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THE *LAND ACQUISITION* MOTIF IN THE IRISH AND RUSSIAN FOLKLORE TRADITIONS

"How is one to explain the similarity of the tale about the frog queen in Russia, Germany, France, India, in America among the Indians, and in New Zealand, when contact between these peoples cannot be proven historically? This similarity cannot be explained if we have wrong conceptions of its character" (Propp 1968: 16).

While specialists in the morphology of the folktale may be able to demonstrate that some similarities which occur between folktales derive from the same source, non-specialists may not see resemblances where they actually exist. In this paper, I present evidence which strongly suggests that three contrasting plots of stories from different cultures stem from the universal motif of land acquisition, which is one of the constituents of the universal paradigm of kingship.

0. Introduction

In many respects, the concept of "motif" and its various definitions are central to our research into certain aspects of Irish and Russian folklore traditions that deal with such notions as space domestication and land acquisition practice. Writing about the semantic structure of the category of the motif, Neklyudov emphasises its invariant character in relation to a variety of its textual manifestations.[1] In his view, these manifestations can all

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[1] Earlier work in which the Russian fairy-tale "The Frog Princess" was dealt with in light of Indian comparanda was carried out by Dr Natalia Alexandrova of the Institute for Oriental Studies (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow). She presented a series of oral communications at various Oriental and comparative mythological studies conferences. I wish to acknowledge her advice and assistance on the Russian material used in the present article. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Archivist, NFC collection, for his invaluable discerning eye regarding my translations of the Modern Irish passages throughout the article and for his assistance in accessing the collection on the whole. Needless to say, they are not to be held responsible for the interpretations proposed and the errors made in this article. All translations are mine un-

be seen as incomplete implementations of an existing "ideal model" which can only be discerned when all the available textual variants of the same motif are compared to one another. From this perspective, any comparative data are extremely useful when interpreting various fixed expressions from the functional and semantic points of view.[2]

> *Семантика мотива не только интертекстуальна, но и … парадигматична. Она опирается на «знание традиции», значительно более широкое, чем то, которое манифестируется в отдельном тексте; мотив принадлежит не ему, а всей традиции в целом. Его значение не выводимо из сюжетной синтагматики, для понимания этого значения (и текстопорождающих возможностей мотива) необходимо его соотнесение, во-первых, с картиной мира соответствующей национальной культуры и, во-вторых, с упомянутым выше общечеловеческим сюжетно-мотивным фондом (и с лежащими в их основе семантическими универсалиями)* (Neklyudov 2004: 243).

The semantics of the motif has not only intertextual character, but is also paradigmatic. It is supported by its "knowledge of the tradition", which is far wider than the one which is manifested in a single text; the motif does not belong to one text in particular, but to the tradition in its entirety. Its meaning cannot be inferred on the basis of the syntagmatics of its plot. To gain a full understanding of the meaning (and of the textual productive qualities of the motif), it is necessary to correlate it, firstly, to the worldview of a certain nation and its culture and, secondly, to the inventory of plots and motifs common to all humankind (and to the semantic universals, lying in their basis).

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[2] In original, "Семантическая структура мотива инвариантна по отношению к множеству своих текстовых реализаций, причем не только в одной национальной традиции, но и в мировой словесности вообще; в силу этого мотивы (по крайней мере их основной фонд) интернациональны. В известном смысле каждая конкретная текстуализация мотива – это всегда неполная реализация его теоретически мыслимой и обладающей своей внутренней логикой «идеальной модели», представление о которой можно получить при сравнении максимального количества вариантов того или иного мотива. Поэтому, в частности, сопоставительный материал столь полезен для функционально-семантического истолкования устойчивых деталей, не мотивированных данным текстом или даже данной традицией" (Neklyudov 2004: 243).

In what follows, I will try to develop the line of argument outlined above. I will attempt to address a land-acquisition motif that forms the basis of various plots that crop up in Irish, Russian and, from the illustrative point of view, Indian traditions. The commonality of the cultural cognitive approach to a certain aspect of the institution of kingship lies in the basis of the congruity of the sources concerned with the conquest of a territory, traditionally embodying one of the constituent traits of kingship. From the methodological point of view, this paper is a sequel to my study presented to the *Societas Celto-Slavica* two years ago at the colloquium in Moscow (Fomin 2009). There I argued that a certain combination of typological, cultural, and historical reasons provided grounds for the origin of the concept of righteous ruling in the three early societies of Christian Ireland, Kiev Rus and Northern Indian Magadha, separated from each other by language, time and space.

In this vein, two possible ways of explanation of the observed similarities can be equally justified. The first one is a genetic or cultural-historical approach which leads the researcher to treat the genetically related and also historically manifested phenomena as the reconstructed variations of the source tradition. The second approach is a typological or structural morphological one which deals with such nuances of the composition as its phraseology, pragmatic aetiology and syntagmatic structure, patterns of text formalisation, questions of proto-genre reconstruction, and relationship with such phenomena as ritual, mythical, and narrative traditions.

> *В этом кругу естественным образом и сталкиваются две наиболее мощные, пожалуй, традиции – древнеиндийская и славянская, полнее всего представленная восточнославянским, и в частности именно русским материалом. Данные каждой из этих традиций не только не безразличны для другой, но и зачастую оказываются решающими аргументами для ответа на вопросы, возникающие в другой традиции* (Toporov 1995: 9).

> In this regard, two of the greatest, one can say, traditions come into natural contact – the early Indian and the Slavic one, the latter most fully represented by the Eastern Slavic, and in particular, the Russian evidence. The data of the two traditions cannot only be viewed as irrelevant to one another, but in most cases the data of the former tradition serves as a key argument when one has to answer the questions coming from the latter.

Not only for the purposes of this study, but in terms of research into the early forms of folklore and narrative in general, one cannot disregard the Celtic evidence and, in particular, the Irish evidence. The Celtic evidence

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can be both useful for the advocates of the cultural-historical approach, as well as for those researchers who work with the application of the structural morphological methodology. In the first instance, various archaic features emblematic of the Irish tradition, going back to Italo-Celtic and further down to the Western Indo-European common heritage, crop up.[3] In the second instance, the comparison of early Irish and other Celtic narrative traditions with other literatures, adjacent in time and space, can draw us to similarities explained either by their common early medieval origin or by common influences and by the flow of narrative segments and archetypical symbols from one tradition to the other.[4] Surmising our observations, one can agree with Vyach. Vs. Ivanov in saying that

> Для XX в. наряду с исканиями художественных эквивалентов древней кельтской литературе характерно появление ее интерпретаций на основе широких аналогий либо сравнительно-исторических (сопоставления с Индией у М. Диллона и Ж. Дюмезиля), либо типологических (как в книге о «Тристане и Изольде»... и в сходном по установке недавнем труде S. Fiore о восточных истоках легенды о Граале). Эти художественные и научные открытия идут рука об руку, иногда опережая одно другое (Ivanov 2004 [1985]: 455 (43)).

> It was characteristic of the twentieth century scholarship to seek the literary equivalents to the early Celtic literature in other traditions along with the propagation of interpretations on the basis of ample analogues of comparative historical (*cf.* resemblances with India drawn by Dillon and Dumézil) or typological (*cf.* works on "Tristan and Isolda", as well as recent work by S. Fiore (1967) on Oriental origins of the Grail legend) character. Those literary and scientific discoveries go hand in hand, sometimes one goes quicker than the other.

It is also worth pointing out that scholarly speculations of a typological nature have probably not yet extended as far as the evidence of the Irish folklore, which will be in the centre of our attention in the course of this study.

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[3] These include preservation of various features of common IE poetic style and composition (Watkins 1995; Kalyguine 1986), including ritual terminology (Meid 1974), common mythology, pantheon and social structure (Dumézil 1971), prototypical narrative structures and motifs, depicting common IE ritual and cultic practices (Olmsted 1976).

[4] To list just a few common examples of the interrelationship, existing between the medieval Celtic and European literatures, one could mention the recurring themes of the *speculi principis* genre (Breen 2002; Anton 1982; Meens 1998), the voyage literature (Strijbosch 2000; Mac Mathúna 1994, 1996, 2000, 2006), the Grail legend (Carey 2007), the closely related legends of the Arthurian cycle (Loomis 1963; Marx 1965), and the Tristan and Isolt legend (Carney 1955: 189–242; Baumgartner 1987; Padel 1981).

It is true to say that Irish and Scottish folklorists succeeded in document-ing traditions of the past that survived from the early Modern period right into the mid-twentieth century. The rich folklore traditions that once exist-ed in Ireland and in Scotland have for a long time been in decline, therefore the researchers attempted to reap their last harvest. This approach gained spectacular results in terms of the accumulation of material and, as a con-sequence, scholars have compiled abundant collections of oral (and re-oral-ised) narratives recorded in Ireland and Scotland. On the other hand, be-ing for a long time concerned with the tradition of the past, the scholars are now becoming increasingly aware of its continuity and adaptation in the present age (Lysaght, Ó Catháin & Ó hOgáin 1999; Beech *et al.* 2007).[5]

1. Irish evidence: Colmcille on Tory island

The evidence under discussion in this paper from the Irish side is the sto-ry that comes from the repository of folklore tales associated with the is-land of Tory. Not only variants of the story survive in the National Folklore Collection (NFC) housed in UCD, but some of them go back to the Early Modern seventeenth century source, *Beatha Colaim Cille*, and can there-fore be taken as a part of the "re-oralised" tradition. However, the author of the *BCC* plot did not seem to re-deploy any of the hagiographic sources available to him and we can probably be safe in assigning its origin to the local lore surrounding the saint. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta, being quite skeptical in relation to *BCC*'s employment of folklore sources, nevertheless, proposed an oral origin of the story on the coming of the saint to the island of Tory:

> *Tá a fhios againn go ndearnadh an-taighde, ar fhianaise na dtéac-sanna go léir a bhfuil tagairti dóibh nó macallaí orthu, nó sleachtan-na astu, ar fud an tsaothair. Níl aon trácht aige ar sheanchas béil mar fhoinse; is cinnte go raibh, ar ndóigh, go háirithe, abair, maidir le Colm Cille agus Toraidh (§§111 et seqq.). B'fhéidir gur d'aon ghnó nach luann sé an seanchas béil; sceitheann sé air féin, áfach, agus tu-gann le tuiscint gur fear liteartha é agus nach bhfaca sé tábhacht sa seanchas béil, ná i mbéaloideas an phobail* (Ó Fiannachta 1985: 29).

> We know that considerable research has been carried out on the ev-idence of all those texts referred to directly or indirectly, or from which passages appear throughout the *Life*. He makes no mention of oral tradition as a possible source; it is, however, certain that it was

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[5] Cp., for instance, a useful discussion contained in Ó Crualaoich's study of the Cailleach (2004: 12–37). In this scholar's view, Irish folk tradition operates on the historic and mythic levels, and its products are oral narratives containing "elements of ancestral knowledge ... [with their] ability to provide access to... the unconscious and the archetypical" (ib., 13).

one of his sources, especially in relation to the story of Colmcille and Tory island. Perhaps he deliberately omits mentioning oral tradition; he gives the game away, however, revealing himself as a man of letters scornful of oral tradition and folklore generally.

J. Szövérffy, who studied the composition from various perspectives, suggested linking the story about Colmcille on Tory with the one about St. Brigid and a cow's hide, proposing that the stories go back to the same folklore motif in their origin – the "motif of the expanding mantle (especially in its better known form 'the deceptive land purchase with cow hide')" (Szövérffy 1956–7: 131) (*cp.* Thompson 1932–6: nos. K 185.1–K 185.11).[6]

The episode in question is related to the coming of St. Colmcille to the island and his conversion of it; its storyline runs as follows. In their argument over the control and conversion of the island of Tory, the three saints – St. Colmcille, St. Beigbhile and St. Dubhthach – climbed the highest mountain in the area and the closest to the island called "Hill of the Saints" (Mod. Ir. *Cnoc na Naomh*), in the vicinity of the Bloody Foreland. Having agreed that "the one whose staff will reach the island will leave the others behind" (Mod. Ir. *cé bith an chéad fhear a chuirfeadh a chroisín go Toraigh go mbéadh siad héin 'na dhiaidh*, Ó Súilleabháin 1951–2: 196), which meant that only one of them would go to Tory on his own, they cast their three staves in the direction of the island.

St. Beigbhile said: "With my own help and with the help of God, I will cast my staff to Tory" (Mod. Ir. *le mo chuideadh héin agus le cuideadh Dé, cuirfidh mé mo chroisín go Toraigh*) and his staff flew through the air and fell in Tullaghobegley (Mod. Ir. *Baile an Teampaill*) near Falcarragh (Mod. Ir. *An Fál Carrach*). In his turn, St. Dubhthach said: "With my own help and with the help of God, I will cast my staff to Tory" (Mod. Ir. *le mo chuideadh héin agus le cuideadh Dé, cuirfidh mé mo chroisín go Toraigh*), and his staff reached Inishdooey (Mod. Ir. *Inis Dhubhthaigh*). Colmcille slightly changed the order of a phrase, saying "with the help of God and my own help, I will cast my staff to Tory" (Mod. Ir. *le cuideadh Dé agus mo chuideadh héin, cuirfidh mé mo chroisín go Toraigh*) and he won the contest – his staff was the one that landed on the island of Tory. However, if one looks at the map, it is clear that they were not casting their staves into the same direction, but in three different directions:

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[6] It will not be expedient in the course of this article to devote our attention to both stories and scrutinise their evidence in more detail. Instead, I will deal with the story "Colmcille on Tory" only and hope to return to "St. Brigid and a cow's hide" story in the near future. In the meantime, an interested reader can be referred to the view proposed by D. Ó hÓgáin (1985: 25–6) who sees the story as "an Irish ecotype of a well-known international tale type concerning a deceptive bargain" and links it to the legend "of the foundress of Carthage, Dido... as Virgil tells it... in the *Aeneid* (I.367–8)".

Colmcille's staff went straight up the north direction, where as that of Dubhthach's went to the northeast and that of Beigbhile's went southeast.

Our story goes that Colmcille thence departed for Tory in his boat (Mod. Ir. *currach*) with a few monks that he took with him:

Map of North Donegal

Landing on the island was not easy. On his first attempt he was quickly driven away by the pagan inhabitants; the second attempt was equally unsuccessful. On the third try, however, as the island-ers tell it (three is a significant number on Tory), he managed to step ashore from his currach onto a large rock (Therman 1989: 44, record-ed from Dónal Doohan).

According to the story, preserved in an Early Modern *Beatha Colaim Chille* (*BCC*), the saint encountered a local king who did not grant Colmcille any permission to found a church on the island when requested to do so by the saint. According to a twentieth century NFC source, the saint asked for a strip of land from the locals. In more detail, he asked for such a trifle as a piece of land that his mantle would be able to cover. The locals all refused to give him anything, save for a certain man called Duggan (Mod. Ir. *An Dubhgánach*). The Early Modern *BCC* states that it was a king who grant-ed him such a trifle. Having received that strip of land – either from a king or from Duggan – he spread the mantle on the land and the mantle started growing and spread out across the whole island.

Dónal Doohan's account of this story is very emotional:

Ah, he couldn't get to come in, Colmcille. He couldn't get an inch on the rock; they chased him away. Colmcille went away. "Well", he says, "when I come again", he says, "I will *land*. No matter there's about *badness*, I will land".

And when he come (*sic*) the third time, he had the *brat* [mantle], you call it. Colmcille landed like that. "I'm only wanting a foot square", he says [to the pagan], "on the rock". This man [Duggan] come to him. "You get back", Colmcille says,
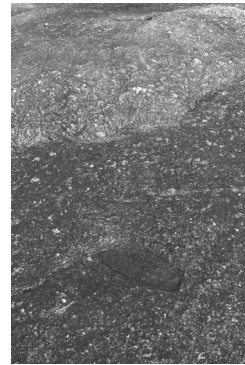
"Colmcille's foot" (Mod. Ir. *Cos Cholaim Cille*), *Port an Churraigh*, Tory island

"Keep at the *back* of me", he says. "He's going to do it *that* time"
(Therman 1989: 45–6).

A different account is contained in a Modern Irish version written down
by Séan Ó hEochaidh:

> *Tháinig sé ann agus curach leis agus landáil sé i Scoilt a' Ghlasáin,
> agus d'iarr sé ar na deamhain a bhí ann roimhe áit a dhá chois a
> thabhairt dó. Agus nuair a fuair seisean áit a dhá chois, spréigh
> sé an brat seo agus chuir sé an tóir ar an iomlán amach as* (NFC
> 1642.19).

> He landed in his currach at Scoilt an Ghlasáin, and entreated the de-
> mons who were there to allow him enough ground on which to place
> his two feet. And when he received room for his two feet, he spread
> out his mantle on the ground and drove the lot of them [demons] out
> of it [the island].

This legend in which the saint drives the whole host of demons out of
the island is by far more stimulating and not devoid of a cosmogonic touch
(in the form of a wide-spread folklore motif "a hero overcomes the forces
of evil") in comparison to other versions mentioned previously.

2. Indian evidence: Buddha's arrival on the island of Sri Lanka

Having fixed Colmcille on Tory, let us depart to the island of Sri Lanka,
where a similar account of conversion and land-acquisition can be re-
called. This is the story of the Buddha's first visit to the island. The story
is contained in the early chronicle of the *Mahāvaṃsa* (*Mvs.*) which, sim-
ilar to the early Irish *Lebor Gabala*, "The Book of Invasions", tells of the
visitors and conquerors who frequented the island of Lanka throughout its
history.[7] The story of the Buddha's arrival is the foundational story with-

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[7] Although *Mvs.* is generally described as the chronicle of the island of Lanka, it is worth
pointing out that it can hardly be attributed to the works of the historical genre and
cannot be put on the par with the annalistic sources of the early medieval Europe. Let
us just mention that the *Mahāvamsa* is not a totally Buddhist canonical composition. It
had been partly built up on the pre-existing tradition of native Lankan royal genealogies
(see Alexandrova 1989, and, more recently, 2008; also, Smith 1972). Similarly, *BCC*, our
earliest source on the labours of the saint on Tory island, cannot exclusively be described
as the work of a hagiographic genre. The similarity between the Lankan and the Irish
documents lies in the way of their compilation. Both were partly compiled on the basis of
accounts of the local lore pre-existing in the oral narrative traditions of Lanka and Ireland.
These shorter pieces were incorporated into a bigger framework, be it the descriptions of
dynasties of the island of Lanka or the career of an early Irish saint.

in the framework of Lankan mythology. The Buddha, having realised it was high time to convert Lanka, descended from the heavenly abodes right into the middle of the island, to the host of local semi-divine beings of demonic character (Pāli *yakkhā*), who were all terrified to see him there. The Buddha appeared to them in a blaze of fire, up in the air, and caused cold winds and thunder and lightning to be visited upon them.

Trembling, the *yakkha*s welcomed the Buddha, and enquired if he intended to land on the island. The Buddha asked their permission to spread his cloak and to land on the cloak. Once the permission was granted, the Buddha spread the cloak which started growing and took the entire island's surface. Similarly to St. Columcille on Tory, who as we just mentioned scattered all the demons from the island by spreading his cloak, the Buddha let the *yakkha*s flee and they finally found themselves on a magical Giri-dipa island in the vicinity of Lanka on which they were to dwell.[8]

3. The Russian fairy-tale "The Frog Princess" and its semiosis

Now let me draw your attention to the third piece of evidence which comes from the widely known Russian fairy-tale "The Frog Princess". This tale was recorded from the oral version and survived in Afanas'yev's nineteenth century folklore collection of Russian fairy-tales. The structure of the tale has been very well studied by such scholars as Meletinsky (1976: 200−201), Anikin (1966: 19−49, also 144−50), Propp (1967: 200−201) and others and it is not my intention to repeat their findings here.[9]

Let me start my discussion of the Russian evidence by considering the episode of the tale that is of central importance to us. The old king, when

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[8] Detailed discussion of the episode with a translation from Pāli original text is contained in Fomin (2010).

[9] It may prove useful, however, to sketch through the arguments of various scholars. Anikin (1966) proposed that the main conflict of the fairy tale's plot is based on the reproduction of the fabrication in a conditional poetic form that may well come true to life based on the disparity of the external aspect and the inner merits of a human being. This contradiction is developed in the moral-ethical, the everyday, and the social aspects. Having burned the Frog's skin, the main character revealed his preference for the beautiful external aspect of his wife to the crafty internal merit. In his eyes, it is not enough to obtain only the latter. However, the fairy tale is trying to teach the hero a lesson, as he has to go a long way to re-iterate his rights to his wife in a beautiful form. For Propp (1968) and Meletinsky (1976), the Frog Princess is a multi-layered and multi-structural source, composed at various stages. They propose that some of the episodes of the tale may go back to a stage when the image of a princess was developed on a totemic level and the frog may well have represented a totemic goddess.

the time is ripe for his sons to choose their brides, sends them in search of themselves. In order to do this, the three brothers shoot three arrows in three different directions.

> *Пустил стрелу старший брат – упала она на боярский двор, прямо против девичья терема; пустил средний брат – полете-ла стрела к купцу на двор и остановилась у красного крыльца, а на том крыльце стояла душа-девица, дочь купеческая; пустил младший брат – попала стрела в грязное болото, и подхватила ее лягуша-квакуша.* (Afanas'yev 1985: 265)

> The eldest brother shot his arrow – the arrow landed in the boyar courtyard, right across the maiden tower-chamber; the middle broth-er shot the arrow – the arrow flew onto the merchant's courtyard and stopped right at the red porch, with a beautiful girl standing there, the merchant's daughter, the youngest brother shot the arrow – the ar-row got right into the dirty bog, and the croaky frog picked it up.

The three maidens (two human and one supernatural) got hold of the arrows. The brothers sought their permission and married those maidens who were, in turn, the boyar's daughter, the merchant's daughter, and the croaky frog. After the marriage ceremony was completed, the old king set three tasks to his daughter-in-laws. The first two maidens failed to com-pete with the frog, who successfully accomplished all the three. When she was so close to completing her last task, the royal ritual dance, her hus-band, the youngest prince, escaped from the royal palace, went home to throw her frog skin into the fire only to find out that in so doing he is destined to loose her. In order to win her back, he had to travel to the Otherworld to overcome the chthonic figure of her father, Koshzhej, which he did with the help of his magical assistants, and brought her home, ulti-mately winning his good fortune.

The three tasks set by the old king for his daughters-in-law are of spe-cial importance to us. The first one is to bake a proper loaf of bread. While the bread of the boyar's daughter is overcooked and that of the merchant's daughter is underdone, the one made by the frog wins the day:

> *Наутро проснулся Иван-царевич, у квакуши хлеб давно готов... Изукрашен хлеб разными хитростями, по бокам видны города царские и с заставами....* (Afanas'yev 1985: 265).

> *По бокам – города с дворцами, садами, да башнями, сверху – птицы летучие, снизу – звери рыскучие* (Bulatov 2002: 282).

> In the morning, when Ivan the Prince woke up, the frog had the bread ready for him for a long time already... The bread was decorated with

various bits and pieces, on the sides one could see the royal cities with
their gates...

On the sides – [there were] cities with palaces, orchards, and towers,
on the top – the flying birds, on the bottom – the crawling beasts.

The second task was to sew a carpet. Again, the old king neither fa-
vours the carpet made by his first daughter-in-law, saying that it is only fit
to be put in front of his door steps, nor is he happy with the second daugh-
ter-in-law's one, which, he admits, is only worth cleaning his feet on, but
the one made by the frog-princess he orders to be placed in front of his
throne, for

> *А ковер у нее... изукрашен ковер златом-серебром, вышито на
> нем всё царство, с городами и деревнями, с горами и лесами, с
> реками и озёрами* (Zhukova 2002: 6).

> She had a carpet ... which was decorated with gold and silver, the
> whole kingdom was sown on it, with its cities and villages, its moun-
> tains and woods, its rivers and lakes.

During the course of the tale the supernatural frog created various
things with her magical powers, and they all had some intricate meaning.
She behaved like a human, and was transformed into a human for the du-
ration of the time taken to perform her tasks. The observed semiotic mod-
els embedded into such a narrative core can be explained by analysing the
motivation behind the activity of the main character. According to Yury
Lotman (2000: 334),

> *Погруженный в культурное пространство человек неизбежно
> создает вокруг себя организованную пространственную сферу.
> Сфера эта, с одной стороны, включает в себя ... семиотические
> модели, а с другой – воссоздающую деятельность человека.*

> A human being, immersed into a cultural space, inevitably creates
> an organised spatial sphere around himself. This sphere, on the one
> hand, includes ... semiotic models, and, on the other, the re-creative
> activity of a human.

Thus, the Frog Princess, being brought from the bog and finding her-
self in the cultural space of a human society, is bound to act according to
its norms and regulations. She is only brought into human shape when she
engages in various forms of activity central to human existence. When she
performs, she creates a semiotic model of the kingdom on the basis of var-
ious discrete icons and images, and the space around herself becomes an-
imate owing to her own activity. This is mostly manifested when she is

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performing a ritual royal dance: "She waved with her right hand – and the forests and waters appeared, she waved with her left hand – various birds started flying" (Rus. *Махнула правой рукой – стали леса и воды, махнула левой – стали летать разные птицы*) (Afanas'yev 1985: 267).[10] Thus, she is bringing life into the space around her by supernatural means, symbolically re-creating the terrestrial plane around the enchanted guests. Taking the idea of cultural space and its semiotic content on a different level, Lotman remarks:

> *Важной особенностью пространственных моделей, создаваемых культурой, является то, что ... они строятся не на словесно-дискретной, а на иконически-континуальной основе. Фундамент их составляют зрительно представимые, иконические тексты, вербализация же имеет вторичный характер. Такой образ вселенной легче протанцевать, чем рассказать... слепить, чем логически эксплицировать* (Lotman 2000: 334).

> An important trait of spatial models, created by culture, is that they are not built upon a verbal and discrete basis, but upon an iconic and continual one. Their foundation is made of visually represented, iconic texts; verbalisation obtains a secondary character. This image of the Universe is easier to present in the dance, than in the story, it is easier to mould it, than to explicate by logical means.

The images created by the Frog Princess are iconic. One can visualise the way she bakes royal bread, or the way she embroiders a royal carpet, or the way she dances a royal ritual dance. One can see that the precise tangible forms and artifacts incorporating various types of human activity (weaving; baking; dancing) are created according to semiotic ideal terms.

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[10] The ritual dance performed by the Frog Princess in the human guise of Vasilisa the Wise has been discussed in some detail in Russian folklore studies. In detail, while she is at a feast, Vasilisa the Wise pours the royal wine into the left sleeve of her dress and then puts the bones left over from the swan into the right sleeve of her dress. Later she is asked to perform a dance. That is when she disperses the sleeves' contents and so the magical lake and swans floating on its surface appear. The opinions on the origin of this episode differ greatly. Some of the scholars point to the archaic nature of the motif of resurrection of birds from the bones and connect it with the archaic belief system of the Early Slavs (Korepova 1980; Nazirov 1982). Korepova points at the parallels that exist in the Polish and Belorussian fairy tales where the heroine, waving with her right hand, turns a wall in the royal palace into gold, and waving with her left hand, makes flowers grow on the wall (see Klich 1903: 957). On the other hand, some scholars have argued that the motif derives from the Christian theme of the resurrection of Christ and provide typologically connected motifs from Old Church Slavonic hagiography, and the "Tale of Piotr and Fevron'ya" in particular (Neyelov 1997).

4. The regal semantics of the tasks set by an old king to the Frog Princess

These patterns can all be presented as a range of syntagmatic units constituting the overall paradigm of space domestication. It is worth pointing at the intriguing details the first two tasks are furnished with. Both the royal carpet and the royal bread abound in attributes filled with regal semantics. The bread reproduces the vertical structure of the kingdom – as one recalls, to the sides there are cities, palaces with gardens and towers, on the top of the bread there are birds, on the bottom there are wild beasts.[11]

The carpet reproduces the horizontal dimension of the old king's land: "The whole kingdom is sown on the carpet with its cities and villages, mountains and forests, rivers and lakes" (Rus. *А ковер у нее… изукрашен ковер златом-серебром, вышито на нем всё царство, с городами и деревнями, с горами и лесами, с реками и озёрами*) (Zhukova 2002: 6). The king we are told orders the carpet to be spread out in front of his throne.

Why should the carpet be included among important royal regalia? Let us invoke the Indian comparanda that can serve as a perfect elucidation to the question just asked. According to the formula of the Vedic ceremony of the *vājapeya* (the ritual that presents the inauguration of an over-king), it should be finished with the laying of the skin of a goat in front of the inaugurate. In the text of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmāna* (hereinafter *ŚB*), the skin is associated with the Prajāpati who is to be understood as the primeval man (Skt. *mahāpuruṣaḥ*). To appreciate the true nature of this identification, one can recall the well known sociogonic myth of the Ṛg-Veda Samhita (X.90) about the "one-thousand headed, one-thousand limbed, one-thousand eyed man" (Skt. *sahasraśīrṣaḥ sahasrāṅgaḥ sahasracakṣuḥ puruṣaḥ*) being identified as Prajāpati from whom the living beings and the social grades were created. Thus, the brahmins were created from the Prajāpati's head, the warriors were created from the Prajāpati's chest, and the cultivators were created from his lower body.[12] Therefore, metonymically the

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[11] This representation of the idea of space finds its parallels in the Russian fairy tales connected with the young warrior hero Vol'ga who is able to turn into a variety of species: a falcon, a wolf and a pike. Assuming their shapes, he attacks the beasts of the sky, then of the earth and finally of the waters, thus symbolically "domesticating" and subjugating all the three dimensions of space around him.

[12] Other cosmogonic myths that involve Prajāpati can be invoked in *ŚB* vii 4.3.5 (in which he took the form of a tortoise), in *ŚB* xi 1.6.1 (in which the primeval waters produced a

skin of the *vājapeya* ritual interpreted as the Prajāpati presents the whole society and the Universe. So, the spreading of a skin in front of an inaugurate presents a metaphoric act of bestowing of a kingdom to a future overking. The inaugurate is sitting on a throne and he is addressed by the brahmins with the following words: "This kingdom is yours" (*iyaṃ te rāḍiti*, ŚB v 2.1.25).[13]

The format in which the ritual actions are set up (the act of spreading of the skin) and the listed royal regalia (the throne and the skin) recall the details of the plot of the story just mentioned: in the Russian tale, the carpet representing the horizontal plane – that is the land of the kingdom – is spread out in front of the old king's throne. Let us recall the Irish legend of the arrival of St. Colmcille on Tory and the Indian tale of the arrival of the Buddha on Lanka, in which the Buddha's and Colmcille's cloaks were being spread throughout the whole island, thus subduing the land for the two sacred persons.

The version of the tale which was recorded by A. N. Tolstoy provides a different variant of the second task: the old king asks for a shirt to be sewn by his daughters-in-law. The task is probably best interpreted as providing the king with a royal garment which is his necessary attribute.[14] In what follows, I propose to interpret all the three tasks presented to the old king's daughters-in-law as the riddles set before the worthy suitors for kingship (of which their husbands are), and in each case their specifically regal character should be clear.

As far as the connection of the royal garment with the image of power is concerned, one may compare the motif of taking the royal clothing (and implicitly of the physical appearance) off the suitors for kingship in the Indian epic *Mahābhārata* (hereinafter *MBh.*). In the Indian story, the congregation of the Pandavas at the warrior's meeting place (Skt. *sabhā*) was followed by their game of dice with the Kauravas, in the course of which

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golden egg whence originated Prajāpati), etc.

[13] The foundational character of the Prajāpati is made evident in the early Indian brahminic treatise on the science of architecture called the *Vastu-Purusha-mandala*. There, the rules of the construction of a human dwelling are laid down. According to the source, the place where the dwelling is due to be erected is seen as the cosmic diagram which represents the body of a primeval being – the *Mahāpurusha*. The process of putting of a place where the dwelling is erected into a good order was correlated with the cosmological order of the Universe presented as the body of the primeval being. Every quarter of a space corresponded to a certain part of his body, starting from the head of the *mahāpurusha* set to the North-east and finishing with his feet (Vertogradova 1975: 301–2).

[14] For a detailed discussion of the image of the royal garment in the context of the early Indian and Irish inauguration rituals, see Fomin fc.

Yudhishthira, the leader of the Pandavas, looses his kingdom, his wife, and finally, his royal guise. As a result of this failure, the Pandavas were to spend seven years away in the woods, in total isolation, secreted from, and unknown to, society. This led to a series of subsequent actions all geared towards winning their own royal appearance and, ultimately, their kingdom in the course of the epic.[15]

On the Irish side, one may recall the removal of his royal cloak from the king in the saga "Suibhne's Frenzy" (Mid. Ir. *Buile Shuibhne*). In the saga, the king Suibhne hears a sound of a bell never heard before in his kingdom and at once hastens to the newly founded church. He is taken off his cloak on his way to the church and he comes totally naked. Deprived of his cloak, Suibhne is symbolically deprived of his regal social status. As a consequence, when St. Ruadan sees Suibhne in such an infuriated and inhuman state, he curses Suibhne to wander around Ireland insane and naked. Shortly afterwards the curse is fulfilled, and Suibhne is degraded from a kingly status to that of a frenzied fool.

> *Ro-cuala 'diu Suibhne airm a raibhi guth chluig Rónáin ag tórainn na cille... Ro-lonnaigedh ₇ ro-fergaigedh go mór antí Suibne ₇ ro-éirigh go dian deinmneadhach do dhíochar an chléirigh ón chill... Lasodhain fágbaidh a bhrat ag an ríogain ₇ dothaod roimhi lomnocht ina réim roiretha do dhíochar an chléirigh ón chill co riacht áit ina raibhe Rónán... Mallachais (Rónán) Suibhne iarom...: ʻamail táinic-siomh dom dhíochur-sa ₇ é lomnocht ar faoinnel ₇ ar folúamhain sechnóin an domhain, gurab bás do rinn nosbéra* (O'Keeffe 1931: 1–3, §3, ll. 22–24, 27–29, 34–37, §5, ll. 59–64).

> Now, in the place where he was, Suibhne heard the sound of Ronan's bell as he was marking out the church... Suibhne was greatly angered and enraged, and he set out with the utmost haste to drive the cleric from the church... Therewith, leaving his cloak with the queen, he set out stark-naked in his swift career to expel the cleric from the church, until he reached the place where Ronan was... (Ronan) then cursed

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[15] V. Romanov (1987: 95–97), who studied this episode in detail, argued that there are various hints within the narrative core of the episode, and, in particular, the congregation in *sabhā* and the game of dice, from which one may infer that it is the Indian royal inauguration ritual *rājasūya* that is being dealt with in the story. The culmination of the *rājasūya* is the chariot drive followed by a ritual game of dice ultimately leading to the enthronement of the sacrificer. During the game of dice the sacrificer gains his kingship, being proclaimed as a victor by a brahman (Heesterman 1957: 146). On the contrary, the Pandavas loose the game of dice, therefore failing to complete the *rājasūya* and claim their right to kingship.

Suibhne: "... as he came stark-naked to expel me, may it be thus that he will ever be, naked, wandering and flying throughout the world; may it be death from a spear-point that will carry him off" (O'Keeffe 1913: 3, 5, 7).

Similarly, in the Russian tale, the burning of the Frog's skin by her husband means that he looses his right to her. By winning her back, he re-instates his right for kingship, and in a due course is crowned as a new king.

To explain the royal semantics that is conveyed in the image of the royal bread, one can also point to the Indian data for comparison. In this case, let us turn to the early Indian treatise on ideal government, the *Arthaśāstra.* According to the figurative logic of the treatise and its commentators, the king was represented as the eater of his kingdom (Skt. *annada*) and the king's treasury (Skt. *kośa*) was interpreted as his mouth (Skt. *mukham*). The collection of king's taxes is metaphorically represented as the ceremonial offering of the food to the king – both procedures were coined in Skt. as *bali* (Rau 1957: 94; Romanov 1978: 30–32). The king is warned by the author of the *Arthaśāstra* not to transgress the limits of reasonable tax-collection and, in the words of the treatise (*Arthaśāstra* 2.1.15–6), a king "should grant to them (*the subjects*) favours and exemptions which would cause an increase in the treasury... For a king with a small treasury swallows up the citizens and the country people themselves" (Kangle 1972: 56; *anugrahaparihārau caitrebhyaḥ kośavṛddhikarau dadyāt ... ‖ alpakośo hi rājā paurajānpadāneva grasate*, Kangle 1969: 32). This logic is also employed in the Vedic ritual of the *rājasūya.* Towards the end of the ceremony, that is when the rite of anointment (Skt. *abhiṣeka*) is completed, the priest announces the sacrificer as the legitimate king of his people: "This man, O ye (people), is your king, Soma is the king of us Brāhmans!" (Eggeling 1885: 95; *yasyai viśo rājā bhavatyeṣa vo'mi rājā somo 'smākam brāhman*, ŚB v 4.2.3). The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* explains: "He thereby causes everything here to be food for him (the king); the Brāhman alone he excepts: therefore the Brāhman is not to be fed upon, for he has Soma for his king" (Eggeling 1885: 95; *ānāṃ rājeti tadasmā idaṃ sarvamādya karoti brāhmaṇamevāpoddharati tasmād brāhmaṇo 'nādyaḥ somarājā hi bhavati*, ŚB v 4.2.3). Similarly, in early Ireland, the king is also metaphorically represented as the "consumer" of his kingdom.[16] In the *Táin*

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[16] I am grateful to Prof Kim McCone for this suggestion. Other useful examples may include: *rige dorumaltsa* 'I have exercised (lit. eaten or consumed) kingship' (Stokes 1904: 24 §4); *doromla Banba* 'he shall enjoy (lit. consume) Banba' (i.e. he shall rule Ireland) (Best, Bergin & O'Brien 1954: 146 = *LL* 4513); for a full list see DIL, *degra-dúus*, s.v. *do-meil* 'eats'; (d) 'makes use of, enjoys, exercises'.

Bó Cúailnge (LU version), the following formula to describe Conchobar's reign is applied:

> *Is amlaid domel Conchobar a flaith. Trían ind laí oc déscin na ma-craide. A trian n-aill oc imbirt fidchille. A trian n-aill oc ól chorma conid gaib cotlad de* (Best & Bergin 1992: 153= LU 4858–60).

> That is how Conchobar used up his reign. A third of day watching the boys. Another third playing *fidchell*. Another third drinking ale till he grows sleepy thereat.

Thus, the chain of the syntagmatic units extrapolated from the Russian fairy tale's storyline – the bread baking followed by the bread giving followed by the bread consumption at the royal feast – can be argued as containing the underlying regal semantics.

It should, however, be remembred that the setting of tasks by the old king takes place at the very outset of the fairy-tale. Let me invoke its opening lines:

> *Говорит им царь таково слово:* "*Дети мои милые, возьмите себе по стрелке, натяните тугие луки и пустите в разные стороны; на чей двор стрела упадет, там и сватайтесь*"(Afanas'yev 1985: 264).

> The king tells them the following words: "My dear children, let each one of you take an arrow; then, draw your tight bows and shoot in different directions; in whose courtyard your arrow falls down, there you should seek [a girl] in marriage".

The episode in which the process of courting is initiated by shooting arrows brings to our mind the early Indian ritual of bridegroom choice (Skt. *svayaṁvara*) as described in *MBh.* I.12.174–176 (Van Buitenen 1973: 346–353).[17] In *MBh.*, the protagonists – the Pandava brothers – set out on a journey in order to seek their future wife – Draupadī – in marriage:

> The five Pāndava brothers... journeyed to see Draupadī and the divine festival. And as the enemy-burners travelled with their mother, they met vast crowds of brahmins... The brahmins said: "Then you should now go to the Pāñcālas, to the seat of Drupada. There will be a grand bridegroom choice there, with plenty of riches..." (Van Buitenen 1973: 346 = *MBh.* I.12.175.1–10)

> The scions of Kuru... eventually arrived in the Pāñcāla country... Affecting the way of the brahmins, they begged their food; no-where did people find out that champions arrived... The Pāñcālya (i.e.

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[17] I wish to thank Dr John Carey for drawing my attention to this correspondence.

Drupada) had a very hard bow made, well-nigh impossible to bend. He had a contraption built in the sky, and onto the contraption he had a golden target fixed... Drupada said: "The man who can string this bow, and when he has strung it, can shoot arrows through the contraption into the mark will have my daughter" (Van Buitenen 1973: 347−8 = *MBh.* I.12.176.5−11).

In many respects, despite some differences in detail on a syntagmatic level (disguised external aspect of the Pandavas who imitate the duties of brahmins; open competition of the Irish saints; indefinite outcome of arrow-shooting in the Russian tale), the paradigmatic character of events listed in *MBh.*, in *BCC* and in the "Frog Princess" fairy tale deals with a common scenario. Firstly, the protagonists of all the three stories have to travel to the place of their intended destination. Secondly, there they should cast their magic weapons and hit a certain target in order to win their prize. And finally, and here *MBh.*'s correspondence with the Russian fairy tale is even more startling, the protagonists are the young princes, who choose their brides by shooting their arrows at the target; what is more, it is the old king in both Indian and Russian stories who takes on an initiative to propose the task of arrow-shooting.

5. The three heroes, the three weapons, the three directions

However, it is such a trifle − the Frog's skin, burnt by Ivan the Prince by mistake in his aspiration to get rid of his wife's ugly appearance forever, which causes the major problem until it is resolved at the end of the Russian fairy tale.

The landing on Tory by Colmcille and his request to be granted him a spot of two feet to stand upon is also perceived as a trifle. In the islanders mindset it was not really important − which piece of clothing spread over the island − it could either have been the mantle or even something else. Let us recall that in one of the versions of the story we are told that it was not the mantle that the saint used, but the handkerchief. Remarkable as it stands, but the saint is depicted as a perfect gentleman who was presumably supposed to wear a proper suit in which he would have a pocket in which to keep a handkerchief!

When St. Colmcille was going round converting this country he called one day to Tory island. All the islanders at that time were pagans and they wouldn't allow him to preach his gospel in the island. "Well", he said, "all I'll ask of ye is to let me preach in the space of my pock-

et handkerchief, surely ye'll grant me that request". "Well, we'll let you do all that but not an inch more", said one of the islanders. All Columcille done was to take out his pocket kanderchief (*sic*) and put it under his shoe. It began to spread and spread until it covered every bit of the island (NFC 227.30–31, recorded by S. P. Ó Piotáin from John Rochford).[18]

This had, however, caused a major problem – the island was taken by the saint and the only choice left for the humans was to jump on his spreading piece of clothing and to become converted. Everyone did, except for three humans:

Thosuigh an brat a shrathnú; thosaigh achan fhear agus bean a léimnigh isteach ar an bhrat ach triúr: Tadhg, Úna agus Áine (Ó Súilleabháin 1951–2: 197).

The mantle started to spread out; every man and woman started jumping inside the mantle, except for the three persons: Tadhg, Una and Aine.

Now let us bring the matching evidence of the Russian and Irish stories together. At the outset of the story, there were three saints to compete with each other to baptise the inhabitants of the island. The three saints are contrasted with the three non-baptised humans in the Irish legend. In the Russian fairy tale, the fairy tales starts with three brothers departing in quest of the brides, and later in the tale the brothers are juxtaposed with their three wives. The characters of the two stories under discussion cast some sort of a pointed weapon in three directions – these weapons are either saints' staves magically transformed into spears or they are princes' arrows. We have three attempts by St. Colmcille to land on the island of Tory and the three tasks set by the old king to his daughters-in-law in the Russian fairy tale, presumably, to win the future kingship for their husbands.

As far as the matters of the literary style are concerned, the rhythmic repetition device is commonly used within the framework of both stories. Propp (1984: 199, following Nikiforov 1934) noted that prosaic genres of the oral literary forms are very often organised by means of rhythm. In particular, he argued, various kinds of repetitions support this device. Along with major repetitions, one can recall the minor ones throughout the fairytales. One can encounter repetitions from a line to a line, from a phrase to a phrase, similar to verse in a song. Sometimes the words in similar and in different inflected forms are repeated, sometimes only the stem of the word is

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[18] However, see collector's note that this version of the tale can be found in print ("Ceapaim go bhfuil an sgéal seo i gcló cheana", NFC 227.31, note).

repeated. Apart from the rhythmical function, the repetition obtains a function of accentuation by strengthening the sense contained in the word.

In our stories, the repetitions take place at the outset of the story – the three saints utter a similar message, invoking the help of God and their own strength as helping agencies. Note also an important detail of the change from the third to the first person of the speaker when the attention is turned to Colmcille. The narration is given a somewhat dramatic twist as the direct speech is invoked:

> *Chaith fear de na naoimh a chroisín agus dúirt sé, le n-a chuideadh héin agus le cuideadh Dé, go gcuirfeadh sé a chroisín go Toraigh ... Tháinic an dara fear agus dúirt sé mur' gcéadna: le n-a chuideadh héin agus le cuideadh Dé, go gcuirfeadh sé a chroisín go Toraigh ... Dúirt Colm Cille:* "*Le cuideadh Dé agus mo chuideadh héin, cuirfidh mé mo chroisín go Toraigh*" (Ó Súilleabháin 1951–2: 196).

One of the saints took his staff and he said, with his own might and with the help of God that he would send his staff to Tory. A second man came and said the same: with his own might and with the help of God that he would send his staff to Tory. Colmcille said: "With the help of God and my own might, I will cast my staff to Tory".

The three princes of the Russian story also shoot three arrows in the same manner and this action is told in the story using similar collocations:

> **Пустил стрелу** *старший брат* – **упала она** *на боярский двор, прямо против девичья терема;* **пустил** *средний брат* – **полетела стрела** *к купцу на двор и остановилась у красного крыльца...;* **пустил** *младший брат* – **попала стрела** *в грязное болото...* (Afanas'yev 1985: 265).

> The eldest brother shot his arrow – the arrow fell on the boyar courtyard... the middle brother shot the arrow – the arrow flew into the merchant's courtyard... the youngest brother shot the arrow – the arrow got right into the dirty bog...

In both instances, the phrases are constructed employing telic verbs as predicates, and the pointing weapons as the objects of the action. Being set off towards a certain location (the aim of the committed action) they are presented as the intended markers of it. Not only the actions, but the figures of the characters of the stories also serve as the repetition markers. Propp (1984: 200) continues to describe the repetition device in the Frog Princess fairy-tale by saying that

> Используется повтор и в качестве средства характеристики героев, подчеркивая отличие и, наоборот, похожесть персона-

жей. Так, в сказке «Царевна-лягушка» с помощью повтора особо выделяется один герой – младший брат. Его непохожесть, исключительность показаны и с помощью противопоставления на лексико-синтаксическом уровне... Две части повтора как бы равноценны. Третья же часть противопоставлена им (вместе взятым). Если же рассматривать две первые части конструкции независимо друг от друга и сравнить каждую из них с третьей, то окажется, что первая конструкция еще не предполагает противоположного результата, а вторая, в отличие от первой, уже вызывает психологическое ожидание его. Слушатель, знакомый с «правилами» сказки, догадывается, что третья попытка должна принести иной результат.

The repetition is used also as a means of characterisation of the heroes, underlining the differences, and, on the other hand, the similarities between the personages. So, the only hero that is marked out by the repetition in the Frog Princess fairy tale is the youngest brother. His distinct and exclusive character is also counter-posed on the lexical-syntactic plane. The first two parts of the repetition are well-balanced with each other. The third part is distinctively contrasting in relation to them (taken together). If we were to look at the two first parts of the construction independent from each other and compare each of them with the third one, it turns out that the first clause does not yet suppose the opposite outcome, whereas the second, taken apart from the first, provokes a psychological expectation of change. An audience familiar with the "rules" of the fairy tale infers that the third attempt should bring a different result.

His words may well be applied to the framework of the story "Colmcille on Tory": once the staves are cast by the first two saints, it is expected that the action committed by the third one – Colmcille – (who is so distinct from the two) will induce a different repetition formula and a different result, and so it does.

6. Conclusion

But let us draw towards the end. In my contribution, I presented a chain of syntagmatic units within the Russian fairy tale and set them alongside a similar syntagmatic chain in its Irish counterpart adding Indian data as an illustrative comparanda. It is hoped that some compelling evidence was brought to light in order to support the argument that, in fact, the three plots (Columcille on Tory, the Buddha on Sri Lanka and the Russian

tale The Frog Princess) stem from a universal motif of the acquisition of land, being one of the constituents of the universal paradigm of kingship. However, it is important to define the meaning of a key theoretical construct just mentioned – that of the "universal motif". I am inclined to follow the understanding of the term proposed by Neklyudov (2004: 240–1):

> Мотив может рассматриваться не только как составная часть сюжета, но и как его эмбриональная форма... Более того, в функциональном плане мотив зависим от сюжета...Соответственно, «заимствование» мотива возможно только при наличии определенной «пилотной конструкции», позволяющей перенести его из одной традиции в другую; в структурном плане, в качестве таковой всегда выступает некий сюжет... Сюжет и мотив обладают различным качеством: если в основе сюжета лежит синтагматическая структура, то мотив по природе своей парадигматичен...

> The motif cannot only be seen as a constituent of the plot, but also as its embryonic form... Moreover, on the functional plane, the motif is dependant on the plot... Consequently, the "borrowing" of the motif is possible only if a certain "pilot construction" is present, which al-lows the motif to be transposed from one tradition to another. From a structural point of view, a certain plot can serve as such a construc-tion. The plot and the motif differ in their quality: it is the syntagmat-ic structure that lies in the basis of the plot, whereas the nature of the motif is paradigmatic.

So, in our case, the plot of the arrival of the saint Columcille on Tory and the plot of the '"The Frog Princess" fairy tale can be presented through a single motif that can be split into smaller segments termed syntagmatic units. The units are united by rhythmic repetition and obtain similar syntactic structure. These units are: the seeking of a land (in the Russian tale metonymically presented as a seeking of a proper bride) to-be-conquered by the three candidates, the shooting of a pointed weapon in three directions, the three attempts (in the Russian tale presented as the three tasks) given to complete the acquisition of a new land, and finally, the ritual spreading of a royal mantle to cover and therefore to mark the territory of a future dominion. The spreading was allegedly carried out by Colmcille on Tory, and, in view of the Indian comparanda (the spreading of the skin during the *vājapeya* ceremony), the provenance of this syntagmatic segment can only be explained in terms of the royal inauguration paradigm.

The complex of beliefs to do with inauguration and kingship is a bit more sophisticated in the Russian fairy-tale. Not only have we dealt with the metaphorical representation of kingship in the images of royal bread

and royal carpet, but we also mentioned that the completion of the third task was violated by the burning of the frog skin. As soon as the acquisition of land is perceived in the Russian fairy tale in the marriage terms, the skin of the frog might well be a testing agency of the marriage. The fact that Ivan the Prince burns the Frog's skin prevents him from becoming a true husband of his supernatural wife, and, consequently, he looses his prospects of future kingship until he wins his wife back. We can certainly extend the Frog skin's supposedly regal connotation. However, whether it can be taken as a covert substitute of a certain component of the inauguration ritual or as some sort of a literary rudimentary form of the component, is yet to be determined.

Finally, the paradigmatic character of the motif in question must be briefly dealt with. To my mind, an extremely productive concept was developed by the late Russian mythologist E. Meletinsky who introduced a notion of the "archetypical motif". In Meletinsky's view, the archetypical motif is "a micro-plot with a certain predicate structure and certain independent deep meanings, all going back to archaic creative complexes of mythical nature" (cit. from Neklyudov 2004: 243).[19]

This definition probably provides one of the most intriguing explanations of the universal character of the notion of the motif from a semantic point of view. Both plots just discussed obtain certain predicate structure, and the revealed syntagmatic chains share common meaning all going back to the archaic mythical store of motifs to do with royal inauguration, land acquisition, domestication of space and, finally, the paradigm of ideal kingship.

Abbreviations

BCC – Betha Colaim Chille (see O'Kelleher & Schoepperle 1994)
DIL – Dictionary of the Irish Language (see Quin 1983)
LL – The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála (see Best, Bergin & O'Brien 1954)
LU – Lebor na hUidre, The Book of the Dun Cow (see Best & Bergin 1992)
MBh. – Mahābhārata (see Van Buitenen 1973)
Mvs. – Mahāvaṃsa (see Geiger 1958)

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[19] In original: "Е.М. Мелетинский с категорией мотива связал термин «архетипический мотив» – микросюжет с определенной предикатно-актантной структурой и более или менее самостоятельными глубинными смыслами, в конечном счете восходящими к архаическим мифотворческим комплексам".

NFC – UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection (formerly known as Irish Folklore Collection), University College Dublin

ŚB – Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (see Weber 1964, Eggeling 1889)

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Motiv "stjecanja zemlje" u irskom i ruskom folkloru

Sažetak

U ovom radu raspravlja se o irskim i ruskim pripovjednim vrstama koje
su sačuvale neke arhaične kognitivne strukture vezane uz pojam prosto-
ra, zemlje i njenog pripitomljavanja. Irska priča "Sv. Columcille na Toryju"
opisuje posjet sv. Columcillea otoku Tory. Svetac svladava namjeru dru-
ga dva sveca, Begleya i Fianniana, i pobjeđuje svece u natjecanju bacanjem
svojeg štapa tako da se on čudesno pretvori u koplje i dosegne otok. Svetac
osvaja zemlju na otoku tako da rasprostre svoj plašt i njime pokrije čitavu
zemlju. U ruskoj priči "Kraljevna žaba" kralj šalje svoja tri sina u potragu
za budućim ženama. Najmlađi se oženi žabom. Kralj zatim zadaje svojim
snahama teške zadatke, od kojih je jedan istkati sag. Kraljevna žaba uspije
i pretvara se u prekrasnu ženu s natprirodnim moćima.

Tvrdimo da je u oba slučaja sačuvan dobro poznati stari motiv pripito-
mljavanja zemlje, koji se kasnije prepoznaje u stjecanju kraljevstva. Motiv
se može rekonstruirati pomoću unutrašnjih dokaza koji su preostali u na-
vedenim izvorima.

Ključne riječi: keltsko-slavenski, irski folklor, ruski folklor, indijska epika, arhe-
tipski motiv, običaj stjecanja zemlje, paradigma kraljevstva, povijesna morfo-
logija

Key words: Celto-Slavic, Irish folklore, Russian folklore, Indian epic, archetypical
motif, land acquisition ritual, paradigm of kingship, historical morphology