddhist mystic.

There is also description of Kaer Siddi in *Hanes Taliesin*:

Perfect is my seat in Kaer Siddi.
Nor plague nor age harms him who dwells therein.
Manawyd and Pryderi know it.
Three organs around the fire play before it.
And around its corners are ocean's currents,
And the fruitful (i.e. wonder-working) spring is above it.
Sweeter than white wine is the drink in it (Loomis 1956: 148-49).

Loomis explicates this portion: “Taliesin occupies the bardic chair amidst the riches of Kaer Siddi, the faery fortress of the ancient gods ...Manawydan, the old sea god, and his stepson Pryderi are also there. All are immune from disease and old age. The fortress is set on an island in the midst of the ocean. The spring ‘above’ it perhaps alludes to an entrance to the underworld through a spring...” (Loomis 1956: 149). As we have seen, treasures, magical fountains, and the presence of deity are world-mountain motifs. It will be recalled that the Iranian Kai Us had the power to rejuvenate the aged to those who travelled to his mountain paradise of Elburz (Dumézil 1986: 68). The source of this power were life-giving springs.

The Persian *Zend-Avesta* records, “To the east [of Persia] rises the ‘Lofty Mountain’ from which all the mountains of the earth have grown. This heavenly mountain is called the ‘Navel of Waters,’ for the fountain of all waters springs there guarded by a majestic and beneficent goddess” (Dames 1992b: 71). Mention of a goddess rather than a god is certainly striking, and since pre-existing goddesses tended to be eclipsed with the advent of the IE according to Gimbutas, I would suggest the possibility that the Iranian version to be more exemplary of the prototype than the Indic in this particular respect. And while Tibet was certainly influenced by Indian traditions, it is interesting to note in this context that the Bon po claim that their religion came from *sTag-gzig*, or Persia, though there is little proof of it.

When one examines Bon myth there are traces of this Persian world mountain in that it hints at the presence of a goddess. The Khyung bird is a popular mountain deity “whose habitat is the very heights of rTa rgo, lives at the edge of the world near the borders of space. Its protective presence is said to be felt by people who live near rTa rgo” (Bellezza 1997: 346). Khyung birds are often associated with goddesses in Bon cosmogonic myths; Dang ra is likened to a khyung bird, and on the uppermost portion of her body is the celestial sphere or mandala. “In the centre of the khyung's heart in the lake is gNam phyi gung rgyal and a mandala ...From the mild and calm waves of the tips of wings manifests. ...the cause of liberation” and a mandala, and on the beak and claws, which are churning waters, is a white wolf-faced mkha' 'gro [dakini] and a mandala (345). A khyung bird also appears in another cosmogonic myth concerning the goddesses Dang ra and gNam phyi gung rgyal. In the text *rMa ston srol 'dzin* she appeared from the wisdom manifested from the void, and in this heavenly void was “the Fort of the Resplendent embodiment of Wisdom”, and inside formed four goddesses; one mounted on a dragon, one on a lion, a vulture, and one on a *khyung* (339). From these manifested Dang ra, the “Only Mother of the Vast Void-like Mother Space.” Bellezza argues that “descent from a rarefied void to a lake goddess is exclusively matrilineal and may be indicative of a pre-Buddhist matriarchal pantheon” (340). If gNam phyi gung rgyal was a pre-Buddhist goddess, then I would argue that the khyung bird association is most likely pre-Buddhist as well. And if this is the case, then the presence of a khyung bird atop sacred mountains would likely be symbolically indicative of the presence of an ancient goddess atop the Tibetan world-mountain, reflecting the Persian depiction.

The Mystic Banquet and Initiation

The presence of a goddess is prominent in portrayals of Celtic otherworlds which also contain elements of the world-mountain theme. The Irish paradise *Tir Na n'Og* is also called the "Land of Youth, of Honey, of Promise, the Wonderland, the Silver Cloud Land, the Land of Women, Land of Bliss", and it is ruled over by a Queen. Individuals could enter by invitation or enticement, or exploration. "Entrances to Tir Na n'Og...are found in lake-isle caverns...down wells, under lakes, or where the sun sets, or on the islands of the Western ocean. These doors all led towards music (often played on a harp), a magic tree (frequently of gold or silver, from which a sacred branch was plucked), divine horses and birds of dazzling colours, a banquet where a cauldron of ale was always full, and where an unearthly kind of time was enjoyed. Central to the vision, its source and overseer, stood the figure of a beautiful woman. Combining generosity with authority, she was the goddess revealed." (Dames 1992a: 90). It will be recalled that common to Tibetan and Irish folk traditions is the motif of aqueous white and green otherworld women affiliated with treasure. In Irish literature, in connection with this theme is a mystic hero's journey to a world-mountain castle in which a banquet feast is enjoyed. The poet Sean O' Shea's visit of Aine's underwater palace will be recalled, in which he was given a purse of gold which turned to furze flowers. In *Pwyll Prince of Dyfed*, prince Pwyll visits Annwn: "...in the court he saw sleeping houses and chambers and the most fairly adorned buildings that man had ever seen ...And the hall was richly equipped ...Here he beheld household and troops and the fairest troop and the best arrayed ...that anyone had ever seen, coming in, and the queen with them, the fairest woman that anyone had ever seen, and a golden gown on her shimmering silk..." (Loomis 1956: 139).

The home of the sea god Mannanan "...is called Tir Nairngire, [and] is in *Echtra Chormaic* conceived as a palace, surrounded by a magic mist, but set above the Irish landscape and approachable on foot; but in *Acallum na Senorach* it lies on an island overseas" where old age and decay are not known by those who drank from a spring (Loomis 1956: 137). According to the poem *Immram Brain*, the British god-king Bran journeyed there in a sea voyage. The tale relates that one day Bran went about alone in his fort and heard music behind him and it lulled him to sleep. When he awoke he saw "a silver branch in white bloom beside him" and he took it to his palace (Mac Mathuna 1985: 46). In the midst of a crowd a woman in "unusual" attire appeared in the middle of the house and sang him a description of the land of women, offering him one of its tree branches:

3 A branch from the apple tree of Emain,
its like surpasses the known ones,
twigs of white silver are on it,
crystal leaves with blossoms.

4 There is an island far away...
four legs hold it up.

.

5 It is a delight to the eyes...
the plain on which the hosts play games;

coracle and chariot contend with one another

.

6 Legs of white silver are under it;
It shines through ages of beauty;

.

7 There is an ancient tree in blossom there
on which the birds call to the Hours,
it is in harmony usually that
they all call together every Hour.

8 Colours of every hue shine
throughout the smooth familiar plains;
joy is continuous, together with music

.

10 Without sorrow, without grief, without death,
without any sickness, without debility from wounds:

.

18 ...they expect neither death nor decay.

.

40 The expanse of the plain and the numerous host
shine with colours of sheer beauty,
a fair stream of silver, steps of gold
beget joy at every great feasting
(Mac Mathuna 1985: 46- 53).

Seamus Mac Mathuna construes *Immran Brain* as being an example of an “otherworld journey” theme in world-myth. He explains:

...the fairy woman is ubiquitous in the hero’s Otherworld quest for immortality; and her role in myths and legends containing this theme is paralleled by the female spirit-protector of the shamans. The female spirit chooses the future shaman, they marry, and she takes him on voyages through the heavens, revealing its mysteries on the way. Sometimes she, too, is inclined to hinder him on his quest. Although there is an overt and complex emotional sexual relationship between the shaman and his spirit-protector, it would appear that this is not the central element in the shamanistic drama; the centre-piece is rather the symbolic death and resurrection of the neophyte, as is suggested by trials of tortures by demons, the cutting of the body into pieces, the descent into the nether-world, and the final resuscitation on the journey to the celestial spheres (Mac Mathuna 1985: 260-61).

There are other examples of this theme in Irish literature. Mac Mathuna points out that the Irish hero CúChulainn is whipped by an otherworld woman in *Tain bo Cuailnge*. He is also attacked in the midst of battle by the Morrigan in the guise of a white and red-eared heifer, a black eel, and a russet-colored she wolf (O’Rahilly 1967: 194). She had previously made sexual advances but he had refused, and so in her anger she hinders rather than help him in battle, though later she does render him aid.

Nick J. Allen offers a similar explanation in his structural comparison between the *Mahabharata*, the *Odyssey*, and a CúChulainn narrative entitled in Meyer and van Hamel’s translation as the *Wooing of Emer* and Stokes’ translation as the *Training of CúChulainn* (2000). In all three epics, the hero has to compete for the hand of his main wife, whom he then leaves and goes on a journey in which he encounters six females with whom he has various adventures. The first female the hero meets is in some sense a magician who makes sexual advances which are either declined or reluctantly accepted, and another one of the females he encounters is a monster in some type of bird form (2000: 58). Allen argues that these stories are cognate and come from a common IE prototype that was likely a ritual initiation into mysteries of yogic wisdom, and a charter for IE matrimonial custom (2000: 57; 1998: 17).

Tibetan lore also connects the world-mountain castle with otherworld women and treasure. A religious adept will make a mystical journey to these realms, and upon arriving he often partakes of a banquet feast. The Bon religious centres established by the Royal priest *dMu-khri-bstan-po* are protected by dakinis, some of whom are owl and crow-headed with “...terrifying mask-like heads and hold curved swords and skull caps” (Ramble 1999: 12). An adept who visited one of the most sacred of the said religious centres, the aforementioned Mt. Gang Ti-se, had a vision in which “[a] pathway of green light suddenly appear[ed] in front of him, and a youth standing on the path present[ed] him with a white scarf and invite[d] him to a mystic banquet...” (17). An account of a mystic who journeyed to another of the sacred mountains, Mu-le-gangs, relates: “In the sylvan surroundings of his meditation place ...he sees a bright light and hears a voice speaking to him from a waterfall. The speaker introduces herself as the *dakini* of the place and invites the hermit to a feast. She emerges from the water, bejewelled and robed in silk, and they set off. They reach Mu-le-gangs in an instant... The sky is thick with parasols, victory banners, rainbows, buddhas, lamas, incense smoke, wheels and conches, and everywhere is the sound of bells, drums, and the intonation of mantras. There are other inhabitants--serpent spirits, earth gods, zombies and so forth... The *dakini* takes him through an eastern door, and he sees a divine palace made of various precious substances. Among its many marvellous features, the palace has five lakes. In the central one is a Ge-sar lotus tree...”

In the six-peaked mountain of Khyung-po Ri-tse-drug, another of the Bon religious centres, it is recorded that a mystic “...dreams that he hears a sound and sees a ray of light from the south-east. On awakening, he sees in front of his door a red woman robed in silk, a-clatter with bone ornaments and riding an eagle. She invites him to a feast, and he realises that he was not dreaming after all. In response to his inquiries, she introduces herself as the *dakini* of action O-rgyan-yum, and tells him that the feast is to be held in a cemetery at the six-

fold exalted place ...He accompanies the *dakini* to the venue...” (Ramble 1999: 22). This vision has strong parallels with the initiatory rite of *chod* in tantric Buddhism, or the “Dreadful Mystic Banquet” described by Alexandra David-Neel. It is performed alone in a cemetery or a place that is associated with a tragic event or that is haunted by evil spirits. The goal is to conjur up demonic forces which will aid the neophyte as he “‘tramples down’ all passion and crucifies his selfishness” (David-Neel 1931: 150).

Using the bell, the *dorje* (lamaic sceptre) and the *phurba* (dagger), a small drum and trumpet made of a human femur, the novice begins by practising a ritual dance with steps that form geometrical figures. While blowing on trumpet to invoke hungry demons,

He imagines that a feminine deity, which esoterically personifies his own will, springs from the top of his head and stands before him, sword in hand. With one stroke she cuts off the head of the *naljorpa* [yogic practitioner]. Then, while troops of ghouls crowd round for the feast, the goddess severs his limbs, skins him and rips open his belly. The bowels, fall out, the blood flows like a river, and the hideous guests bite here and there, masticate noisily, while the celebrant excites and urges them with the liturgic words of unreserved surrender: ‘For ages, in the course of renewed births I have borrowed from countless living beings-at the cost of their welfare and their life-food, clothing, all kinds of services to sustain my body, to keep it joyful in comfort and to defend it against death. Today, I pay my debt, offering for destruction this body which I have held so dear’ (David-Neel 1931: 151).

This part of rite is called the “red meal”, and a “black meal” follows which is only disclosed to disciples who have reached high degree initiation. Then the banquet vanishes and the mystic imagines

...that he has become a small heap of charred bones that emerges from a lake of black mud-- the mud of misery, or moral defilement, and of harmful deeds to which he has co-operated during the course of numberless lives ...He must realise that the very idea of sacrifice is but an illusion, an offshoot of blind, groundless pride. In fact, he *has nothing* to give away because he *is nothing*. These useless bones, symbolising the destruction of his phantom “I”, may sink into the muddy lake, it will not matter. (David-Neel 1931: 152).

This parallel possibly connects the Tibetan world-mountain mystical banquet with initiation rites. Though the horror and gore associated with this ritual may at first seem to have little in common with Irish encounters with fairy women, it may be recalled that Aine is said to have indifferently watched a poet drown in her lake, and that a victim is believed to be taken once every seven years. Bones sinking into a muddy lake is the imagery David-Neel uses, though it is considered to be symbolic rather than literal. Literal insanity or death reputedly occur as a consequence of practising the rite, however. Near Lough Gur there is also a graveyard on its western shore, and there is a myth that a great female eel

would arise from the lake and feed on corpses. When the eel was caught it asked for “Tadhg”, meaning “poet.” Irish poets were mystics, as Michael Dames explains: “poets were specialists in liminality; they operated at the thresholds, between categories of space, time, or identity, in dangerous ‘frontier’ conditions, among uncomfortable truths...” (Dames 1992a: 69). Dames further explains that “[t]o equip them for this task the Irish poet’s traditional apprenticeship was spent in the dark, in underground chambers, where the rules of composition were taught, and poems committed to memory” (90). Apprenticeship in a dark earthen chamber hints of initiation, and may symbolise death. The theme of death in these contexts may also be understood as being the symbolic death of the neophyte which is an important element of initiation ceremonies the world over.

Thus Irish and Tibetan traditions both share the theme of the a hero or religious adept’s journey to mystic banquet which can either be associated with delights and the revealing of treasure, or death and horror. This banquet often takes place in a magical paradise inside a castle in which an otherworldly woman is present or presides. This theme may also be related to initiation of mystics. The castle in which the banquet takes place is in an otherworld paradise either on top of or in the midst a sacred mountain, on a sea-girt island, or in a lake. These mountains or islands or lakes relate to the prototype of the “world-mountain”, in which the world or reality is conceived of as being an ocean in the midst of which is a mountain whose tiers represent the realms of existence which revolve round the mountain like a wheel on an axis.

Tree-pillar and Mandala

Common to the paradise island in *Immran Brain*, the enchanted lake Lough Gur, depictions of Tir Na n’Og, and the mystical realm in Mt. Gang Ti-se is a tree in the midst. A cosmic tree in association with a mountain also occurs in a Bon origin myth concerning the war between the heavenly realm of Ye and the demon realm Ngam. A tree grew on frontier between these two realms: “the leaves of the tree were made of silk, the fruits gold, the juice was nectar, the bark was of cloth, the thorns were weapons and the flowers were strange to look at” (Karmay 1998: 203). An appointed mediator climbed to *peak of the mountain of existence* riding sheep and carrying a divine arrow with white feathers. He realised that the tree was sign of continual war between Ye and Ngam, but that Ye would eventually win.

Tree imagery also comes to the fore in the depiction of Mount Sumeru. It is a three-storied, four sided palace in the middle of an ocean of milk “...adorned on all four sides with rows of stairs made of gold, silver, sapphire, and amber, all over which spring up *wish-granting trees* decorated with a thousand fluttering victory banners ...a *lotus trunk* which takes its origin from a shaft in the centre of Mt. Sumeru, is graced with many jewels, has leaves made of variegated jewels and [blossoms] whose filaments are of gold, anthers of amber, and tops of pistils ringed by lines of silver... Above it... an eaved palace ...within it various... stupas of varieties ‘victorious’ and ‘radiant’” (Tucci 1988: xxi, emphasis added).

Mount Gang Ti-se also has the form of a crystal stupa, which is a Buddhist architectural motif that is also related to trees. Tucci explains that in the Rig Veda “stupa” translates as

a “tree’s stem, pillar, post, crown”, and “a knot or tuft of hair, the upper part of the head, crest, top, summit ...columns...” (Tucci 1988: xiii). After examining related root words in various languages, Tucci deduces “In its earliest stages it was a ‘tethering post’ for an animal... made out of a *wooden stump* to keep the animal in place. The animal was the symbol of wealth... when the animal sat around the post, it urinated and excreted on the ground, rendering it hard and impervious to grain pests... In the course of time, the ground hardened by dung plastering was used to store grain.” Sheaves of grain were heaped around it with clay laid around the rim, rising to top of the post with opening left at the top for ventilation. With time it became a symbol of economic security for the community. Denise Patsy and Robert Thurman note that the pole found in stupas represents “the *axis mundi* in later traditions, but in early monuments it is most likely a reference to the pre-Buddhist cult of sacred trees” (Patsy and Thurman 1997: 19). Similar to stupas are sepulchral monument *caityas*, which Tucci feels are pre-Buddhist in origin and were likely connected to funeral pyres. “Caityas to Yaksas were constructed with bricks around tree trunks... *Caitya-taru* is a tree standing on a sacred spot ...Worship of caitya-vrksa/caitya trees was popular since very ancient times. Images were placed under a tree. To this day, folk images are placed under a tree for worship in the Himalayan areas” (xvi).

Tree-imagery also appears in the Tibetan mandala, which symbol Tucci explains as being a representation of Mt. Sumeru in tantric Buddhism: “It is the whole universe in its essential plan, in its process of elimination and reabsorption... as a temporal revolution, and both as a vital process which develops from an essential Principle and rotates round a central axis, Mount Sumeru, the axis of the world on which the sky rests and which sinks its roots into the mysterious substratum.” (Tucci 1961: 23). The drawing of a mandala is a religious rite. Mandalas are drawn in precise detail on the ground or a cloth on purified surface using coloured powders. The basic design is one or more circles enclosed within a square. Tucci explains that the outer circle symbolises the Mountain of Fire which burns ignorance and dispels darkness of error. Then a diamond is drawn, symbolising Illumination and Cosmic Consciousness. Inside the circle are drawn eight graveyards in a cross shape “symbolising eight aspects of the individual and individuating cognition which has been lost”, and the bones represent overcoming of world (43). *Each has a mountain, river, stupa, tree* and sitting ascetic. Then a lotus flower with gods on petals is created, symbolising rebirth. In middle of this circle is drawn a “*mandala proper*”: *a palace*, with a line bisecting north and south symbolising the *axis mundi*, or “*Sumeru*, the spinal column of man, assimilated to macrocosm” (emphasis added).

Tucci continues to describe the palace: “In the middle of each of the four sides a gate opens in the form of a T, flanked with seven bands of five colours which are prolonged along the four sides, thus joining gate to gate and constituting the walls of this sacred city. Over the gates rises a *torana*, a sort of triumphal arch, resting upon two, or more, lateral pillars...” (Tucci 1961: 43). Two of the walls are called “necklace” and “half necklace” and are decorated with jewels “issuing from the mouths of marine monsters”, surmounted by a balcony with lotus flowers and Trees of Paradise rising from vases containing Water of Immortality (43). The palace also contains seven gems which symbolise a universal monarch, and a breastplate, shield, and lance.

It is also common practice for tantric yogins to picture the palace in meditation, and to conceptualise the lotus flower in the centre as being the heart chakra. Elaine Brook explains that “[t]his centre is usually describes as having the form of an eight-petalled lotus, the ‘petals’ representing the side channels, or nerves, of the psychic energy system” (1996: 240). The chakras are associated with seven colours, and the heart chakra’s colour is green. Tara is a common spiritual guide in this practice, and a diamond is also a widely used object of meditation (34).

Tucci also explains “[t]he temples of Western Tibet are inspired by Tantric ideas, which have given to them the value proper of a mandala” (1989: 160). He also writes “[t]he temple is, in its real significance, nothing other than a large mandala; and even for its construction the same regulations which must be followed to draw a mandala are valid” (22, emphasis added). It may be recalled that in the midst of the mandala palace is a bejewelled “lotus trunk which takes its origin from a shaft in the centre of Mt. Sumeru” (Tucci 1988: xiii). Tibetan Buddhist temples and shrines are also known to have a central pillar which symbolises a tree, such as the shrine at the Serlo monastery in Nepal built by Tibetan Sherpas with a central “tree of life” pillar (Samuel 1993: 193). A temple in Bhutan, dKon-mchog-gsum, contains an ancient pillar fragment in the forecourt with a lotus design on it, which Aris suspects predates the temple, though the lotus design may have been a later addition (1980: 37-39). There is a legend that below the plinth there is a subterranean lake where Padma Glingpa discovered text treasure, and sealed with a plinth and surmounted with a lotus.

The mandala is a symbol of Mt. Sumeru, which is a representation of the world mountain, but it has been shown that the world mountain is an ancient motif predating Buddhism, that was likely IE. Perhaps the Tibetan tradition of modelling sacred sites after the image of a world-mountain could also be pre-Buddhist. It will be recalled that The Bon po land of paradise, Ol-mo lung-ring, contains twelve cities, four of which are in the cardinal directions. In northern Tibet, Bellezza has found ancient sites with “multiple pillars erected... aligned closely with the compass points, usually 12 in a single row along the west wall of [a rectangular] enclosure” (2001: 35). He speculates “[t]he orientation of these structures with the cardinal directions suggests that there was an astronomical or astrological component in their use and design”, perhaps also in relation to ancestor worship (36, 38). According to local legend, they are said to have been where the Bon hero Gling Ge sar tied his divine horse, or that they arose with the founding of the universe, or that they are Mon monuments or graves. The Mon are the legendary ancient inhabitants of the region which was also known as the ancient kingdom of Zhang-zhung, the “land of Bon”. Bellezza explains that “[a]ccording to Das, the ancient hunting tribes of the cis-Himalayan known as Mon are *equivalent* to the non-Aryan Kirata... who in Sanskrit literature are said to have ruled the region before the Aryan conquest”, and A.H. Francke noted that Mon graves, castles, and fields are found throughout the Zhang-zhung region (41). Is it possible that these pre-Buddhist sites are ancient representatives of the cosmic world-mountain?

A likeness of the Buddhist mandala architectural tradition is to be found among the ancient Celts. According to Anne Ross, the sacrality of trees was reflected in their ritual use in

religious centres of worship. Sacred assemblies were held under ash, yew, and oak trees, and a scene on silver Gunderstrup cauldron depicts “a sacrificial scene and a line of soldiers carrying a tree” (Ross 1992: 62). Sacred grove names tend to incorporate ‘nemeton’, ‘sacred grove’ which calls to mind goddess Nemetona (63). The Celts also made votive offerings in pit shafts which often include the remains of trees, such as the shaft well in Ashill, Norfolk, in which hazel leaves and nuts were found (54). In Swanwick, Hampshire, a shaft was found twenty four feet deep, with a wooden post at bottom, packed round with clay, with a band of charcoal and loom-weights and a fragment of a saddle-quern, with traces of dried flesh and blood (53). The wooden post packed round with clay recalls Tibetan Buddhist stupas and caityas, though buried deep in the earth rather than being above ground. Ross explains that similar pit shafts are to be found from the Belgic parts of England. Compiling archaeological evidence, Ross concludes: “We can then visualise many of the *temenoi*, the sacred precincts of the pagan Celts as consisting of a focal point of a sacred tree, no doubt frequently associated with a sacred well, over or beside which a shrine may have been in some instances been constructed... or wood or wickerwork, or even of stone... simply a place in which the sacred objects and idols could be housed, cared for by the priests, and ritually displayed to the people when they assembled for various seasonal festivals” (64-5). She goes on to theorise that ancient pre-Roman Celtic temples were likely conical wicker/thatch roofed structures with a sacred tree post or shrine in centre. In Britain, Roman temples were often built upon pagan sacred sites, having a square fort structure (70). It is interesting to note that the Roman square fort superimposed on a pre-Roman pagan conical temple with a wooden tree-post in the middle forms the geometrical pattern of a mandala.

Aspects of this architectural mandala pattern are to be found in the structure of houses in modern Ireland and Tibet. Geoffrey Samuel explains that the Tibetan house or nomadic tent is a microcosm of the world-tent (1993: 187-89), and according to Michael Dames the world axis is symbolically present in Irish domestic architecture: “In old Irish, the human spine, the roof tree of a house, and the world axis came together in the word *Cli*, meaning ‘an oaken pillar or support, the mighty balk, great and good under roofs of fortune, and a radiant body’ ...” (1992a: 254). Another name for the domestic centre-pole was *cleithe*, meaning “[d]welling, top, the crown of the head, the heavens, firmament, and sky, culmination, and perfection” which resembles Tucci’s translation of “stupa” (Dames 1992a: 254-5). St Brigit’s cross made of rush or wheat straw, (which, incidentally, resembles a swastika), hangs in the kitchen for good luck. One of Evans-Wentz’s interviewees also relates that before moving into a freshly constructed house, a bed and food are placed in it for the fairies (1977: 75). Spirits also dwell in Tibetan houses: the protector spirits *pho-lha* and *mo-lha* (Samuel 1993: 187). The *Pho-lha* usually has his shrine on the roof, and he is associated with the men of the house and external defense. The *Mo-lha* has her shrine inside the house in its *central pillar* and is concerned with family well being, particularly for its women. Though Irish houses tend to be rectangular, their orientation is in accordance with the four quarters: “The main door should face east, or south. Only with great reluctance would a house be extended towards the west, the zone of misfortune.” (Dames 1992a: 256). Childbirth traditionally took place in the home, during which time and the ‘Moon of the Four Quarters’ was addressed: “Four corners to her bed, four angels at her head...” (Dames 1992a: 257). In Tibet, five protective deities

are born at the time of the child, two of whom are a *pho-lha* and *mo-lha*, associated with the heart and the right shoulder. These protective deities are the ‘gods of the head’ (Karmay, 1998: 209). In some parts of Tibet, a juniper tree is also planted at the time of a child’s birth (Samuel 1993: 186). Though these are loose correspondences, a central pillar (which in the Irish case is clearly a tree), a tree, and protective spirits associated with childbirth and the head are in common, which in the Irish case is also associated with the four cardinal directions, and which in the Tibetan case are associated with the central pillar.

Thus the world-mountain theme is also associated with a tree-pillar in the midst, which is reflected in mandala architectural symbolism in the structures of temples and houses. The tree-pillar would also seem to be connected with ancient forms of tree worship, as Celtic shaft pits and temple tree-poles, and Tibetan stupa-like *caityas* attest.

7) The Tibetan Demoness and Ogham

Lake Drainage Myths

The association in Tibetan folk traditions of lakes with goddesses and aqueous palaces is most interesting in light of the numerous “lake drainage myths” Nick Allen discusses among the Thulung Rai in eastern Nepal, who are linguistically and culturally related to Tibet. He focuses on folk myths in which “one or more animate agents deliberately opens a naturally enclosed body of water and allows it to drain away...” (Allen 1997: 438). For example, locals near lake Ghume Pani relate the story that one day the shamans Daner and Pokner go to a lake and after performing a ritual strike the earth with their headress plumes. The lake opens and water flows out, revealing frogs at the bottom which they catch, kill, and eat. The next evening the *bayahap* spirit of the place comes down weeping and searches their tracks while the two shamans hide in their drums. The *bayahap* couldn’t find them and went home weeping. The shamans had committed *khlamaya* or “sinful act generating an evil force” (436). In another myth about the same lake “Mini, the First Man ...is threatened by wild beasts. Mother Sandalwood Tree shelters him overnight ‘in her womb’, and in the morning sends him forth to wash in still water at Ghume Pani.” In a Bhutanese tale, a child plays at lakeside and opens a bamboo tube of snakes and the lake becomes sandy plain with a large copper vessel in the midst and beneath it was the devil’s maid servant, who transformed child to fish. (The copper vessel calls to mind the metal artefacts and vessels found in lakes in Ireland and Britain which were likely votive offerings to deity). Some Buddhist Dards think their land was once a lake that was drained, that was once inhabited by four *Bume* sisters. “[W]hen water ‘flew out’ the elder three dispersed to other lakes in the area... The youngest, being lame, apparently stayed put in a spring” (441). These *Bume* sisters were associated with agricultural fertility. “Tibet itself was drained by ...the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who soon afterwards, in the form of a monkey, acted as progenitor of the whole Tibetan race” by mating with a rock Srin demoness” (438). Some of the myths are associated with the building of dams which historically took place, but Allen argues that this does not explain all of the common motifs in the myths (442-444). He feels that the myths are cosmogonic, and that the myths “...are projections onto local geography of what were once the primal waters of creation” (445). He concludes that “...the effect of the parallels is to suggest that the waters were originally

primal waters, and that the drainage was originally the act of a demiurge making the cosmos suitable for human habitation” (437). Though this is a remarkable observation, I would argue that this is not a sufficient explanation. The theme of the presence of a pre-existing female entity residing in or near the lakes that is violently tampered with by male actors seems to have escaped him. I would argue that these myths rather likely relate an ancient patriarchal religious take-over, which took place in primordial “mythic” time because it was religious in nature, and set about to reinterpret cosmology. This religious takeover is likely the advent of Buddhism, since Padmasambhava and other Buddhist religious figures often appear as actors taming a wild feminine landscape. However, the Thulung Rai in particular have a distinctive non-Buddhist *diumla* folk religion, and there are many non-Buddhist themes in the myths as well (435). I would therefore suggest that it is also possible that some of the myths contain pre-Buddhist references to a more ancient patriarchal infusion; the Indo-Europeans.

The killing and eating of the frogs at the bottom of lake Ghume Pani is especially interesting when the frog as a mythic theme is examined more closely. Allen relates that in an Ashing myth, a female water spirit, Pedong Sune, is believed to have given birth to frogs in a pond in Tibet, which would associate frogs with feminine otherworld beings (Allen 1997: 442). This same association appears in what is perhaps Tibet’s most well-known lake-drainage myth. It concerns the “Frog-head Bloody-eye” (*sBal mgo khrag mig*) *Srin mo* lake demoness that “...comes to represent both the spirit world in its entirety, and the demonic nature of the early Tibetans, in a founding myth concerning the Buddhist dominion over the indigenous Tibetan religion” (Gyatso 1987: 39). However, this takeover may also have been pre-Buddhist; Janet Gyatso notes that Buddhism credits Bon with “closing the doors of the tombs of the dead”; “[i]f this is so, and if our supine Srin-mo symbolizes what is truly indigenous in Tibetan religion, part of which is the fearful, (ir)repressible world of the demonic departed, then Buddhism was not the first to suppress her” (Gyatso 1987: 46). Could part of the IE infusion in Tibet have been the ancient Bon religion?

The Supine Demoness

The *Mani bka’ bum* relates the myth of the supine demoness. When King Songtsen Gampo’s Chinese wife Kong jo first arrives in Lhasa, when her chariot wheels get stuck in the sand she performs a geomantic reading and pronounces that “Tibet is like a demoness fallen on her back”, with two the nearby mountain peaks being her breasts and the third being her life-force vein. She also says concerning the mountains:

Of the four directions of this place, the east is a mountain like a heap of flowers. In the south is a mountain like a heap of jewels. In the west is a mountain like a stack of *stupas*. In the north is a mountain like a conch-shell cup on top of a tripod. If you build a chapel on the Plain of Milk, the naturally (auspicious) qualities of Tibet will come to develop (Gyatso 1987: 41).

She describes the nearby “Plain of Milk” as being a palace of *klu* spirits and its lake as the demoness’s heart blood. She explains that this inauspicious sign can be transformed if the lake is filled with earth and a Sakyamuni temple were to be built on the Plain of Milk to replace the *klu* palace. Songtsen Gampo’s second wife, the Nepalese Queen *Khri-bstun*, is assigned this task, but her work is destroyed at night. *Khri-bstun* thinks she is being deceived and goes to Songtsen Gampo, who consults a sandalwood image and a ray of light beams from it into lake. He takes *Khri-bstun* to the lake and commands her to build a temple where his ring falls. When he throws it in the air it lands in lake. She is overjoyed at this auspicious sign and continues constructing temples (Aris 1980: 14-15).

Songtsen Gampo sets out to tame and “pin down” the demoness by building the Jo-khang palace in the central city of Lhasa, the *ru-gnon* or “The Four Great Horn-Suppressor” temples in outlying regions, and eight others beyond, making a total of thirteen. Aris argues that the pattern resembles a mandala, with the Jo-khang palace at the center surrounded by three squares, though only the alignment of the “four horn” temples resembles a square, while the others seem to me to have a more triangular pattern. Aris also explains that the rendering of the temple scheme is confused, that texts contradict one another. I would suggest that perhaps this “confusion” might be due at least in part to Haarh’s observations concerning the tension between triangular and rectangular conceptions of the Four Horns in ancient Tibet (Haarh 1969: 275-9). Songtsen Gampo’s temple plan was also modeled after the Chinese Buddhist astrological pattern of the compassionate female world supporting tortoise, with the pinned “limbs” of the demoness as half points of the cardinal directions (Aris 1980: 19). The Chinese and Tibetan cardinal associations are remarkably similar:

CHINA		TIBET	
N		N	
Black Tortoise		Black Tortoise	
White Tiger	Azure Dragon	Red Bird	Striped Tiger
W	E	W	E
S		S	
Red Bird		Azure Dragon	

(Aris 1980: 21).

In Chinese astrology the cardinal directions are also points on a calendrical system associated with the seasons and celestial bodies, with stars and spring in the east, the sun and summer in the south, the autumn and lunar houses in the west, the moon and winter in the north, and the earth in the centre (Durkheim and Mauss 1963: 71-72). The Chinese Buddhist twenty-eight lunar mansion scheme is also in accordance with the cardinal directions, consisting of a set of seven in each direction which are associated with days of the week and planets, as well as numerology, luck, and animals. Since the temple pattern seems to have been modelled after Chinese astrology, I would argue that Songtsen

Gampo's temple pattern could also possibly have been calendrical. Aris mentions that the Tibetan text *rGyal-rabs* introduces nine additional temples in the Tibetan scheme, each assigned type of geomantic activation or element suppression, such as three in the east activating sun, moon, planets and stars (1980: 25). And the Tibetan calendar is highly influenced by Chinese astrology, and is lunar with thirteen months which, incidentally, is the number of temples.

The notion of pinning or staking down also makes sense in light of the Tibetan world-tent cosmology explained by Haarh: "[t]he pole of the Tibetan tent of the world was imagined as the glacier mountain of Ti-se, the top of which passed through the central hole of the tent or heaven" (Haarh 1969: 141). The temples might be conceived of as being stakes of the world-tent in this context, which pattern of four horns reflects the Tibetan quadripartite cosmic image of the world. This interpretation also adds considerable dimension to Aris's views concerning the mandala patterning of the thirteen temples, when the mandala is understood as being a symbol of the Tibetan cosmic world-mountain. When the world-mountain theme is applied to Songsten Gampo's temple scheme, it would make Jo-khang in Lhasa the palace in the midst, or atop, the mountain. And it will be recalled that this was built on top of a formerly existing *klu* palace, which was also conceived of as being the *heart* of the demoness. This makes perfect sense in light of tantric Buddhism which, as explained earlier, conceives of the chakras along the spinal chord as being a microcosm of the *axis mundi* of the world-mountain, with the *heart chakra being the most sacred centre*. This would make Jo-khang the central point around which creation revolves in karmic cycles, symbolised in the temple pattern in its association with animals and the cardinal directions.

Songsten Gampo's Temple Scheme and Ogham

Now, if Songtsen Gampo's Tibetan temple scheme is calendrical, then the tree-pillar of the Tibetan Buddhist mandala discussed earlier would associate trees with a calendrical system. The effect of this would be thirteen tree-poles revolving around the central one at Jo-khang or, in other words, a tree-calendar. Perhaps this is bordering upon speculation, but the reason I make mention of it is because this has strong parallels with the Robert Graves' Irish Ogham-tree cosmology. Robert Graves was a classicist whose book *The White Goddess* elucidates the cosmology of the ancient Irish Ogham alphabet said to have been used by the druids in Ireland and Britain. Using linguistic, archaeological, mythographic, and historical evidence, he pieces together a portrait of an ancient religious calendar. He examines roughly half of the world's written mythologies, and was fluent in Gaelic, Greek, Welsh, Latin, and he also seems to have been familiar with Sanskrit. The editor of the most recent edition, Grevel Lindop, praises it as being "one of the twentieth century's most extraordinary books", and writes that "It is tempting to ...suggest that no one can fully understand the modern world who has not at least considered its arguments" (Graves 1997: vii). Graves argues that the Ogham-tree alphabet was a lunar calendrical system, with each of the thirteen consonants being associated with a month, and the months being symbolised by the trees birch, rowan, ash, alder, willow, hawthorn, oak, holly, hazel, blackberry, ivy, and elder. These revolved around the centre point, which was associated with "White Goddess" and the five sacral vowel trees silver fir, gorse, heather, white poplar, and yew. Graves' "White Goddess" is Albion, Pliny's word for Britain, whose

name is connected to the Greek words *alphos*, or “dull white leprosy”, and *alphiton*, or “pearl barley” (62). The Irish “White Goddess” was Ana or Danu, the goddess of the Tuatha de Danaan (360-361). The goddess is symbolised in various animal forms, most especially birds such as the owl, crane, or raven. Graves also connects the “White Goddess” with the Roman door-hinge goddess Cardea, making her the “Celestial Hinge at the back of the North Wind”, the north wind being associated with the Celtic otherworld. The door on which she is a hinge is made of oak. Graves also makes a connections between Cardea’s hinge and the Greek conception of a cosmic axis-mill around which the constellations and seasons revolve, turned by the Big and Little Bears (173-174). This would make the central hinge or axis the North Star.

Graves’s Ogham-tree pattern also has affinities with the pattern of sacred hills in Ireland put forth by Michael Dames. He argues that Ireland has a central sacred hill, Uisnech, and four sacred hills for each province: Cruachain in Connacht, Emain Macha (Navan Fort) in Ulster, Almu in Leinster, and Cnoc Aine in Munster (with Tara hill between Leinster and Ulster). Each hill was associated with a goddess and seat of kingship (Dames 1992a: 198). Uisnech is believed to be the Irish omphalos, or navel of world according to Dames. He explains that according to Giraldus, when the ‘Five sons of Dela’ (alias the Fir Bolg), arrived in Ireland from Greece, “...their bounds met a stone ...called *Umbilicus Hiberniae*, the navel of Ireland, because it stands in the middle of the country.” The ash tree, *Craeb Usnig* on Uisnech, was the central tree of all Ireland, and was a place for observing the seasonal cycles. Dames explains that there was a yearly gathering at Uisnech at Beltane where people would watch the sunrise. “The Uisnech view of Ireland as the living [female] divinity, Eriu-Fodla-Banba, depended partly on seeing the surrounding array of hills and mountains in combination with the sun and moon risings and settings on critical days in the annual cycle” (211). The effect of this is five sacred hills surrounding a central hill, which is an omphalos or world navel with an ash tree on top, associated with a seasonal cycle. This would be cognate with the five vowel trees and central oak/north star point in Graves’ Ogham calendar.

The pole of the Tibetan world-tent is the North Star according to Haarh, as in Altaic and Siberian cosmology (Haarh 1969: 141). The North Star is also of paramount importance in Tibetan astrology; it “...took on special significance to the early sky-watchers who termed it the ‘Stable Star of the North’. Some nomads in the northern part of Tibet still believe that if they lose an animal they only have to locate the North Star and ask it to keep the animal for the night; the next day, they will easily be able to find it” (Dagthor 1995: 21). This would imply that the polestar was conceived of as a being or deity. There are also other themes in Tibetan folklore and Bon myth which resemble aspects of Graves’ Ogham cosmology. The Goddess gSer thang yi ge ma (She, the Alphabet of the Golden Plain) is said to live on a plain bordering lake Dang ra. “It is told that in the spring time a magically-formed Tibetan alphabet appears in the grass. This tale is well circulated throughout the region and in Bon communities across Tibet. The magical alphabet, which is said to include all 30 of the letters, perfectly formed, is the sign of the *brtan ma* goddess’ presence. Livestock are thought to instinctively search out grass in the vicinity because of its medicinal qualities” (Bellezza 1997: 338). This would most certainly associated a goddess with a mystical alphabet. Trees are connected with feminine deity in gNam-phyi’s

prayer of purifying trees, recited during a Bon healing fumigation rite. Eight are named: 1) the white *a-krong* fern, crop of the snows; 2) *sedum*, crop of the mountains; 3) *a-ba*, the crop of the rocks; 4) white forehead *spra-ba* (vegetable tender), crop of meadows; 5) fragrant *spas-ma*, crop of the mountains; 6) golden leafed fern, crop of the cliffs; 7) turquoise-leaved juniper, crop of the sunny side; and 8) white *ba-lu* rhododendrons, crop of the dark side of the mountain" (Karmay 1998: 207). gNam-phyi is a medicinal healing goddess, depicted as a white grouse, who flies about the peaks of mountains (Karmay 1998: 205). It will also be recalled that gNam-phyi is also conceived of as being in heart of Dang ra in the form of a khyung bird. Accompanying gNam-phyi is a mandala.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Songtsen Gampo's thirteen temple mandala pattern may reflect an ancient world-mountain cosmology which would seem to have affinities with Graves' Ogham tree-calendar-alphabet. The construction of these temples is associated with the Tibetan myth of the supine demoness. The filling of the Plain of Milk with sand in this myth is an example of lake drainage myths which in my view likely relate a patriarchal religious takeover in which a Buddhist cosmography was superimposed upon a pre-existing one. This would help explicate the pre-Buddhist elements in the cosmology, such as the *klu* palace in the heart of the demoness, or in the centre of what was the lake, where the Buddhist Jo-khang palace was built.

8) Gesar, Arthur, and CúChulainn

Though the focus of the British Isles thus far has mainly been Ireland, a very important corpus of popular Tibetan folklore has many notable parallels with Britain's most well-beloved epic tradition: Arthurian legend. The Tibetan Gesar epic is a vast admixture of oral and literary bardic tradition first printed in a Mongolian version in 1716, though based on pre-existing Tibetan oral folklore. Arthurian legend is impossible to date with exactness in like manner, as it also is based on folklore, but the first printed mention of the name King Arthur was a much earlier time: 800 A.D. in Nennius's *Historia Britonum*, though it was Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* in roughly 1136 which gave it widespread popularity in Western Europe. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Brythonic romances were written down by French authors, and themes such as the Holy Grail and the love story of Guenevere and Lancelot took shape. There are also Welsh tales of Arthur which appear in the *Mabinogion* and other Welsh collections which date roughly to the fourteenth century, though some, such as *Culhwch and Olwen*, are known to contain subject matter "coeval, maybe, with the dawn of the Celtic world" (Jones 1949: ix). Arthur is also a quasi-historical personage, as there is inconclusive evidence of his existence. In roughly the fifth century AD, the time when Arthur is said to have lived, the historian Gildas wrote of a Brythonic champion who resembles Arthur, but fails to mention the name Arthur. Gesar is also quasi-historical, as the kings of gLing claim to be descendants of Gesar's half brother rGya-tsha, and in the fifteenth century Chinese historical annals record that the kingdom of gLing -tshang received Chinese diplomat chiefs, as though it were a powerful kingdom, but Chinese history is silent about Ge-sar epic (Stein 1981: 9).

Possible Historical Connections

Up until recently, Arthurian legend has been viewed by scholars as being native in origin, but there are some scholars who now suspect a connection with the Scythians via the Roman conquest. C. Scott Littleton and Linda Malcor argue that the Roman army recruited a tribe of tall blonds from Northeast Iran known as the Alans, and that when the Romans conquered Gaul, the religious cult of the Alans took some root, resulting in the blend of Roman, Druidic and “oriental” traditions which the historian Markale describes as having existed at the time (Littleton and Malcor 1994: 27). The same authors feel that there were also Alans in Brittany (36). The Alans worshipped a deity who symbolised a chalice, which may account for some of the inspiration behind the grail legend (233). And the Nart sagas of a modern remnant of the Alans in Iran, the Ossetians, have many elements which resemble Arthurian tradition, such as the goddess Satana who lives in a lake and trains a warrior infant in a similar manner that the Lady of the Lake raises Lancelot (156).

There may also be an Iranian connection with the Gesar epic, as Gesar is said to have come from “Phrom”, which is “an Iranian form of the name Rum that is Eastern Rome (Byzance) and Turkish Anatolia” (Stein 1981: 13). “Ge-sar” is also a transcription of the Turkish title *kaisar* (“emperor”), which was originally a Greek word. That Tibet had early historical connections with Iran, Turkey and Greece has already been established. Thus an actual early historical connection between the Gesar epic and Arthurian legend via Iran and the Roman conquest is a plausible possibility. Geoffrey Ashe, the world’s leading scholar on Arthurian legend, suspects that Arthur and Gesar are cognate (Ashe 1977: 206).

Bardic Traditions

The Gesar epic also has a bardic tradition that has some affinities with Irish and Welsh bardic traditions. The Irish poet was anciently a shaman who communicated with the otherworld on behalf of the kingdom. The Irish ollav was anciently connected to sacral kingship: “...it was the ollav who presided at an inauguration and who handed the prince the rod or wand which symbolised his mystic union with the land ...he is the intermediary between the prince and the mysterious powers of nature ...Satire in origin is a religious sanction... when an ollav satirises a prince he is in effect telling him that the forces of nature, with which he, the ollav, is in communion, are not satisfied: the result of the satire is an injury to the king’s honour (which may show physically as blisters on his face) and possibly a blight on the land” (Carney 1967: 11). The poets were expert in native learning-- legal tradition, history, genealogy, and the science of natural phenomenon-- all viewed as aspects of the divine myth, and realised in verse” (Dames 1992a: 69).

Tibetan bards who sing Gesar (*sgrung-mkhan*) also have shamanic qualities. They “are said to be inspired, when singing, or even in a kind of rapture or trance,” and they wear a hat “characterised by two big asses’ or *kyang* ears, by sun and moon on the forehead and by flower-like ornaments made of little shells” (Stein 1981: 4). Chanters of the epic are also sometimes seers and diviners. The famous chanter Kacazaba, who copied nine volumes of the epic in *Degaer*, sings the epic with the aid of a divining bronze mirror. He is also a local diviner who foretells the future by observing barley seeds thrown onto his mirror (Yang 1990: 438). Yang explains that aspects of the bard’s costume is pre-Buddhist; the hat in particular, with its decorative silk strips of auspicious colours and feathers, is likely related to Bon priestly hats, and the bronze mirror worn on the waist “has evolved from the

old shield used to resist harmful spirits and demons” (Yang 1990: 439). Yang concludes that despite its Buddhist associations, the epic “reveal[s] the contents and customs of primitive Tibetan cultural life” (Yang 1990: 433). Yang further explains that originally the shaman-sorcerer (*lhawa*) was also a teller of stories, but with the advancement of Tibetan society, the number of sorcerors decreased, and “instead, folk singers and storytellers who no longer performed exclusively religious ceremonies appeared” (Yang 1990: 437). This parallels the changes of the role of the Irish ollav with the advent of Christianity: the number of ollavs was reduced because poets were regarded as a threat to the church, and poetry gradually came to be regarded as secular (Carney 1967: 11). However, in Wales ancient poetic traditions were kept alive by wandering prophetic minstrels (Graves 1997: 14).

Gesar and Arthur

The characters Gesar and Arthur are also remarkably similar. Gesar is the son of the god Kenzo, and is himself an incarnated god born miraculously by a virgin *naga* (aquatic spirit), sent by Padmasambhava to subdue incarnated demon-rulers. Evans-Wentz argues that Arthur is an incarnate Celtic god (Evans-Wentz 1977: 309). Though Arthur is born of a human queen, his father, Uther Pendragon, was the king of Hades, and his half sister, Morgain la Fee, is a fairy, giving him genetic connections to the otherworld. Both Arthur and Gesar are hero-kings who engage in a series of religious battles that free the land from tyranny. Gesar conquers eighteen castles in surrounding lands and from each he takes a type of treasure, such as magical medicines, which he gives to the gLing kings whom he appoints as new rulers, and thereby sets himself up as an over-king in gLing. In Geoffrey of Monmouth’s version, Arthur engages in twelve battles against the Saxons, and as he conquers castles and lands he sets up new rulers to whom he will act as over-king in a similar manner. In *Culwhich and Olwen*, Arthur’s battles take him to Ireland, Wales, and in various places in Britain, such as Cornwall, collecting the treasures along the way such as a magical hamper and the harp of Teirtu (Jones 1949: 95-136). Though Both Gesar and Arthur defend in the name of an ecclesiastical tradition, both also display shamanic qualities of folk traditions. For example, both use magical accoutrements. Geoffrey of Monmouth records of Arthur: “On his head he placed a golden helmet, with a crest carved in the shape of a dragon; and across his shoulders a circular shield called Pridwen, on which there was painted a likeness of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, which forced him to be thinking perpetually of her. He girded on his peerless sword, called Caliburn, which was forged in the Isle of Avalon. A spear called Ron graced his right hand.” (Barber 1979: 15). Arthur’s sword Caliburn or Excalibur was a gift from the Lady of the Lake in later versions. Gesar’s weapons are also a heavenly gift; his helmet, thunderbolt sceptre and sword were made by the goddess Dolma and thrown down to earth, and hidden by Padmasambhava for Gesar to find. Gesar also has a whip and a spear (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 96). Geoffrey Samuel points out that instead of being an incarnation of Buddha, Gesar is an emanation of the tantric magician Padmasambhava, making him more shamanic (1993: 64). Both Gesar and Arthur are not really dead according to legend, but are rather sleeping in caves until the time of their return, when they will conquer and reign again. At Arthur’s burial a violent storm occurred, followed by a mist and the disappearance of his corpse. According to legend, he was carried off to a mystical abode, perhaps Avalon. Concerning Gesar’s return, the Lama Yongden told David-Neel:

“‘Suddenly he will rise in all the greatness of his power and terrify the men of wicked heart who are prone to malicious activity. His numberless horsemen will follow him at lightning speed, the earth will shake with the hammerings of their chargers’ hooves, and the thunder of their gallop will resound above the clouds... We have slept long, while he, the Invincible, was resting; but we shall waken for his return. To the conquest of the world, he will lead the millions of Asiatics who, today, are drowsing... ’” (1959: 35).

Gesar and CúChulainn

Unlike Arthur, however, Gesar is also a trickster magician. For example, Gesar transforms himself into an oracular raven to mislead prince Todong into pronouncing himself king of gLing and organising horse race that Gesar himself will actually win and thereby obtain the kingship (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 98). In this and other qualities Gesar is perhaps more comparable to the Irish CúChulainn, who is a conquering hero who uses ruses to battle Queen Medb. For example, after killing Medb’s servants he leaves a forked branch pole in ground, and when Medb and her army arrive they divine that “ ‘it is tabu for the men of Ireland to go into the bed of this ford until one of you pluck out the pole with the tip of one hand even as he drove it in just now’” (O’Rahilly 1967: 155). Medb’s warrior Fergus shatters three chariots before being able to do so. This was CúChulainn’s ploy to delay Medb’s army while the Ulster army prepared for battle. Both Gesar and CúChulainn also have superhuman prowess which they begin to display in early childhood; just five days after being born, Gesar kills three black birds sent by a sorcerer to kill him (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 88), and at the age of five CúChulainn overthrew fifty of the king’s sons while playing games (O’Rahilly 1967: 160). Gesar and CúChulainn also receive name changes in their youth after performing heroic deeds; CúChulainn receives his name when he kills a hound of a blacksmith at age five, and Gesar is called “Joru” until he wins a horse race and becomes king of Gling. Both also have divine female guides; as previously mentioned, CúChulainn is helped by the Morrigan, and Gesar is aided by the goddess Manene who “rode a white lion, and led a buffalo in leash behind her; in one hand she threw a bow, in the other a mirror” (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 105). That the Morrigan’s relationship with CúChulainn has been likened to that of a shaman-guide has been suggested by Mac Mathuna, and I would suggest that Gesar’s relationship with Manene could be similarly described, save that their relationship is not sexual, and she never hinders him on his quest. But Gesar unquestioningly obeys her, whereas CúChulainn does not always heed the Morrigan’s advice and is punished for it.

Conclusion

Thus it would seem that the Gesar epic also has strong affinities with CúChulainn legends, and the epic’s bardic tradition has similarities to Irish bardic tradition. How is this to be accounted for? The Roman army did not reach Ireland, and there does not seem to be any historical record of an Alan presence in Ireland. Cross-fertilisation between British and Irish mythological traditions could be an explanation, but if this were the case, it would seem that we would have an Irish version of a hero-king like Arthur, but such a character has not presented itself in Irish legend. If one compares CúChulainn, Arthur, and Gesar, it is the shamanic warrior qualities that all three share. Arthur is also helped by the Lady of the Lake, and CúChulainn has a magical chariot and horse. These qualities-- miraculous military prowess, an otherworldly female guide, magical accoutrements-- are IE cultural

traits of the warrior function according to Dumézil. In the Indic tale of the fight between Tritá Aptyá and Namuci it will be recalled that the goddess Sarasvati restores the hero to health and she and her twin brother give him a thunderbolt weapon which he can use to kill his enemy. Thus I would argue that a possible Iranian connection via the Roman army could account for some cross-fertilisation between Tibet and the British Isles, but certainly not all. It would seem that there must have been some cross-fertilisation reaching back to a much more ancient time; the time of the IE invasions across Europe.

9) King and Queen

It will be recalled that both Celtic and Old Tibetan contain the IE root **reg* which translates as “king” or “royal rights.” Comparison between what is known concerning Irish and Tibetan forms of sacral kingship sheds light on both ancient traditions and its IE prototype. It also reveals the possible of the existence in ancient Tibet of the IE institution exemplified in Ireland by Queen Medb: the sovereignty goddess.

The Irish Sacral King

In addition to classic mythology and folk traditions, what can be said concerning the institution of kingship that existed in pre-Christian Ireland can also be gleaned from Irish law tracts. Charles O'Donnell explains that the Irish jurists were like Hindu jurists in that they had a profound respect for antiquity; “The more ancient a custom, the more venerable it became...” (1970: 1). O'Donnell feels that the traditional elements preserved in these tracts represent “a very ancient pattern which takes us back to the origin of kingship in Indo-European societies.” O'Donnell explains that the ancient Irish king was a tribal king ruling over a clan unit or *tuath*. His powers were more symbolic than political; he was a vegetation god in the Frazerian sense. The “Last words of Morand” contains a catalogue of blessings that accrue for the *tuath* by *fir flathemon*, or “princes of peace”: “...prosperity and fertility for man, beast, and crops; the seasons are temperate, the corn grows strong and heavy, mast and fruit are abundant on the trees, cattle give milk in plenty, rivers and estuaries teem with fish; plagues, famines, and natural calamities are warded off; internal peace and victory over external enemies guaranteed” (10). The consequences of misrule may be expressed in the term opposite of *fir flathemon*; *gau flathemon*, meaning “injustice or falsehood of price”, which causes famine and defeat in battle. “Inauguration of a new king was symbolical mating of the new king with the local earth goddess...which was destined to bring fertility to man and beast in his reign” (11). The most celebrated was the Feast of Tara, originally a ritual marriage between the new king of Tara and the goddess Medb. As a symbolic representative of fertility, the king also had to be without blemish, as imperfection would be an inauspicious symbol. A commonly quoted example is the story of King Nuada, who lost his office of kingship when he lost his hand in battle in *Cath Maige Tuired*.

In a *tuath*, agnatic descendants of a common great-grandfather inherited kingship, but father-to-son inheritance was rare. O'Donnell also suspects that “[i]n a small rural unit like the Irish *tuath* the king may have originally incorporated in his person all the offices necessary to a primitive society, being at once priest, war-leader, judge, and lawgiver”

(O'Donnell 1970:15). This parallels Dumézil's views concerning the IE monarch: that he must exhibit the superior qualities of all of the functions. The life of the king was precarious and a ready replacement was needed, the *tanist*, who was often a brother, uncle or cousin, was likely chosen at the king's inauguration (O'Donnell 1970: 26). Kings ruling *tuaths* could make bonds of fealty between other *tuath* kings, and the tracts also record the existence of *ruiri*, a leader of *tuath* kings, and *ri ruirech*, a "king of superior kings". O'Donnell feels that the Ui Neill dynasty at Tara was for a time the over-king's seat of kingship, but that the Ulidian province Munster was the more ancient province of the over-king, as the Ulidia belonged to the pre-Goidelic race of Erainn and it is the only province in the annals recorded to have had a *ri ruirech*. With this last observation, Michael Dames' aforementioned pattern of five sacred hills which are seats of kingship becomes more salient if it is envisaged as a system of *ruiri* with a ruling *ri ruirech* in the centre. Dames and also Dumézil feel the ancient seat of the over-king to have been in the central region of Meath (Dumézil 1973: 11).

The Tibetan Sacral King

Eric Haarh's study *The Yar-Lun Dynasty* examines Tibet's prehistoric royal lineages. The aforementioned King Songtsen Gampo was the first Buddhist King, and there are thirty-two kings recorded to have ruled before him, who are quasi-historical characters connected to the Bon cosmogonic myth. The first King, gNya'-khri-btsan-po, was said to have been a divine being who set foot on a the sacred mountain of Gyang-to and was welcomed as king of the "black headed" Tibetans. He descended from the thirteenth heaven by means of a divine thread connected to the head or "head ladder" of the dMu race of gods given to him by his maternal uncle. He was also given eight magical weapons from his divine parents which would enable him to subdue the evil Mi-yul. It was by this cord that the king was able to return to heaven once his son reached the age of thirteen and took over the kingship (Karmay, 1998: 252; Haarh 1969: 333). Haarh feels, however, that the historical reality of a king's "heavenly ascent" may have been ritual regicide (1969: 334). Though in historical times the eldest son inherited the throne, Haarh also feels that in former times it may have been the youngest son. Care for the heir was traditionally in the hands of maternal relatives, especially the maternal uncle or Zhang, to prevent infanticide. Like Irish kings, the power of Tibetan kings was more sacral than political. Names of ancient kings imply that the sacral king was conceived of as being the central pole of the world-mountain connecting the Underworld, Middle World, and Heaven (Haarh 1969: 141-142). Kings were believed to be possessed by an ancestral spirit, and his role was "to be the equal of the powers of the earth, the deities and the demons, and to be the equal of the most powerful deities, the bTsan" (Haarh 1969: 137). The Tibetan king also had to be physically perfect in order to reign (Haarh 1969: 339). And as previously mentioned, the ritual auspiciousness of the king's person at the time of burial was overseen by Bon priests (Kvaerne 1995: 27).

Thus the Tibetan king, like the Irish king, seems to have been a sacred symbol and quasi-divine. This is to be expected, since these are IE attributes outlined by Dumézil. According to Dumézil, in conjunction with the IE institution of kingship is the existence of a goddess as a symbolic representative of sovereignty with whom the king mates. The

possibility of the existence of such an institution in ancient Tibet is something which has yet to be addressed by Tibetologists, but a comparison between Tibetan queens and Irish and British queens as sovereignty goddesses yields some fascinating clues.

Irish Goddess of Sovereignty

It will be recalled that the sovereignty goddess Queen Medb of Cruachan chose as kings men who were without fear, jealousy, or greed, which qualities correspond to the three functions of force, fecundity, and sovereignty (Dumézil 1973: 92). However, Dumézil also felt that because Medb was under the tutelage of her father, King Eochaid, that the Irish sovereignty goddess was ultimately under patriarchal patronage. However, Medb was a Queen of Tara of the Ui Neill dynasty, who according to O'Donnell took over the pre-Goidelic lineage of Ulidian kings, who seem to have ruled supreme up until the fifth century. The possibility of changing institutions as a result of historical takeover needs to be taken into account. The sovereignty goddess should be examined more closely, and be fleshed out with some historical depth when possible.

In the Irish tale *Aided Muirchertaigh meic Erca*, King Muirchertach mac Erca's wife-to-be, Sin, appears seated near Muirchertach after a hunt, and when he asks who she is she tells him "I am spouse of Muirchertach mac Erca, King of Ireland, and it is to seek him that I have come here" (Bhreathnach 1982: 249). When he asks if she recognises him she says, "I do... because I am learned in places more secret than this and I know you and men of Ireland besides." They marry and she resides in the king's palace and "...Sin is seated at his right hand and no woman existed who was of better form or appearance than she. After the king looked at her he used to ask for information and to ask her questions, because it seemed to him that she was a goddess with great powers and he asked what powers she had." In the story she exhibits the powers of hypnotic suggestion, and she conjures up phantom foes for Muirchertach to fight from stones, ferns and sods, which exhausts his strength. Muirchertach does not turn out to be a good sovereign, however, and his kingdom revolts. Sin "changes three vats of water drawn from the river into wine and then dispenses drink to the king and his men which saps them of their strength. Finally, when she has set fire to the house, Muirchertach falls into one of the vats of wine in a vain attempt to escape from the flames and drowns" (Bhreathnach 1982: 259). Breathnach explains that this is an example of the fate of an unjust sovereign; that he is sacrificed by the Goddess of Sovereignty to redress the balance. Now, it would seem that in this account not only is the goddess not subject to patriarchal rule, but that the life and fate of the king is in her hands. What's more, according to Proinsias Mac Cana, "The underlying tradition envisages the goddess as espoused to the rightful king, but it also regards her as the mother of such a king and the ancestress of a royal line" (Mac Cana 1955-56: 88). According to Maire Herbert, with the advent of Christianity in the fifth century, Irish sovereign kings began to pursue actual rather than symbolic political authority, and by the eleventh century the sovereignty goddesses had diminished to being objects to be appropriated by patriarchal rule, and her powers continued to be eclipsed by new forms of political rule (Herbert 1992: 272).

The royal power of the ancient Irish sovereignty goddess is also connected to bodies of water according to Bhreathnach, symbolised by her golden chalice. It will also be recalled

that the root word of “Medb” means intoxicating drink”. There is a depiction of Eriu the “Earth Mother” of Ireland in *Baile in Scail* as “a lady wearing a golden crown and seated on a crystal throne, having before her a vat of red liquor, from which she pours a draught into a golden cup which she hands to each successive king of Ireland” (Bhreathnach 1982: 77). Bhreathnach explains that the royal marriage rite or *banais* entailed the offering of liquor in a golden cup to a man of the queen’s choosing at a banquet feast, followed by sexual union (243). The goddess has powers over the abundance of the rivers, streams, and lakes of the land, and if a king rules unjustly, she will cause the bodies of water to dry up. In another Irish death tale of an unjust king, *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, King Conaire retires from battle to drink but finds that the closest river has dried up and can find no other body of water from which to drink. Mac Cecht goes to seek water for the king in a golden goblet, but by the time he finds a river it is too late, and Conaire dies of thirst and is beheaded by his enemies (258). It will also be noted that an unjust king’s death is associated with water, by drowning or thirst.

Guenevere and Sechang Dugmo

“...it has been suggested that Guenevere, ‘to whom all Ireland and Britain do belong’ might well have played the role of sovereignty, that is, to have been a goddess” (Darrah 1994: 68). According to John Darrah, this would explain her numerous abductions and why a knight stole her golden cup at a banquet feast. It would also explain Arthur’s lack of jealousy and resigned acceptance of her abductions and her affair with Lancelot. She may also have been a fairy because her name means “White Phantom” and because she wore green the day she went a-Maying in the woods. Guenevere was also present at a tournament at Pomeglai held by the Dame of the White Castle in which her daughter’s hand and wealth was the prize. Darrah explains the meaning behind such spring tournaments: “They have been identified by narrators with medieval tournaments and are always so described, but they retain traces of their origin as a system for selecting temporary ritual kings who attained that position as the consort of the ‘queen’ or ‘princess’ of the country, who was the real power of the land” (63). He further explains: “...if the tradition is examined closely it will be seen that traces of the memory that tournaments were originally organised by women for the benefit of women” to select a virile king to bring prosperity to the land (64). All noblewomen attended, and they gave their lovers items of clothing such as sleeves and hats to encourage them. The knights collected these items from their victories, and they were displayed on shelter railings where women watched the fighting. These tournaments tended to take place at boundaries such as mountains or rivers between different kinship groups, as it was also a means of ensuring exogamous marriage to avoid inbreeding (64-66).

Now let us turn our attention once again to Tibet. The Gesar epic has been shown to contain archaic elements, and that the god-kings Gesar and Arthur are possibly cognate has also been illustrated. It would follow, then, that Arthur’s Queen Guenevere and Gesar’s Queen Sechang Dugmo could also possibly be cognate characters. The spring tournament mentioned above calls to mind the horse-race Gesar takes part in to win the kingship of the land of gLing. He also wins the hand of the most beautiful woman in the land, the daughter of Tampagyaltzen, Sechang Dugmo, who is described by Gesar’s rival Todong as a “star” and who “shone forth as a goddess” (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 102). She is an

emanation or *tulku* of the Goddess Chomden Dolma or Dolma the Conqueress. Dolma is Tara, one of whose forms, as previously mentioned, is green (156, footnote). Sechang Dugmo is also abducted by Gesar's enemy, the King of Hor, while he is away, and she falls in love with him and has a son by him. Her mystical association with water is revealed when she hides vases of holy water in the sacred mountain Dorje tse when she is abducted (160). When Gesar takes Hor's kingdom, he shows no signs of anger towards Sechang Dugmo, but says little to her with an air of resigned acceptance, calling to mind Arthur's attitude. It would seem to me that Sechang Dugmo was therefore most likely a goddess of sovereignty.

In addition to Sechang Dugmo's hand in marriage, Gesar's prize for winning the horse tournament also includes Tampagyaltsen's treasures in subterranean palaces, which include a statue of Dolma, "the mysterious mother of beings." (David-Neel and Yongden: 96). This is an example of the recurrent thematic association with queens, princesses, and goddesses with treasures, trees, turquoise, and water or liquid throughout the epic. When Gesar appears to Lungjags in a dream and give false explanations for bad omens, he says, "The blood flowing from the vase of holy water betokens that the celestial Mother Uma regards thee with favor" (115). After her husband's kingdom is conquered, Tazig's Queen gives Gesar treasure kept in a sandalwood box with four gold keys that she fetched. A turquoise statue of Goddess Dolma one of it seven treasures. She was made sovereign by Gesar (274). The most precious of medicines in India is the "life jewel of the Mutegspas" in their fortress kept in a sandalwood box, with a turquoise key kept by a woman who is a *tulku* of a celestial *dakini* fairy from Padmasambhava's paradise. She is daughter of keeper of medicinal treasures, *Lungjags Nagpo*, whose vital essences resides in a nine headed serpent that has entered a sandalwood tree. Her name is *Padma Chos Tso*, "lotus ocean of religion", and she has bad dreams presaging Gesar's arrival. Among the medicine treasures are tree trunks and branches, and sandalwood shrubs, and whoever looks upon them becomes immortal (110). Before going to battle King Satham washes hands in Lake of Milk where a *nagi* brings him the exhilar of life. Right before King Satham's kingdom is conquered, his Queen's body falls into a sacred garden in the palace (234-35). King Samtham's other wife was the incarnation of a goddess. All of these queens and princesses are associated with life giving waters and the fate of the king and the kingdom, echoing the Irish sovereignty Goddess. They are also the keepers of medicinal treasures, which in Padma Chos Tso's case are revealed to be trees. These treasures are kept in a sandalwood box with either a gold or turquoise key to which they are guardian. In two instances the statue of the goddess Dolma occurs as being one of the treasures, and in Tazig's case it is turquoise in colour. It would seem, then, that the Gesar epic would indicate the possible existence of a sovereignty goddess in Tibet as guardians of palace treasures.

The Tibetan Royal Marriage Rite

If Tibetan had a sovereignty goddess, what did the marriage rite consist of? The turquoise colour association with queens parallels Irish myth; according to legend it was commonplace for Irish Kings to marry otherworldly fairy women, whose color-association was green. Knoc Aine was the seat of Kingship in Munster, and there is a legend that the Earl of Desmond stole Aine's green cloak and he laid with her, and so obtained kingship of the area. She also bore him a semi-otherworldly son (Dames 1992a: 65). Early Tibetan

kings also had otherworld wives; according to Haarh, the first twenty-four Tibetan kings tended to marry queens of either the white celestial Lha-mo lineage or the aqueous Klu-mo (Haarh 1969: 123). Parallels between the Irish *gentry* or *sidhe* fairies and Tibetan *lha* spirits will be recalled.

In Bon marriage ritual, turquoise is the bride's symbolic colour (Uray 1972: 7). Bon marriage ritual is an enactment of the myth of the first marriage, in which the Lord of *rGya* marries the Goddess *Srid-lcam*, connecting gods and humans. As such, it would likely also reflect elements of the ancient Tibetan royal marriage rite between a king and a goddess. A golden spindle and a golden arrow with turquoise feathers is symbolically associated with the lives of the bride and groom, and wool and blue threads are attached to the cenciput of the bride and groom (Karmay 1998: 210-11). Karmay connects the wool marriage thread with the dMu thread "head ladder" of early Tibetan kings which connects them with heaven. He failed to remark, however, the simple fact that thread is spun from a spindle, which belongs to the bride, who represents a goddess in this context who *is* the connection between the gods and man. Perhaps from this observation the symbolism of the dMu thread of kings can be further understood to be *spun by the goddess who connects them with heaven*. In Irish literature, a divine king's connection to the otherworld by means of a thread also appears in *Immran Brain*, when Bran arrives at land of women and an otherworld woman throws him a ball of yarn and pulls him ashore (Mac Mathuna 1985: 57).

At the end of the Bon marriage ceremony, the groom and bride say "We two the man and the woman, Have become like the lake and the goddess of the lake" (Karmay 1998: 211). This calls to mind the folklore concerning marriage between lakes and mountains. The aforementioned rTa rgo is believed to have been the source of the regal power of Zhang-zhung kings (Bellezza 1997: 294). The mystical union between Dang ra and rTa rgo is believed to take place at a shrine near the lake, said to be the crown of goddess's head "Head Rope" (Bellezza 1997: 336). It would seem, then, that Dang ra has one more very crucial thing in common with the Irish Aine: she was a Queen. And if her mate was symbolically associated with Zhang-zhung kings, it follows that Dang ra was likely symbolically associated with Zhang-zhung queens.

Marriage Rite also Shamanic?

It would seem, then, that what can be surmised concerning the ancient Tibetan marriage rite between a king and queen would have little in common with the Irish *banais*. However, the Irish *banais* marriage rite calls to mind the aforementioned theme of the mystical banquet present in both Irish and Tibetan folk traditions, in which a hero takes part in a banquet in an otherworld castle that is the home of a divine female being. That this theme has shamanic elements has already been established, which likely involved the initiation of a mystic or warrior hero during an otherworld journey. It will also be recalled that part of this initiation was marriage or sexual union with the divine female guide. Could the Irish *banais* also have been a shamanic type of initiation of the king by the sovereignty goddess? RA Breathnach's description of the *banais* sounds shamanic; "a hero, a hunt in which the hero is victorious over a wild animal, a search for water in a royal cup, an encounter with the *puella senilis*, [which is] coition or osculation and the

metamorphosis or promise of Sovereignty” (Breathnach 1982: 243). It will also be recalled that IE matrimonial custom was likened to a shamanic journey according to Nick Allen.

Did Tibetan kings undergo a shamanic type of initiation? Interestingly enough, aspects of this shamanic otherworld journey theme and the Irish *banais* are found in the Gesar epic. At the end of Gesar’s adventures he goes to a sacred mountain during a full moon and lays claim to the treasures guarded by the twelve goddesses of the earth in a crystal *bumpa* (vase):

Stepping through the door-like opening, Gesar entered a magnificent hall where, on a large gold throne, lay a *mandala*. In the centre of this shone the vessel containing the water of immortality, which bubbled up and overflowed; a happy portent for Ling and its King. Around the vessel were ranged the knots and pills of life, a number of other magic charms, and the supernatural armor destined for Gesar. At the foot of the throne countless bows, arrows, helmets, and lances formed the outer circles of the *mandala*. The whole was bathed in a dazzling light of surpassing intensity: the splendour of the sun united with that of the moon (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 106).

The water’s association with initiation is revealed when during the ensuing palace celebrations, everyone receives a few drops of the water in an initiation rite, *angkur*, which was conferred upon all the country (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 107). Gesar’s discovery of the water is not associated with marriage in the epic, but his peaceful rule as king of gLing follows. It will also be recalled that Sechang Dugmo hid vases of holy water inside a mountain, and Gesar found the water of immortality inside a mountain. Gesar does not kill a wild animal but he does kill the demon Lutzen in the north, and three other kings who are incarnate demons before he finds the water of immortality.

Eric Haarh explains that the ritual installment of a Tibetan sacral king likely involved a fight with a yak, in likeness of the legendary King gNya-khri’s battle between a red yak representing the enemy-aspect of the Srin, and an ox with white horns. Haarh also explains that a new king was also bestowed with sacred weapons and a new name (Haarh 1969: 333). This most certainly sounds shamanic. Gesar was also bestowed with weapons when he discovered the water, and he received a name change when he won the hand of Sechang Dugmo and became King of gLing.

It would seem, then, that aspects of Gesar’s shamanic adventures contain elements of both the Irish *banais* and the ritual installment of a Tibetan king. Is it possible, then, that the installation of a Tibetan king was a shamanic marriage rite with a goddess? Perhaps this is merely a speculative suggestion, but it is interesting to note that this would considerably illuminate the interpretation of Queen Sad Mar Kar’s poetry in the Old Tibetan Chronicle. She was Songtsen Gampo’s sister and wife of the Zhang-zhung prince Lig Myi-rhya. When Songtsen Gampo sent her a complaint for not consummating her marriage, she replied with poems complaining about her bleak life in Zhang-zhung, complaining about the “share of land imparted to me.” Uray interprets her poetic call for a yak fight between

“the six clans of paternal subjects” as a political call for war, promising a victorious share of the “yak”, or land, for each clan (1972: 38). Her call for a war which mirrors an aspect of the ritual installment of a king, and her ridicule of the “share of land imparted to me” are understood if she is viewed as a goddess of sovereignty with whom the king is mated when he is installed as king. Her call for war might then be also interpreted as a call for a new king or mate to rule over her land, and a promise of a share of the land for each clan under new political leadership.

Leprosy and Royal Death

The likely existence of a pre-Buddhist Tibetan sovereignty goddess and an ancient marriage rite with the king has been established. Did the Tibetan goddess have the power of life and death over the king like her Irish counterpart? An examination of the common mythic theme of leprosy reveals some clues. Another aspect of the Irish sovereignty goddess is her metamorphosis from the disguise of an ugly hag into a beautiful goddess when the king-to-be shows her sexual favor. MacCana explains, “The idea of the goddess changing her form and raiment when she is without her proper spouse and king is very common in the whole of our literature, and enshrines the ancient belief that a land gained or lost fruitfulness and prosperity according as it gained or lost its true and rightful king” (MacCana 1955-56: 84). An oft quoted example is the tale of “Loughly Lady”, in which only Niall among his four brothers accepts a kiss in return for water from a hag they come across while hunting together (Herbert 1992: 268-72). When Niall approaches her he embraces her, she changes into beautiful maiden and says, “I am sovereignty,” and he becomes king. In the “Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid” Muigmedon, such a hag is described in detail:

The hag was thus: every joint and every member, from the top of her head to the ground, was as black as coal. The bristly shock of grey hair that came through the top of her crown of her head was like the tail of a wild horse. She would sever the green branch of an oak fully laden with the tusk-like green teeth that were in her head and reached to her ears. She had black, smoky eyes and a crooked, cavernous nose. Her abdomen was sinewy, spotted with pustules, diseased, and her shins were crooked, bent below. [She had] gnarly feet, broad and shovel-like, huge knees and green fingernails...(Stokes 1903: para. 11, 198-200).

She takes on a beautiful appearance when transformed:

There was not a girl in the world whose step or appearance was more beautiful than hers. Each joint from the tip of her head to the sole of her foot was like the most freshly fallen pockets of snow. Her forearms were plump and queenly. Her fingers were graceful, long and pliant. Her calves were straight and fairly hued. Two sandals with white bronze between her tiny, soft, bright feet and the ground. A precious cloak of purple was about her. A gleaming silver brooch was on the cloak. She had lustrous, pearly teeth, a great, queenly eye, and scarlet-red lips (Stokes 1903, para. 14, 198-200).

The above quotes were taken from a Celtic Seminar at Jesus College given in November 2002 by Amy Eichhorn-Mulligan, a postgraduate studying medieval literature at St Anne's College, Oxford. She felt that the appearance of the "ugly hag" fit the common bodily deformities of the leprosy disease. There are also accounts of leprosy in Bon myth, but it was the king rather than the queen who contracted the disease, such as King Bron-snan-lde'u'. His beautiful wife became green and emaciated, but she was cured by eating cooked frogs from her own country, and she once again became healthy and beautiful. When the king secretly ate some of the frogs, he fell ill with leprosy (Haarh 1969: 335-56). Haarh makes a parallel between leprosy and mental illness displayed by other early Tibetan kings such as Gri-gum, who Haarh feels died because he "proved unable to master desire and arrogance" or was cowardly (330). In the Irish case, the appearance of leprous deformity is also arguably the goddess's test against arrogance in a future king, since he would need to be humble in order to see through the grotesque disguise. It would seem that this Tibetan legend could echo this same idea in reverse: that leprosy is a result of kingly pride, symbolised by his stealing of the queen's frogs, which was the source of her vitality and beauty. If a king became leprous or had any other type of physical defect he "*was disqualified as a king*, and was obliged to resign, which meant to die" (339). If the king's contraction of the disease is in connection with the queen, this could possibly imply that the queen had power over the life of the king, like her Irish counterpart.

Haarh also explains that Gri-gum's name, "the Mighty stabbed", also implies water-death and Sri-death. Gri-gum died at the hand of his minister Lo-ngam, who cut his dMu cord, and thus severed the connection with heaven. Thereafter kings were buried in water as opposed to re-ascending to heaven. Haarh also argues that Gri-gum's fight with Lo-nam was an inversion of gNya-khri's fight with the yak; Gri-gum may have shunned or lost the ritual fight, thereby severing his heavenly connection and bringing about his death. Water-death also calls to mind the Irish sovereignty goddess's punishment of a king who has abused his power. In an account Gri-gum's corpse is taken to a river and ingested by a female kLu-mo. The Bon po tradition says that "[m]an originated from the kLu, and by burial in the river the king, as a mortal being, was given back to his origin, the kLu" (Haarh 1969: 343).

Symbolic Forms of the Tibetan Goddess

More observations can be made at this point concerning the possible symbolic forms of the Tibetan sovereignty goddess. The theme of aqueous Srin and Klu-death of the king and the possible association with lake Dang ra would reinforce the likelihood of her association with water. Srin-death and the cooking of frogs recalls the lake drainage myths of the supine demoness who was staked down with the building of Buddhist temples, and of lake Ghume Pani in that both had a frog or frogs at the bottom associated with otherworldly female spirits. The above-mentioned myth also connects frogs to Tibetan queens. King Bron-gnan-lde'u's queen was also of kLu origin. The supine "Frog head bloody eye" Srin-mo demoness represented the land of Tibet in its entirety. If a sovereignty goddess existed in ancient Tibet, she would seem to also to have been associated with aqueous frogs. This possibility would also further elucidate the symbolism of the association with the colour green, as frogs are green.

It will also be recalled that near lake Ghume Pani lived “Mother Sandalwood tree”, who sheltered Mini, the first man, “in her womb”, protecting him from wild beasts (Allen 1997: 436). Sandalwood seems to also have been associated with Tibetan kings and queens. The recurrent theme of the queen’s keeping of the sandalwood box in the Gesar Epic is also revealed to be associated with the king when Sechang Dugmo puts her son in a sandalwood box (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 214). King Coshing also sleeps in a sandalwood bed in the epic (David-Neel and Yongden 1959: 153). The symbolism of theme of a king sleeping inside a sandalwood box makes sense if the box is understood to represent a maternal womb. Tucci’s argument that the worship of *caitya* trees was an ancient Tibetan practice will also be recalled. I would suggest that the sandalwood tree in particular was anciently an object of worship, personified as a maternal deity, which seems also to have been associated with the ancient institution of kingship. This is further evidenced by the presence of a sandalwood throne in the midst of ancient royal tombs such as that of the above mentioned king, ‘Bro-gnan-lde-’u, upon which was placed a golden image of the king (Haarh 1969: 349-350). Perhaps, then, Tibet’s sovereignty goddess may have also anciently taken the form of a sandalwood tree. It will also be recalled that in the story of the building of his thirteen temples King Songtsen Gampo consults a sandalwood image and a ray of light shines from it onto the Plain of Milk in which his ring falls as an auspicious sign.

King ‘Bro-gnan-lde-’u’s tomb was a square subdivided into nine parts, at the centre of which was the sandalwood throne, and a closed silver or copper vessel containing remains of deceased filled with cinnabar (Haarh 1969: 349-350). The other eight sections were depository for royal treasure. Haarh explains that a king’s tomb was in the shape of a swastika, which is a symbol of indestructibility that revolves counter clockwise in Bon. This calls to mind the Tibetan image of the world-mountain, with the king’s throne in the midst, around which revolved the eight continents. This would make the sandalwood-throne in the midst a microcosmic likeness of the tree in the centre of the palace atop the world mountain, which would reveal the Tibetan sovereignty goddess to be the tree-pillar of the world mountain. It will be recalled that the Irish goddess was also the omphalos tree-pillar according to Dames, as she was the ash-tree in the central hill and seat of kingship, Uisnech (Dames 1992a: 198).

Conclusion

The various pieces of historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence, and the comparison of folk traditions presented reveal the likelihood that Tibet and Ireland and Britain share common cultural IE roots. These cultural roots manifest themselves in traditions that venerate deity incarnate in natural landscape which often has a symbolic likeness to the IE cosmic world mountain. In conjunction with the world-mountain theme there is evidence for the presence of Dumézil's sacral king with shamanic warrior qualities, and sovereignty-goddess queen. From examination of the Irish sovereignty goddess in comparison with legendary Tibetan queens, it becomes evident that ancient Tibet most likely had a sovereignty goddess. This comparison also reveals the ancient IE sovereignty goddess to perhaps have had a shaman-guide relationship with the king, and his life and fate in her keeping. And in light of Gimbutas's model of Old Europe, it is also apparent that the institution of sovereignty goddess has a long and complex historical development which most likely has its beginnings before the advent of IE civilizations.

If she existed in Tibet, then I would argue that like her Irish counterpart, the Tibetan sovereignty goddess was gradually eclipsed with the advent of Buddhism, which the myth of the supine demoness most likely relates. In the Irish case, Gimbutas would extend the eclipse of the goddess much further back in time, to the arrival of the IE in Ireland. It will be recalled that Gimbutas feels that the Old European goddess was originally a creatrix who, with the advent of the IE, became an earth goddess who mated with the male sky-god. This would seem to be Dumézil's institution of IE kingship and sovereignty goddess. That this is the historical development of the Irish goddess in particular is argued by Maire Herbert:

The sacred marriage originally seems to have been a myth of agriculturally-based communities, reflecting a belief that the earth, no longer a self-fecundating *generatrix*, required human intervention to ensure successful harvesting of its fruits. Thus, energy or natural forces, represented by the female principle, combined with social forces represented by the male principle...seems to have been originally associated with New Year festivals and seasonal renewal. Over time, however, both myth and ritual appear to have acquired more specific associations with royal rule, so that the sacred union with the goddess of the land was seen to initiate the fertility and prosperity of a sovereign's reign (1992: 265).

I would suggest that Tibet's history may mirror that of Ireland in this respect; that an ancient Tibetan goddess was gradually eclipsed, first by IE invasions, and later by the advent of Buddhism. Feminine deity embodied in the natural phenomenon of birds, frogs, lakes and trees recalls Gimbutas's Old European Goddess forms. Gyatso explains that Erik Haarh "detects a revolution in world view who he associated with foreign invaders who usurped the Tibetan throne at time of king Dri gum btsan po"(i.e. Gri- gum) in which sky and heaven-centered worship replaced an underworld focus, and kings were buried above

ground instead of in water (Gyatso 1987: 47). Gri-gum's insane cutting of the heavenly dMu chord may also be interpreted as being violence done to the embodiment of a king's connection with heaven: the goddess queen. The records indicate that the first seven Tibetan kings took the names of their mother, which practice stopped with Gri-gum, who was the eighth king. I would argue that these foreign invaders were likely Indo-Europeans, who were perhaps also the harbingers of the ancient Bon religion.

However, as previously noted, scholastic study of Tibet's cultural development has barely begun; there remain many documents to examine and translate, and not much in the way of archaeological excavation has taken place. It is my hope that the views put forth in this study will serve as catalysts for future research. Perhaps continued discovery and study of ancient documents will shed more light on Tibet's ancient queens.

References

- Allen, Nick J. 1997. And the Lake Drained Away. In *Mandala and Landscape*. Edited by Alexander Macdonald. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, 435-445.
- . 2000. CuChulainn's Women and Some Indo-European Comparisons. Offprint from *Emania* 18 (October).
- . 1978. Fourfold Classifications of Society in the Himalayas. In *Himalayan Anthropology: the Indo-Tibetan interface*. Edited by James F. Fisher. The Hague: [Chicago: Mouton; distributed in the USA and Canada by Aldine], 10-19.
- . 1998. The Indo-European Prehistory of Yoga. *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 2:1 (April): 1-20.
- Aris, Michael. 1980. *Bhutan: the early history of a Himalayan kingdom*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Ashe, Geoffrey. 1977. *The Ancient Wisdom*. London: Macmillan.
- Barber, Richard. 1979. *The Arthurian Legends: an illustrated anthology*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press.
- Battaglia, Frank. 1997. Goddess Religion in the Early British Isles. In *Varia on the Indo-European Past: papers in memory of Marija Gimbutas*. Edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter and Edgar C. Polome. Washington, DC: Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph No. 19, 48-74.
- Beckwith, Christopher I. 1977. Tibet and the Early Medieval *Florissance* in Eurasia: a preliminary note on the economic history of the Tibetan empire. *Central Asiatic Journal* 21(2): 89-104.
- . 1987. *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia: a history of the struggle for great power among Tibetans, Turks, Arabs, and Chinese during the Middle Ages*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bellezza, John Vincent. 2001. *Antiquities of Northern Tibet: pre-Buddhist archaeological discoveries on the High Plateau (findings of the Changthan circuit expedition, 1999)*. Delhi: Adroit Publishers.
- . 1997. *Divine Dyads, Ancient Civilization in Tibet*. Dharmasala, H.P.: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- Besse, Marie and Christian Strahm. 1998. The components of the Bell Beaker Complex. In *Bell Beakers Today: pottery, people, culture, symbols in prehistoric Europe*:

- Proceedings of the International Colloquium Riva del Garda (Trento, Italy) 11-16 May.* Edited by Franco Nicolis. Trento, Italy: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Servizio Beni Culturali, Ufficio Beni Archeologici.
- Bhreathnach, M. 1982. The Sovereignty Goddess as Goddess of Death? *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 39: 243-60.
- Brook, Elaine. 1996. *In Search of Shambhala*. London: J. Cape.
- Case, Humphrey. 1998. The Beaker Culture in Britain and Ireland: Groups, European Contacts and Chronology. In *Bell Beakers Today: pottery, people, culture, symbols in prehistoric Europe: Proceedings of the International Colloquium Riva del Garda (Trento, Italy) 11-16 May*. Edited by Franco Nicolis. Trento, Italy: Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Servizio Beni Culturali, Ufficio Beni Archeologici.
- Carney, James. 1967. *The Irish bardic poet: a study of the relationship between poet and patron as Exemplified in the persons of the poet, Eochaidh O hEoghusa (O'Hussey) and his various patrons, mainly members of the Maguire family of Fermanagh*. Dublin: Dolmen Press; [distributed in the U.S.A. By Dufour Editions, Chester Springs, Pa].
- Cornu, Philippe. 1990. *L'stologie Tibétaine*. Collection Presences. Quoted in Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. (1993, Washington, D.C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press. Excerpt translated by Geoffrey Samuel), 162-63.
- Crumley, Carol. 1974. *Celtic Social Structure: the generation of archaeologically testable hypotheses from literary evidence*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Dagthön, Jampa Gyaltson. 1995. An Introduction to Tibetan Astro. Science. In *Tibetan Astronomy and Astrology: a brief introduction*. Dharmasala, Distt. Kangra, H.P., India: New Delhi, India: Astro. Dept., Tibetan Medical and Astro. Institute; Distributed by Men Tsee-khang Exports, 11-21.
- Dames, Michael. 1992a. *Mythic Ireland*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- . 1992b. *The Silbury Treasure: the great goddess rediscovered*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Darrah, John. 1994. *Paganism in Arthurian Romance*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- David-Neel, Alexandra. 1931. *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*. London: John Lane.
- and the Lama Yongden. 1959. *The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling*. London: Rider.

- Dumézil, Georges. 1973. *The Destiny of a King*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1970. *The Destiny of the Warrior*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press.
- . 1986. *The Plight of a Sorcerer*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press.
- Durkheim, Emile and Marcel Mauss. 1963. *Primitive Classification*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Eichorn-Mulligan, Amy. 2002. *Sovereignty's Body: The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship*. Celtic Seminar, 21 November, Jesus College, University of Oxford. Unpublished.
- Evans-Wentz, W.Y. 1977. *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gimbutas, Marija. 1974. *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe, 7000 to 3500 B.C.; myths, legends and cult Images*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- . 1997. *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe: selected articles from 1952 to 1993*. Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Man.
- . 1999. *The Living Goddesses*. Berkeley; London: University of California Press.
- Graves, Robert. 1997. *The White Goddess: a historical grammar of poetic myth*. 4th ed. Edited by Grevel Lindop. Manchester: Carcanet.
- Green, Miranda. 1986. *The Gods of the Celts*. Gloucester: Alan Sutton.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1987. Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet. *The Tibet Journal* 12 (4): 38-53.
- Haarh, Erik. 1969. *The Yar-lun Dynasty: a study with particular regard to the contribution by myths and legends to the history of ancient Tibet and the origin and nature of its kings*. Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad's FORLAG.
- Herbert, Maire. 1992. Goddess and King: The Sacred Marriage in Early Ireland. In *Women and Sovereignty*. Edited by L.O. Fradenburg. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 265-272.
- Hodge, Stephan. 2000. *Illustrated Tibetan Book of the Dead: A New Reference Manual*

- for the Soul*. Abridged. New York; New Jersey: Sterling Publishing Co.
- Jones, Gwyn and Thomas. 1949. *The Mabinogion*. Translated by Gwyn and Thomas Jones; revised by Gwyn and Mair Jones. Rutland, Vermont: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd; Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc.
- Jones-Bley, Karlene. 1997. Defining Indo-European Burial. In *Varia on the Indo-European Past: papers in memory of Marija Gimbutas*. Edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter and Edgar C. Polome. Washington, DC: Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph No. 19, 197-213.
- Karmay, Samten. 1998. *The Arrow and the Spindle: studies in history, myths, and beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.
- Kvaerne, Per. 1995. *The Bon Religion of Tibet: the iconography of a living tradition*. London: Serindia Publications.
- . 1987. Dualism in Tibetan Cosmogenic Myths and the Question of Iranian Influence. In *Silver on Lapis: Tibetan Literary Culture and History*. Edited by Christopher Beckwith. Bloomington, Indiana: The Tibet Society, 164-175.
- Laing, Lloyd and Jennifer. 1995. *Celtic Britain and Ireland: art and society*. London: The Herbert Press.
- Leidy, Denise Patsy and Robert A.F. Thurman. 1997. *Mandala: the architecture of enlightenment*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Lihua, Ma. 1990. Shamanic Belief Among Nomads in Northern Tibet. *Proceedings of the International Seminar on the Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya: September 21-28 1990 at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich*. Edited by Charles Ramble and Martin Brauen. Zurich: University of Zurich.
- Littleton, C. Scott and Linda Malcor. 1994. *From Scythia to Camelot: a radical reassessment of the legends of King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, and the Holy Grail*. New York; London: Garland.
- Loomis, Roger Sherman. 1956. *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Mac Cana, Proinsias. 1955-56; 1958-59. Aspects of the theme of King and Goddess in Irish Literature. *Etudes Celtiques* 7: 76-114, 356-413; 8: 59-65.
- Mac Mathuna, Seamus. 1985. *Immram Brain: Bran's Journey to the Land of Women*. Tubingen: M. Niemeyer.
- O'Donnell, John 1970. *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: the O'Donnell lectures for*

- 1967-8 delivered at the University of Oxford on 23 and 24 May 1968. Oxford: London: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press.
- O’Rahilly, Cecile. 1967. *Tain bo Cuailnge*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
- Ramble, Charles. 1999. The Politics and Sacred Spaces in Bon and Tibetan Popular Tradition. In *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture: a collection of essays*. Edited by Toni Huber. Dharmasala, H.P.: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 10-22.
- Ross, Anne. 1992. *Pagan Celtic Britain: studies in iconography and tradition*. London: Constable and Company, Ltd.
- Samuel, Geoffrey. 1993. *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington, D.C.; London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Schmidt, Karl Horst. 1996. *Celtic: A western Indo-European language?* Innsbruck: University of Innsbruck.
- Stein, Rolf Alfred. 1981. Introduction to the Gesar Epic. *The Tibet Journal* 6: 3-13.
- Stokes, W. 1903. The Death of Crimthann Son of Fidachm and the Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedon. *Revue Celtique* 24.
- Tucci, Giuseppe 1988. *Stupa: art, architectonics and symbolism*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.
- . 1989. *The Temples of Western Tibet and their Artistic Symbolism*. Edited by Lokesh Chandra. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.
- . 1961. *The theory and practice of the mandala: with special reference to the modern psychology of the subconscious*. London: Rider.
- Uebach, Helga. 1994. Small Units in the Territorial Division of the Tibetan Empire (7th-9th century). *PIATS* VII: 997-1003.
- and Geza Uray. 1994. Clan versus Thousand-district versus Army in the Tibetan Empire. In *Tibetan Studies*. Edited by Per Kvaerne. Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.
- Uray, Geza, 1983. Tibet’s Connections with Nestorianism and Manicheism in the 8th-10th Centuries. In *Contributions on Tibetan Language, History and Culture*. Edited by E. Steinkellner and H. Tauscher. Wien: Arbeitskreis fuer tibetische und buddhistische Studien, Universitaet Wien, 399-429.

———. 1972. Queen Sad-Mar-Kar's Songs in the Old Tibetan Chronicle. *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* 25 (1-3): 5-38.

Walter, Michael and Christopher I. Beckwith. 1997. Some Indo-European Elements in Early Tibetan Culture. *Tibetan Studies: proceedings of the 7th seminar of the IATS, Graz 1995*. Edited by H. Krasser, M.T.Much, E.Steinkellner, H.Tauscher. Wien: Verlag der Oesterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1037-1054.

Yang, En-Hong. 1990. The Forms of Chanting Gesar and the Bon Religion in Tibet. In *Proceedings of the International Seminar on the Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya: September 21-28 1990 at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich*. Edited by Charles Ramble and Martin Brauen. Zurich: University of Zurich, 433-440.