

Classifications of Kings in Early Ireland and India

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I. Introduction

The wisdom-text ‘The Morand’s Testament’ (hereafter *AM*) contains an interesting classification of rulers based on their modes of government. We shall try to compare the Irish evidence with that of the early Indian treatise on politics, *Arthaśāstra*, in which the similar classification of rulers is contained, and to find the underlying theory behind their congruence.

The relationship between the power and the ethical structures within any society can be described in different ways. Rudimentary social units that create the foundations on which are based the mutual coordination between a human being (the microcosm of the society) and a social organism (its macrocosm) tend to organise themselves into clusters or pairs. This principle is called classification; what is more, no two traditions use classification systems in exactly the same way. The pre-existing cultural tradition imposes its own mode on the process of classification and the generalisation of social relationships by an individual, therefore generating a certain code embodied in the form of his or her verbal expression. The principles of ‘right’ and ‘left’ with regard to the system of spatial orientation, or those of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ with regard to the system of moral evaluation, and those of ‘noble’ and ‘base’ with regard to the system of social stratification, to list just a few, are employed and articulated by both the individual and the society to establish and harmonise their relationship.¹

2. Definition and types of classification

There are different views on the definition and the principles of classification. Two ways to describe the process of classification can be distinguished: the horizontal

1 I propose my argument on the basis of the findings of Durkheim (1912), Hertz (1909), Mauss (1933), Lévi-Strauss (1966), and Schwartz (1981) who all had a lot to say about such topics as the ordering capacity of a human being, the universality of binary contrasts inherent to a human nature, and the conversion of vague ideas and sentiments into sociological universals of which every human being is capable.

(sometimes also called lateral) and the vertical. Both types are intertwined: it is difficult to describe the relation of the idea of the left to that of the right (although both belong together as the opposing principles of space and orientation) without referring to the archetypal association of the left with inauspicious, and that of the right with auspicious characteristics:

What resemblance more perfect than that between our two hands? And yet, what a striking inequality there is! To the right go honours, flattering designations, prerogatives... The left hand, on the contrary, is despised and reduced to the role of a humble auxiliary... The right hand is the symbol and model of all aristocracies, the left hand of all plebeians (Hertz 1909, 3).

My main concern is the vertical type of classification. I have mentioned that ‘right’ and ‘left’ can be viewed differently from the point of view of their positive/negative characteristics. An inherited human ability to associate the positive with the higher level of existence and the negative with the lower one creates a vertical polarity of ‘above’ and ‘below’.² The vertical polarity creates inequality.

Inequalities in moral rectitude and value, and inequalities in distribution of social power and authority [are] two sets of distinctions which are experienced and encoded through the metaphor of vertical contrast (Schwartz 1981, 36).

Vertical classification as a framework of our research into classification of kings in early Ireland and India is important in the way that it encompasses both the ‘power semantic’ and the ‘moral semantic’.³ The combination of power and morality is the referential point of our analysis. Two types of inequality between the kings are distinguishable. The first one is based on ‘power semantic’: the bigger is the sphere of a king’s dominance, the higher he stands in the classification of kings. Early Irish law tracts distinguished between the petty king (OIr. *rí tuaithe*), the over king (OIr. *ruire*), the king of (over-)kings (OIr. *rí rí*, *rí ruirech*) and a mighty *tríath*, presumably the king of the highest status, claiming the whole territory of Ireland as the sphere of his rule.⁴ Similarly, on the basis of the early Indian political treatises

2 A perfect illustration of existing correlation between lateral and vertical codes of the ‘right’ and the ‘left’ is that ‘in certain paintings of the Last Supper, Christ is depicted pointing up to Heaven with his right hand and down to Hell with his left’ (Schwartz 1981, 71).

3 By the term ‘power semantic’ I understand the capacity of human conscience to correlate the vertical structures with social differentiation and inequality (e.g. in medieval European society, the nobility occupied the highest position in the social hierarchy whereas the peasantry occupied the lowest). By the term ‘moral semantic’ I understand the capacity to correlate on the one hand the good and the proper with the upper domains of human ethics, and, on the other hand, to correlate the bad and the evil with the lower domains. It is hard to disagree with Schwartz in that ‘while verticality maybe totally independent of power, it is infused thoroughly with morality – with the good, the right and the proper’ (1981, 89).

4 For discussion of king grades see Kelly 1988, 17-8; Breatnach 1989, 36-7. See also Breatnach 1986a for the discussion of the figure of a *tríath*. The *ardrí Érenn* ‘the high-

one can speak of a king (Skt. *rājan*), of an over-king (Skt. *adhirāṭ*, *virāj*), and of the universal ruler (Ved. *saṁrāṭ*), also called a ruler of the whole Earth, containing four continents (Skt. *cakravartin*).⁵ However, the compilers of the early treatises on kingship also passed judgement on such matters as the elevated principles of royal morality.⁶ The compilers were always positive with regard to morally good rulers and despised evil ones. Therefore, similar manifold classifications of rulers based upon their ethical principles were devised. These can be defined as classifications based upon the ‘moral semantic’.

3. Early Irish and Indian kingship: similarity governed by morality

Since Dillon’s work on the ‘Act of Truth’ (1948; 1975, 90, 95-114) in Irish and Indian traditions there has been a number of attempts to revisit the problem of correspondences between Irish and Indian models of ideal kingship. There have been two major trends of research: in the first instance, Watkins (1979), Zimmer (2001; 2003) and McCone (1980; 1990, 107-120; 1998) have tried to look at the problem from the point of view of the common Indo-European inheritance of Ireland and India; on the second instance, Sjöblom (1998), Doherty (2005), and Fomin (1999; 2006) have looked at it from the perspective of the continuity of tradition and cultural development. Despite the difference in methodology, the conclusions of the scholars just mentioned with regard to the governing principle of kingship both in Ireland and in India remain the same. The principle of morality (Skt. *satya*, *dharma* and OIr. *fír*, *fírinne*) both in its ethical/legal and its cosmological/eschatological perspectives is considered to be concurrent in two traditions. However, there is also some evidence that might cause us to suggest that

king of Ireland’ is discussed in Breatnach 1986a and 1986b, 49. For *ruire* see *Bretha Nemed Deidenach* (Gwynn 1942, 33: *Do-eimh ruire riograidh*, ‘An over-king protects grades of kings’). The treatise *Bretha Nemed Toisech* (CIH 2219.30-40) describes *rí ruirech* in the following words: *Roimse, feis Temruch, fonaidm rig ruirech nemtiger righ ruirech*, ‘Abundance, the feast of Tara, the treaties with over-kings constitutes the king of over-kings’.

- 5 Gonda 1969, 102-4; Heesterman 1957, 196-8, 211. Note a Vedic triad with respect to ‘a god being invoked with ... three functions. Thus Taittirīya-Saṁhitā 2.3.6.2 speaks of Indra the king (*rājā*) who is this world (the earth), Indra the overlord (*adhirāja*) who is the atmosphere and Indra the sovereign (*svarāṭ*) who is the world of heaven.’ (Gonda 1976, 216).
- 6 The early Irish treatise on status *Críth Gablach* (Binchy 1941, 21 § 39) is explicit that a petty king (defined as *rí benn*, ‘the king of peaks’) has obligations towards his people, and that his status depends upon his fulfilment of the principle of the ‘ruler’s truth’. Cf. also *Bretha Nemed Toisech* on the status of a petty king: *rí benn | biit do | secht cumala | la enngus firfhilatho*, ‘A ‘king of peaks’, there are seven *cumals* for him, when he has the innocence of the true lord’ (Breatnach 1989, 14-5).

various other principles were recognised by the early compilers of the treatises on ideal kingship.

4. Audacht Moraind on principles of ruling

The early Irish wisdom-text *AM* contains an intriguing classification of kings according to the key principle by which they ruled. The first (and the best) among them is the *fírfhlaith*, ‘a true lord’, who rules according to his righteousness (OIr. *fírinne*). The second one is the *cíallfhlaith*, ‘a common sense ruler’, who rules by means of his intellect and reasoning. The third one is the *tarbfhlaith*, ‘a bull-ruler’, who is portrayed as a violent and impulsive leader of warrior-bands, ready for attack and aggression. The fourth one is ‘the ruler of occupation with hosts from outside’ (OIr. *flaith congbála co slúagaib díanechtair*), and it is not clear from the text what the precise difference is between the last two.⁷ There is an indication that we are in fact dealing with two distinct classifications – the fourfold and the threefold.

All four recensions of our text differ from one another regarding the classification of rulers.⁸ Recension A says that there are three, but does not immediately provide a list of them; it then goes on to furnish a description of all four.⁹ It presents the four descriptions in the ascending sequence, starting with ‘the ruler of occupation with hosts from outside’, continuing with ‘the common sense ruler’, and moving on to ‘the true ruler’. The ‘bull-ruler’ following the ‘true-ruler’ does look like a digression from the original principle of enumeration.

L¹ says that there are four rulers, lists only three, and provides a description of four:

Apair fris ní filet acht cethri flathi issin bith .i. flaith congbála co slúagaib anechtair , cíallfhlaith , fírfhlaith (Best & O’Brien 1967, 1267.37607-21).

7 Translations of the relevant passages of the AN recensions that will follow are based on readings provided by the editions of Kelly (1976, 68-69) and Thurneysen (1917).

8 For detailed discussion of the manuscript tradition and dating see Kelly 1976, xx-xxxiii. B recension is the most archaic: Kelly proposed its compilation date of c. A.D. 700 (1976, xxix). L¹ is contained in the twelfth century Book of Leinster (Best & O’Brien 1967, 1265-7). A is contained in the fifteenth-century TCD manuscript H.2.7, fol. 418a-420a; in the fourteenth-century Yellow Book of Lecan, 413b-414b, and in the fifteenth-century British Museum Additional MS. 33993, ff. 7v-8r. Recension A can be securely dated to the late Old Irish period. N recension is contained in the eighteenth century RIA manuscript 23. N. 27, and can be dated to the late Middle Irish period.

9 §44. *Ní filet inge téora flathi is(s)in bith* (Kelly 1976, 69), ‘There are only three rulers in the world’. Note that from the point of view of nominal declension, *teora flathi* of A, ‘three rulers’, is correct, following the fem. gender of *flaith*, ‘ruler’, but *cethri flathi* of L¹ and *ceithre flatha* of N, ‘four rulers’, are not.

Tell him, there are only four rulers in the world, i.e. the ruler of occupation with hosts from outside, and the common sense ruler, and the true ruler.

L¹'s order of enumeration in the list is ascending, reminiscent of A, starting with a *flaith congbála co slúagaib anechtair*, and finishing off with a *fírflaith*.

Recension N says that there are four, does not provide a list of them, and gives a description only of the first three.

The list preserved in A, L¹ and N recensions is different from the list provided by recension B, which lists the types of rulers in descending order, and arranges them in pairs. It starts with the best, *fírflaith*, 'a true lord', and finishes off with the worst, *tarbflaith*, 'a bull-ruler'. Only B is fully consistent: it says that there are four types of rulers, lists all of them and provides description of each of them after the list:

Apair fris, ní fil inge cethri flathemna and: fírflaith 7 cíallflaith, flaith congbále co slógaib 7 tarbflaith.

Tell him, there are only four rulers: the true ruler and the wily ruler, the ruler of occupation with hosts and the bull ruler (Kelly 1976, 18-9).

Let us now compare the types of rulers in turn, and note parallels and differences between the recensions.

4.1 The true ruler

AL¹N: (47) *Fírflaith immurgu, immos-mōrat, immos-bāgat, immus-nertat immus-cumtaiget 7 fírinni immalle* (Kelly 1976, 69).

And the true ruler: the true ruler and righteousness exalt one another, glorify one another, strengthen one another, [and] support one another at the same time.

B: (59) *Fírflaith cétamus, luithir side fri cach fó, fris-tibi fírinni inde-cluinethar, coten-ocaib inden-aici. Ar ní fírflaith nad níamat bí bendachtnaib.*

The true ruler, in the first place, is moved towards every good thing, he smiles on the truth when he hears it, he exalts it when he sees it. For he whom the living do not glorify with blessings is not a true ruler (Kelly 1976, 18-19).

The passages in AL¹N, describing the 'true ruler', involve the second subject *fírinne*, 'righteousness', which is distinguished by the extensive use of compound verbs, all having as their first element the prefix *im-*, denoting mutuality in the relationship between the true ruler and his *fírinne*. Rec. B, which does not employ the verbal parallelism, involves other things to characterise the true ruler, such as

that his subjects glorify him by blessings (*bendachtaib*), as well as that he follows ‘every good thing’ (*cach fó*).

4.2 The [common] sense ruler

AL¹N: (46) *Cíallfhlaithe immurgu, con-gaib side a chrícha* (N: *7 a thír*) *cen chorra cen chernu* (L¹: *cen chatha cen choscru*). *Ni dēne di neoch, ni dēne nech de. Ráid a ré láaib 7 aidchib, or is ó láaib 7 aidchib ráithir in bith huile.* (Kelly 1976, 68).

Moreover, the common sense ruler. He supports his borders (N: ‘and his land’) without pikes and without slaughters (L: ‘without battles [and] without slaughters’); He doesn’t take away from anyone, nobody takes away from him. He passes through his time by days and nights, for by days and nights the whole world is lived through.

B: (60) *Cíallfhlaithe, ar-clich side crícha sceo túatha, to-lécet a séotu 7 a téchte ndó.*
The wily ruler defends borders and tribes, they yield their valuables and dues to him (Kelly 1976, 18-19).

Although the beginning of §46 in AL¹N is in some respects similar to the corresponding §60 of B, its end is entirely different. B arranges its terms in pairs: *crícha sceo túatha*, ‘borders and tribes’, as well as *a séotu 7 a téchte*, ‘valuables and dues’. N follows B, speaking of *a chríocha 7 a thír*, ‘his borders and his land’ of the common sense ruler. In A and L¹ recensions, the first object of the first clause is *crícha*, ‘borders’ – presumably, of the domains of the ruler. They are also characterised by complex line-internal alliteration between the three last words of the first clause.¹⁰ The remaining two clauses of the last paragraph in the AL¹N recension exhibit parallelism between their elements. The second phrase of the second clause is formed by the repetition of the first one in a different order. The third one involves repetition of the pres. ind. act. and pass. forms of the verb *ráid*, ‘rows’, and the collocation *láaib 7 aidchib*, ‘by days and by nights’, which can be taken as a temporal adverbial phrase.

4.3 The ruler of occupation with hosts

AN: (45) *Flaith congála co slúagaib díanechtair, gnāth flaith labur ēlaithech do suidiu. Amal soithi a shlúraig úad, soid a grad* (A: *7 a gráin*) *for cūlu* (Kelly 1976, 68).

A ruler of occupation with hosts from outside: customary for his rule [to be] weak [and] transitory. As his hosts turn away from him, love and fear of him retreat.

10 Cf. A’s *a chrícha cen chorra cen chernu* (Kelly 1976, 68.174-5) and L¹’s *a chrícha cen chatha cen choscru* (Best & O’Brien 1967, 1267.37610-1).

L¹: (45) *Flaith congbála tra; nirap inmain flaith amal soit a shlúraig úad. soid a greit 7 a gaisced, a grád 7 a gráin for cula* (Best & O'Brien 1967, 1267).

The ruler of occupation, then; he would not be a ruler worthy of love as soon as his hosts turn away from him; his valour and his skill at arms, love and fear of him retreat.

B: (61) *Flaith congbále co slógaib díanechtair; in-soet a shlóig side, in-snádat a aidilcni, air ní soí soithcedach sechtair* (Kelly 1976, 18-19).

The ruler of occupation with hosts from outside; his forces turn away, they put off his needs, for a prosperous man does not turn outside.

The passage in recension B is similar to those in AL¹N in that it employs different forms of the verb *soid*, 'turn', to denote the instability of this type of ruler.¹¹ It is different in other respects: the subject of narration in B is *slóig*, 'the hosts', presumably of the ruler, since they are the constituents of his power and authority. In A and N, however, the characteristics of his vain rule are in the centre of author's attention (*labur ēlaithech*, 'sick and transitory'), as well as *slóig*, 'the hosts'. Similarly to a description of the common sense ruler, the last clause of the paragraph is characterised by complex line-internal alliteration.¹²

4.4 The bull-ruler

AL¹: (48) *Tarbfhlaith dano, nī inmain fer. (L¹: nirip inmain flaith) Do-slaid do-sladar, fo-fich fo-fechar, con-clich con-clechar. Is fris con bith- bennaib (L¹: bemmennach) -büredar. Garb duaig tossach a fhlatha, miscnech anblathach a medón, utmall ēloithech fo deoid a dered. Is fria maccaib ar-dlúthfaiter cinaid, aran-gēbtar gnúsi, aran-dūnfaiter cridi. 'Nī fochen', ar cách do maccaib na flatha sin, 'nibo maith dún flaith for n-athar riam'* (Kelly 1976, 69).

The bull ruler, then, is not a man worthy of love (L¹: 'Let his rule be not worthy of love'). He strikes [and] is struck, he injures [and] he is injured, he attacks and is attacked. Against him there is always clashing with horns (L¹: 'It is against him there is endless clashing [and] noise of striking'). Harsh, unfortunate [is] the beginning of his reign, hateful, waning [is] its middle, [and it is] unstable, impermanent in the end (L¹: 'is its end'). It is against his sons that [his] crimes will be heaped together, that faces will be raised, that hearts will be shut. 'Not welcome', says everyone to the sons of that king, 'the rule by your father was never good for us.'

B: (62) *Tarbfhlaith, to-slaid side to-sladar, ar-clich ar-clechar, con-claid con-cladar, ad-reith ad-rethar, toseinn to-sennar, is fris con bith-büirethar bennaib.*

The bull ruler strikes [and] is struck, wards off [and] is warded off, roots out [and] is rooted out, attacks [and] is attacked, pursues [and] is pursued. Against him there is always clashing with horns (Kelly 1976, 18-19).¹³

11 Cf. *soithi*, and *soid* of A, as well as *in-soet*, 'turn away', and *ní soí*, 'does not turn' of B.

12 Cf. A's *a grád 7 a gráin* (Kelly 1976, 68.172-3) and L¹'s *greit 7 a gaisced, a grád 7 a gráin* (Best & O'Brien 1967, 1267.37609-10).

13 Kelly proposes two possible interpretations of the last sentence of §62 (1976, 56, note to line 155). I prefer the second variant which is based upon 'a continuation of the

The description of the rule of the ‘bull-ruler’ in AL¹ and in B can be regarded as being closer to one another than the descriptions of the first three types of rulers. The abundant use of active and passive verbal forms in both the first clause of AL¹ version, and throughout the whole of B seems to support this view. The verbal forms emphasise the reciprocal character of his actions: whatever he does is turned against him. It is worth underlining the marked antithesis between the sound of ‘clashing with horns’ (*bith- bennaib -búirethar*)¹⁴ against the bull-ruler and the glorifying with blessings (*bendachtaib*) of the true ruler in B. Contrary to the descriptions of ‘a common sense ruler’ and ‘a ruler of occupation’, the alliterating pairs are absent in the descriptions of ‘a bull-ruler’ in all the three recensions.¹⁵ Note that L¹ repeats the clause *nirip inmain flaith*. In addition, A repeats *ēloithech* ‘transitory’. Both terms had earlier been used to describe ‘a ruler of occupation’.

5. Two versions – two alternatives

On the basis of this evidence it might be suggested that the A recension preserves a contradiction in the shared original due to an odd placement of *tarbfhlaith* at the end of classification. The ascending sequence in A ending with a *fírfhlaith*, ‘a righteous ruler’ at the summit vs. the descending one of B starting with a righteous ruler and ending up with a bull-ruler both tell us of the different organising principles of the recensions. From this perspective, the description of the *tarbfhlaith* in A looks like a mere addition. However, looking at the text of the B recension, one should note that there is a certain parallelism between the description of a true ruler in § 59, and the description of a bull-ruler in §62.

The descriptions are both abundant in verbal forms; another parallel is the opposition between *bendachtaib*, ‘blessings’, with which living beings glorify the true ruler and *bennaib* ‘horns’ that bellow against the bull-ruler. Alliterating sequences of *bí bendachtaib* vs. *bith-búirethar bennaib* are constructed on a similar basis: note the visual parallelism between *bí* and *bith*, in addition to both words (*bendachtaib* and *bennaib*) being in dat. pl.

As far as the A recension is concerned, one can note the further parallel that the descriptions of the true ruler and the bull-ruler (§§47, 48) feature verbal forms. However, the second and the third part of the paragraph on the bull-ruler exhibit no

metaphor of the bull ruler’, therefore taking *bennaib* ‘as referring to the horns on the head of the bull’.

14 Note the tmesis construction in A here, which may be an indication of the earlier date of the passage in A against B.

15 The minor exception being the pair *utmall ēloithech*, ‘unstable, impermanent’. The words are probably employed because they are synonyms, rather than on the basis of alliteration.

such correspondences. The text is now concerned with the description of each of the three parts of his rule, and ends up with an oral address by the subjects to the sons of such a king, barring them from taking their father's place.¹⁶ The address can be seen as the malediction of the people, which is certainly an antithesis to the blessings that the people confer on the true ruler in §59 of B.

The classification of four rulers in B according to their intrinsic moral characteristics can be viewed simultaneously as lateral as well as vertical. The ideal types of rulers are divided into two pairs of opposites, each of which is hierarchically lower than its opponent from the moralistic point of view. The classification can be viewed symmetrically, that is the first two 'ideal types' are the two good ones, in which the first is still better than the second, whereas the last two are the two bad ones, in which the last is worse than the first. The polarity of 'good' vs. 'bad' types of kingship, in which the good one was divided into the 'righteous' and the 'wise', and the bad one was divided into 'the worse' and 'the worst', was current in the imagery of Irish kingship from quite an early stage.

6. Arthaśāstra on different types of kings

A similar threefold classification of kings in accordance with their behaviour towards the inferior kings who submit to their conquest is contained in the twelfth book of the the third century B.C early Indian treatise on politics *Arthaśāstra*:¹⁷

XII.1.10-16 *Trayobhiyoktaro dharmalobhāsurasuravijaina iti. Teṣāmbhyavapattyā dharmavijayī tuṣyati... Bhūmidravya-haraṇena lobhavijayī tuṣyati... Bhūmidravya-putradāra-prāṇaharaṇenāsurasuravijayī.* (Kangle 1969, 247).

(10) There are three types of invaders, i.e. the lawful conqueror, the greedy [one] and the evil [one].
 (11) Of them, the lawful conqueror is pleased by approaching for imploring [his overlordship]...
 (13) The greedy conqueror is pleased by abduction of land and material possessions. (15) The evil conqueror [is pleased by] taking his life, his children and his wife, his land and his wealth.

The three-fold division of potential aggressors owes its origin to the 'triadic mode of thought' (Gonda 1976, 212) characteristic not only of the *Arthaśāstra* itself, but also of the early Indian literary tradition in general. As far as the *Arthaśāstra* is concerned, it certainly goes back to the primary division of the spheres (Skt. *varga*) of human existence into *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, that can be tentatively

16 This is reminiscent of the beginning of the Middle Irish saga *Bruiden Meic Da Réo: Bai fodord mōr ic aithechthūathaib Érenn*, 'there was a great murmuring of discontent among the vassal-peoples of Ireland' (transl. by O'Connor 2006, 126). O'Connor notes that 'while *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* is not actually preserved in the extant manuscripts as an "introduction" to *Audacht Morainn*, its original author may have been making a conscious link between the two works' (ib., 131). Indeed, the tale exemplifies what can actually happen when the *fírfhlaith* type of rule is turned into the *tarbhfhlaithe* one.

17 Scharfe 1993, 292-3, proposes its second century A.D. dating.

translated as the principle of law and duty, the principle of material well-being and the principle of sensual pleasures.¹⁸ The author of the treatise advises the king to adhere to all the three principles without giving priority to any of them.

I.7.3-5 *Dharmārthāvirodhena kāmaṃ seveta | samaṃ vā trivargamanyonyā-nubaddham | eko hyatyāsevito dharmārthakāmānāmātmānamitarau pīḍayati* (Kangle 1969, 8).

By living in agreement with the principles of duty and material well-being, he should devote himself [not only] to sensual pleasures, but evenly to the group of all three, bound with one another. What is more, if [it is only] one out of the [three] principles of duty, well-being and sensual pleasures that is highly venerated, this harms itself and the other two.

Similarly to the three principles of human existence, there are the three principles of royal government (Skt. *śakti*), to which the king should adhere. These are the strength of his counsel (Skt. *mantraśakti*), that of material resources (Skt. *prabhāvaśakti*) and that of energy (*utsāsaśakti*).

IX.1.14, 16 *Mantraśaktīḥ śreyasī... evam utsāhaprabhāvamantraśaktīnāmuntarantar-ādihiko atisaṃdhante* (Kangle, 1969, 217).

The power of counsel is the best... Now, being full of each of the powers of energy, resources and council, he surpasses [his enemies].

Discussing the necessity of employment of counsellors by a king, Kautilya provides a striking metaphor. He compares the idea of kingship to that of the image of the wheel, stating that the state government cannot be carried out by the king on his own:

I.7.9 *sahāyasādhyam rājatvam cakramekam na vartate | kurvit sacivāṃstasmāntemām ca śmuyāmatam* (Kangle, 1969, 9).

His kingdom [can only be] managed [with] assistants – the wheel does not roll on its own. He should appoint counsellors and listen to their advice.

It is now clear that the *dharmavijayin* – the first king in the classification of the aggressors – is the one who mastered the first power of a king, the power of council, governed by the principle of *dharma* (law and justice) where as the other two are those who adhere to the other two principles of government, that is either to the *artha* (in case of the *lobhavijayin* who subscribed to the primacy of material resources in his government) or to the *kāma* (in case of the *asuravijayin*, who

18 In the Classical Hindu tradition this triad was extended to include *mokṣa*, ‘liberation’, presented as the ultimate end of human existence. In the words of U. N. Ghoshal, ‘the two paths or processes ... according to the view of catholic Hinduism wonderfully complement each other in man’s progress towards self-realisation, namely, the path of action (*pravṛtti*) and that of renunciation (*nivṛtti*). While liberation (*mokṣa*) is held to be the goal of the latter path, the former path is conceived to involve the co-ordination of the three ends of life, these being virtue (*dharma*), wealth (*artha*) and pleasure (*kāma*)’ (1966, 10).

subscribed to politics shaped by the power of energy and physical force). Having acquired and subdued all the three powers of a king, the lawful conqueror can proceed to attain the ultimate goal – dominance over the Indian continent. The sphere of dominance of this kind of king is called a *cakravartikṣetra*. Therefore, the image of a wheel and the image of a world ruler intertwine in a metaphoric notion of the ‘wheel-roller’ – the *cakravartin*. The kings that are observant of lawfulness succeed in conquering the whole India.¹⁹

7. The principles of righteousness and force as the principles of ‘right’ and ‘left’ in the Indian political theory

The idea of world-dominance and its attainment by means of peaceful conquest and righteousness was elaborately developed in the early Buddhist political thought. The third century B.C. ‘Sutra of the Lion’s Roar of the Universal Monarch’ (Pāli *Cakkavattī-sīhanāda-sutta*) describes the career of the Universal Monarch (Skt. *cakravartin*). Among other things, it contains his conquest of the earth for the purpose of the instalment of a Buddhist over-kingship. I have argued elsewhere (Fomin 1999, 181-6) that the description of the campaign as it stands can be regarded as a straightforward literary fabrication, based upon the motifs and themes of the Indian inauguration ritual (Skt. *rājasūya*) and the *vājapeya* or the ritual that establishes the sacrificer in the position of a universal king (Skt. *saṃrāṭ*) in which the specifically Buddhist elements were incorporated. In the course of the sutra, the *cakravartin* is presented as a preacher of Buddhism, and the conquest of the neighbouring kings is their conversion to Buddhism. The kings submit to him voluntarily, without fighting or negotiating.²⁰ Nevertheless, the expediency of the secular power in early India required righteousness to be correlated with the principle of force (Skt. *daṇḍa*). The *Arthaśāstra* taught that the proper use of legitimate force (understood both as the power of punishment and the power of army) is appropriate in the government of a state.²¹ This is reflected in the presence of *dadaṇḍaa* among the elements of the state (Skt. *prakḍaṭī*) in the treatise.²² On the contrary, the *Cakkavattī-sutta* sought to establish the authority of the ‘wheel’ (Skt. *cakra*), portrayed in the sutra as the principle of Buddhist teaching, as the principle of the righteous rule:

19 Cf. Kangle, 1969, 217 = *Arthaśāstra* IX.1.17-18: *deśaḥ pṛthivī || tasya himavatsamudrān... cakravartikṣetram*, ‘his [conquered] land is a continent from Himalayas down to the ocean – the field of the *cakravartin*’.

20 A new translation of the sutra, together with its gist and commentary, is contained in Fomin 2003, 304-325.

21 See *Arthaśāstra*, I.4.3-10 = Kangle, 1969, 6.

22 See *Arthaśāstra*, V.1.1 = Kangle, 1969, 134.

[The cakravartin], after having conquered this earth, surrounded by the ocean, neither by daṇḍa, nor by the sword, [but] by dharma, set out to live a settled life like a householder (transl. of the Pāli text in Carpenter 1992, 59).

However, one must admit that Buddhist political thought had to allow for some compromise to include the inevitable use of *daṇḍa*. The first attempt to accommodate the principle of legitimate force in the state government was the exposition on the origin of kingship contained in the second century B.C. ‘Sutra of the Supreme Knowledge’ (Pāli *Aggañña-sutta*). The first king (Pāli *mahāsammato* ‘elected by many’) was presented not as a fully-fledged *cakravartin*, but rather as a basic petty king who met the necessary requirements of traditional Indian political ideology, and this concept of kingship can be seen as drawing heavily on the brahminic expediency of the *Arthaśāstra*:

Because it is said ‘a lord of the fields’ or *khattiyo*, that is why *khattiyo* as the second word [denoting] a king originated. And because they say ‘he delights [his subjects] with dharma’ or *rāja*, that is why *rāja* as the third word [denoting] a king originated.²³

The next step was to link up the notion of *cakravartin* with the principle of legitimate force. As was mentioned earlier, the *cakravartin* of the *Arthaśāstra* strived to rule over one continent, and is sometimes called ‘a ruler over one fourth [of the Earth]’ (Skt. *caturbhāga-cakravartin*). According to the Buddhist thinkers, this kind of *cakravartin* is inferior to the fully-fledged *cakravartin* who is the ruler over the four continents. The ‘ruler over one fourth [of the Earth]’ is ‘victorious by means of sword’ (Skt. *śāstrajito*) and is therefore defined as the *balacakravartin*, ‘the World Monarch by the power of force’.²⁴ The image of the *balacakravartin* crops up in the second century A.D. *Aśokavadāna*, the biography of the legendary Indian ruler Aśoka.²⁵ The collection contains an account of the formal prediction which the Buddha makes about Aśoka, when Aśoka was predicted to become a *balacakravartin*:

The Blessed One then displayed his smile. Now whenever Blessed Buddhas smile, it is usual for rays... of light to issue forth from their mouths... After roaming throughout the worlds, all of the rays then re-enter the Buddha’s body. If a Buddha wants to ... predict a rebirth as a human being they vanish into his knees; if he wants to predict the kingship of a *balacakravartin* they vanish into his left palm, if he wants to predict the kingship of a *cakravartin* they vanish into his right palm (Strong 1983, 202).

23 Transl. is based on the Pāli text in Carpenter 1992, 93. These two titles are based on popular Indian etymologies, also prominent in the Sanskrit sources, which derive *kṣatriya*, the cognate of the Pāli *khattiyo*, from the verbal stem **kṣi*, *kṣayati*, ‘to govern, to lead, to protect’, as well as from Skt. *kṣetra*, ‘field’, and *rājā* from the verbal stem **rañj*, ‘to gladden, to make happy’.

24 See Strong 1983, 49-56, esp. 50, for further reading and references to the sources.

25 For dating see Strong 1983, 27.

It is clear from the above account that the vertical classification of ideal rulers in Buddhist thought was presented as lateral: two types are distinguished and compared to the hands of the Buddha. Because the character of the left hand is less auspicious than that of the right one, so then is the position of the *balacakravartin* is less prominent in the Buddhist cosmology. He enjoys a slightly less superior status than the *cakravartin* per se, although both are described as righteous and lawful kings (Skt. *dharmikā dharmarājā*).

8. Conclusion

This brings us back to the *Audacht Moraind*. The intricate setting of the Indian texts which have been examined reveal the existing interrelationship between the classifications of kings based on ‘moral semantic’ and those based upon the ‘power semantic’. We have seen that the lawful, greedy and evil conquerors of the *Arthaśāstra* find their counterparts in the petty king (Pāli *mahāsammato*), the power-king (Skt. *balacakravartin*) and the righteous king (Skt. *cakravartin*) of Buddhist literature.

An analogous correlation between the ‘power semantic’ and ‘moral semantic’ exists in the early Irish source. It is important to note that the legendary author of the wisdom-text, Morand, addresses his instruction to the king – Feradach Find Fechnach – who came over to Ireland accompanied by supporting troops to subdue the vassal tribes and to restore his original power.²⁶ In the context of the introduction to the text, Feradach is the ‘ruler of occupation with hosts from outside’. However, he was to overcome the usurpers (*aithechthúatha*, ‘the vassal tribes’) and to become the fully-fledged ruler over the whole of Ireland. Thus we have a connection between the classification of kings based on their status, Feradach striving to be at the top of it as the king of Ireland, and the classification of kings based on their morality. It is intended by Morand that Feradach’s rule will be eventually worthy of becoming the first among the ideal types propagated in the closing paragraphs of the wisdom-text:

Dia-nderna inso huili, bid sen, bid suthain... biaid cach mí inna bláth, is úad gébthar hÉriu co bráth (§52 (A) = Kelly 1976, 70.196, 201-2).

26 *Dolluid iarum in Feradachsain i cind ilbliadan i nHerinn co slógaib tairis*, ‘Feradach then came over with hosts to Ireland at the end of many years’ (rec. L¹, Best & O’Brien 1967, 1265.37525) = *Do-luid side iarum taris co slógaib* (rec. B, Kelly 1976, 2.6). For the discussion of the Medieval Irish tales *Bruiden Meic Da Réo* and *Scél ar Chairbre Cinn Cait* in which the vassals’ revolt and the subsequent restoration of Feradach to a high-kingship of Ireland is described see O’Connor 2006.

If he does all this, he will be old, he will be long-lived... every month will be in its blossom, it is from him that Ireland will be inherited forever.

However, Feradach is expected to progress from the ‘ruler of occupation’ type. If we look at the royal career proposed to Feradach by Morand from the point of view of the ‘moral semantic’, it becomes clearer why the recension B version of the wisdom-text is equally divided between *Is tre fhír flathemon* series (§§12-28) and the *Ad-mestar* series (§§32-52). The first series introduces the fortunes of the ‘righteous’ type of ruling, whereas the second series introduces the valuables that constitute the rule of the ‘common sense’ type of ruling. Both are deemed to be good, but the first is nevertheless better than the second.

The vertical division between the good and the bad types of kings (*fírfhlaith* – *tarbfhlaith*), on the one hand, and the lateral division between the rational type (*cíallfhlaith*) and the righteous type (*fírfhlaith*), on the other, has provided us with a clue to the sense of the four-fold classification of kings in the *AM*. Having conquered the vassal tribes, Feradach is now capable of choosing a non-violent method of ruling. The troops are no longer needed. Therefore, the ‘ruler of occupation’ type of ruling has to be abandoned. The *ad-mestar* series prescribing the good ruler to estimate the valuables in his domains compel him to be reasoning. But the common sense is not the terminus of his rule. Finally, going further than just collecting valuables from his tribes, the ideal ruler has to comply with the principle of righteousness, and enjoy the blessings of his subjects together with the joys of experiencing the ruler’s truth. In the eyes of the compiler of the wisdom-text, there is no such thing as *fírinne*, and the true ruler should smile ‘on the truth when he hears it’ (Kelly 1976, 19).

Abbreviations

AM = *Audacht Morainn*. See Kelly 1976.

Arthaśāstra = *The Kauṭīlya Arthaśāstra*. See Kangle 1969.

CIH = *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*. I-VI. Ed. D. A. Binchy 1978. Dublin: DIAS.

DIL = *Dictionary of the Irish Language based mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials*. Compact edition. 1990. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy.

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