

The Fili and the Muni: Reconstructive Readings of Deconstructed Texts

Warren Brewer

ABSTRACT

Nirvana is perhaps best taken as an Indo-European phenomenon. According to his Pali hagiography, Siddhārtha Gautama attained this ultimate goal after ingesting something called “pig-softness”, an incident which has proven a crux in Buddhist studies, to say the least. My research indicates, however, that the Śākyamuni was not only clearly following an entheogenic tradition traceable to the Vedic *muni*, but that he was even reënacting a vatic ritual reconstructible to proto-Indo-European times. From a comparison of texts dealing with the activities of the Rigvedic *muni*, the Pali *Sākyamuni*, and the Irish *fili*, an Indo-European shaman can be deduced within the Dumézilean structuralist model of comparative mythology; i.e., a non-sacerdotal first-function figure closely tied to the martial second function, at the remotest level of proto-Indo-European society.

KEY WORDS

Brewer, W. A.
Buddhist hagiography
Dumézil, Georges
fili, Irish ‘seer’
Indo-European mythology

Irish legend
pig-chewing ritual
Śākyamuni
shamanism
sūkara-maddava “pig-softness”

[§ 1] Peripheral correspondences.

Keep in mind that the word *shaman* comes from a Buddhist word meaning 'monk'.¹ This stray bit of etymological trivia sounds the keynote for this essay, which will try to answer the question, What possible historical connection could there be between Buddhism and Irish paganism? The question becomes the less absurd when it is also kept in mind that at least since the late nineteenth century striking correspondences especially of religious vocabulary have been noted as being peculiar to the Indo-Iranian and the Italo-Celtic branches of Indo-European.² Functional resemblances, too, between druids and brahmins in particular are believed to be relics from proto-Indo-European times due to the formalist rigor of priestly colleges.

No doubt the ancient Indo-European peoples were like the Eurasian barbarians we know of from later times, so that the existence of a shamanistic sociotype can be presupposed at *any* time depth, regardless of linguistic reconstructibility. Both the Irish *fili* and the Rigvedic *muni* were, indeed, non-sacerdotal figures outside the "colleges of priests", and their ecstatic techniques are certainly too well attested around the world to presume *per se* a genetic link in their roles.

What may be unique, however, is the presence on the Indo-European periphery, in Ireland and in India, of a particular kind of mantic or ecstatic practice involving the chewing of something called "pig". If indeed Siddhartha Gautama had used something called *sūkara-maddava*, or "pig-softness", to attain his Last Great Nirvana, then perhaps we should compare the Irish poet seer's chewing of a *mír dó charna dirg muicce*, or "morsel from the red flesh of pig", to solicit the "manifestation that enlightens [?]" . The question of cognativity, of course, depends on the uniqueness of such porcine terminology among shamanistic jargons.

[§ 2] Dumézilian structuralism.

As background for further discussion, I shall outline the theoretical framework I am working in. In recent years the ideas of Georges Dumézil have dominated the field of comparative Indo-European mythology.³ His theory provides the student with a comprehensive framework for the systematic study of ancient materials ranging from Iceland to India. Dumézil's new comparative mythology proposes a useful background that includes a common set of myths functionally interrelated to a common set of social

institutions and to a common ideology. Dumézil's reconstructed, uniquely Indo-European ideology is roughly divided into three basic "functions" reinforcing a tripartite social stratification into priests, warriors, and farmers, with each stratum having its own mythical representations.

India provides the clearest example of Dumézilian tripartition. In Rigvedic and epic times, the northern Indian communities were organized into three free classes: (1) *brahmans*, whose functions as priests and arbiters were reflected in the myths of Varuṇa and Mitra, respectively; (2) *kṣatriyas*, or warriors, collectively represented by Indra and the Maruts; and (3) *vaiśyas*, or food-producers, whose fertility deities included the Aśvins and Sarasvatī. In elaborating the model for their Celtic materials, the Rees brothers have proposed a fourth function, the subservient *śūdra* caste consisting of menial laborers, craftsmen and entertainers. Completely excluded from this scheme were the aboriginal outcastes, the untouchables.

Besides the clear functional stratification in India, Dumézil has apparently found tripartite structural parallels in other cognate traditions, in Zoroastrianism, in Roman historicized myth, in Norse saga, in Irish myth and epic, and to a lesser extent in Greek myth and epic as well.

To show how Siddhartha Gautama relates to this Dumézilian paradigm, and how a particular episode in his hagiography relates to Old Irish materials to fill a niche in that paradigm is the purpose of this article.

The Celtic Evidence

[§3] The Irish reflex of the Indo-European ideology.

The early Irish laws and sagas clearly reflect the Dumézilian tripartition into spheres relating to the sacred, physical force, and fertility.⁴ The three principle types of Irish freemen were (1) *druí* 'druid', (2) *flaith* 'lord', and (3) *bó-aire* 'cattleman, commoner'. Celticists suggest the additional function (4) *nemed* 'subject freemen', craftsmen, serfs and entertainers.

The ancient Irish first function can furthermore be subdivided into druids, *filiú*, and bards, corresponding to the druids, *vates*, and bards of Celtic Gaul; these three subclasses correspond to and interrelate with the overall functional tripartition.

(1.1) As priests, the druids were held in highest honor, conducted official sacrifices, and judged disputes; they were first function figures par excellence.

(1.2) Secondary in prestige, the *filid* and the Gaulish *vates* were learned poets concerned with inspiration and prophecy, and more closely tied to the second, warrior function.

There is evidence from the Celtic countries and from India that the poets were also the official historians and the royal genealogists. The poet's praises confirmed and sustained the king in his kingship, while his satire could blast both the king and his kingdom They were certainly the experts on the prerogatives and duties of the kings, and a master-poet (*ollam*) was himself equal to a king before the law. Such priestly functions as divination and prophecy also came within the province of these early Irish poets who, it may be added, wore cloaks of bird-feathers as do the shamans of Siberia when, through ritual and trance, they conduct their audiences on journeys to another world.⁵

(1.3) The bards sang the praises of their rulers, and therefore assumed a supportive, third function role.

With the inexorable domination of Christianity in Ireland, this pattern dissolves: The druids were suppressed, their functional successors becoming the early Irish saints;⁶ and the *filid* eventually merged with the bards.

[§4] Cormac's *Glossary* and *imbas forosnai*.

Celticists seem to have figured out the significance of the Irish *imbas forosnai*. According to a famous entry in Cormac's *Glossary*,⁷ the *fili*, or "poet-seer", can obtain occult knowledge by first of all chewing on a *mir dō c[h]arna dirg muice nō c[h]on nō c[h]ait*, i.e., "a morsel from the red flesh of pig or dog or cat". He then sets it on a flagstone behind a door, chants over it and offers the cud to his heathen gods and invokes them. Sometime after this the *fili* falls into a mantic sleep for at least three days, maybe up to nine or more, while companions watch him to prevent anything disturbing the anticipated revelation. The glossator goes on to say that this practice was suppressed by St. Patrick himself,⁸ and it seems likely that with the advent of Christianity to Ireland such unorthodox oneiromancy couldn't be fitted into the new sacerdotal repertoire, although another practice, the *dichetal do chennaib*, or "incantation from the ends [?]", must have overlapped enough with a corresponding Christian ritual to have been assimilated.

Although officially banned by the Church, the original practice of *imbas forosnai* does seem to have slipped through into Celtic lore as the "Thumb of Knowledge" motif, an epic element sufficiently obscure in origin to have been no longer intelligible of itself, and hence posing no threat to medieval Christian orthodoxy.

[§5] Deconstruction of *imbas forosnai* in the Fenian Cycle.

The *Fianagheacht*, or 'Lore of the Warrior Band', shows a curious development of the elements of the shamanistic ritual uniquely described in Cormac's *Glossary*. The protagonist of this set of folktales is Finn mac Cumhail, a forest-dwelling poet-seer at the head of a band of young foot-soldiers.

According to one version of "The Death of Cúldub",⁹ a member of the *fian* (or 'warrior band') twice tried cooking a pig, but each time the roasting pig ran off into a *sidh*, or 'fairy mound'.¹⁰ On the third try, Finn himself was cooking the pig when it, too, ran off. Finn chased it to the door of the *sidh* which was slammed on his thumb. Putting his hurt thumb in his mouth, he experienced *imbas forosnai* and then fell into glossolalia.

In another variant of the same story,¹¹ it was the goblin Cúldub who came out of the *sidh* three times to steal the pig as it was being roasted. Finn caught up with the supernatural thief at the *sidh*'s threshold where a woman was coming out carrying a dripping vessel (which presumably dripped on the doorpost), and it was she who slammed the door on Finn's thumb.

Can these two folkloric episodes involving the magical use of *imbas forosnai* to obtain occult knowledge be related to the clearly shamanistic ritual described in Cormac's glossary? Celtic specialists have, as a matter of fact, already done so, and have convincingly shown that a lexical deconstruction took place, that the Irish word *mír*, 'a morsel', was randomly associated with the word *mér*, 'finger', and by extension with *ordu*, 'thumb', which eventually led to the elaboration of the "Thumb of Knowledge" motif.

In either version of "The Death of Cúldub" it is a cooked pig that leads to the *fili*'s enlightenment. But in other episodes of the Finn cycle, the presence of a pig at the attainment of *imbas forosnai* has been dispensed with, and the salient action in the ritual has become not the chewing of a morsel [*mír*] of "pig" as described in Cormac's *Glossary*, but the insertion of a finger [*mér*] or thumb [*ordu*]¹² in the mouth in contact with a "wisdom tooth" [*dét fiss*]. Such deliberate folk etymologizing characterizes much of

medieval Irish lore.

The Indic Evidence

[§6] The Rigvedic *mūnih*.

In ancient India, there is a functional parallel to the Irish *fili* as described in Cormac's *Glossary*. Hymn 136 in the Tenth Book of the Rigveda is an isolated, very late song, uniquely describing a drug-induced trance.¹³ A *mūnih* is said to have drunk from a *viśāsya pātram*, "a cup of poison", not to be confused with the orthodox *soma* of the first-function brahmans, to have his vatic experience:

Múnayo vātaraśanāḥ piśāmgā vasate mālā.
 Vātasyānu dhrājim yaṁti, yād devāso ávikṣata.
 "Únmaditā māuneyena, vātām ā tasthimā vayanī.
 Śārīrēd asmākaṁ yūyām mártāso abhī paśyatha."
 Amtárikṣena patati, vísvā rūpāvacaśkaśat.
 Múnir devāsya devasya saukṛtyāya sákhā hitāḥ.
 Vātasyáśvo, Váyóḥ sákhā átho devéśito mūnih.

Wind-girt munis are clothed in reddish-brown filth.
 When the gods come in them, they go with a blast of wind.
 "Ecstatic with muni-ness, we've mounted the winds.
 You mortals see only our bodies."
 He flies through the inter-space, staring down at everything.
 The muni is every god's friend and kindly disposed.
 Now the god-driven muni is the horse of the wind, the Wind
 God's friend.

The functional parallel to the Celtic *fili* is clearly there in the Rigvedic muni. Furthermore, according to the much later Patañjali, a *siddhi* or 'enlightenment' could be obtained with the help of various herbs and medicines; so it should not be surprising that sects such as the Nāthas, Siddhas, and Tantrics have long used drugs to attain ecstasy and illumination.¹⁴ Some have even tried to link Siddhārtha Gautama, the "*Mūnih* of the Śākya clan," with just such a practice at his last meal shortly before attaining his nirvana.

Nowadays, of course, no devout Buddhist could conceive of a historical

connection between the clearly entheogenic practices of the Rigvedic muni and the later experiences of the Śākya-muni described in the Pali canon. The belief systems underlying each description differ radically in many respects, not least of which is the half-millennium during which bloody sacrifice lost ground to *ahimsa* and vegetarianism, and there grew an atheistic “non-religion” that would try to discourage non-meditative forms of asceticism.

[§7] The Chunda episode in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*.

As far as Western commentators are concerned, the Pali compound word *sūkara-maddava* is a crux. As far as modern Buddhist dogmatists are concerned, it is an embarrassment that can make little sense. Rhys Davids and Stede¹⁵ cite three Pali texts in which the word occurs, namely in the canonical *Dīgha-Nikāya*, or “Long Collection”, which gives “the impression that here we are confronted with the actual reminiscences of the last days of the Master”,¹⁶ in the *Udāna*, or “Sayings” of the Śākyamuni; and in the post-canonical *Milinda-Pañhā*, or “Questions of Menander”. Analyzed literally, *sūkara-maddava* means “softness of the wild pig”,¹⁷ but trying to figure out more precisely what its ancient meaning really was has given dogmatists, both medieval and modern, seemingly as much gastric distress as Siddhartha Gautama himself experienced when he sampled the stuff in the fifth century B.C., at least according to the *Mahā-Parinibbāna-Sutta*, “The Dialogue of the Great Complete Extinction” of the Śākyamuni. The strange word occurs *only* in descriptions of the Śākyamuni’s last meal, as in the following passage from the *Dīgha-Nikāya*:

Atha kho Cundo, kammāra-putto, tassā rattiyā accayena, sake nivesane, panītaṃ khādaniyaṃ bhojaniyaṃ paṭiyādāpetvā pahūtañ ca sūkara-maddavaṃ, Bhagavato kālaṃ ārocāpesi: “Kālo, Bhante! Niṭṭhitaṃ bhattaṃ!” ’ti.¹⁸

At the end of the evening, Chunda, a smith’s son, had made in his own home lots of solid food and lots of *sūkara-maddava*, when he informed the Bhagavat of the time: “It’s time, sire! The meal is ready!”

And according to the canonical text, the Śākyamuni immediately made it quite clear to his host what he wanted:

Yan te, Cunda, sūkara-maddavaṃ paṭiyattam, tena maṃ parivisa,
yam paṇ' aññaṃ khādaniyaṃ bhojaniyaṃ paṭiyattam, tena
bhikkhu-saṃghaṃ parivisaṭi.¹⁹

Chunda! Serve me the *sūkara-maddava* you've prepared. But that other stuff – the solid food, the mushy food – feed it to the monks!

No one else was to eat it; no one else *could* eat it:

Yan te, Cunda, sūkara-maddavaṃ avasiṭṭham, taṃ sobbhe
nikhaṇāhi, nāhan taṃ, Cunda, passāmi sadevake loke, sa-Māra-
ke, sa-Brahmake, sassamaṇa-brāhmaṇiyyā, pajāya sadeva-manussāya,
yassa taṃ paribhuttaṃ sammāpariṇāmaṃ gaccheyya aññaṭa
Tathāgatassāti.²⁰

Chunda! Bury your leftover *sūkara-maddava* in a hole. I don't know of anybody who can digest it when it's used, nobody in the realm of the gods, of Death, of Brahma, of the hermits and Brahmans, of the race of gods or men; nobody, that is, except a Tathāgata!

Later on, Siddhārtha Gautama left no doubt whatsoever about the potent properties of the *sūkara-maddava*:

Yaṅ ca piṇḍapātaṃ bhuñjivā, Tathāgato anuttaraṃ sammāsam-
bodhim abhisambujjhati, . . . anupādisesāya nibbāna-dhātuyā
parinibbāyati.²¹

After a Tathāgata has eaten this food handout, he awakens to a complete wide-awakening, and . . . finally becomes extinct through an extinguished state where no existence remains.

Siddhārtha Gautama and his entourage moved on to Kusinārā where he was to undergo what he had predicted three months prior. His last words before attaining nirvāṇa were:

Handa dāni, bhikkhave! Āmantayāmi vo! Vayadhammā saṃ-
khārā. Appamādena sampādetthā.²²

“Hey, you monks! I'm talking to you! Things fall apart. Work hard.”

He then went on a veritable roller-coaster ride along various stages of consciousness, starting at the first *jhāna* (or “level of meditative ecstasy”). And then rising from the first *jhāna*, he reached the second *jhāna*; from there to the third, and thence to the fourth. And from the fourth *jhāna* he reached the realm of *ākāśānañca* (of “infinite space”); and from there up to the realm of *viññānañca* (of “infinite mind”); then on to the realm of *ākīñcañña* (of “nothingness”); then on up to the realm of *nēva-saññā-nāsaññā* (of “neither consciousness nor unconsciousness”); and finally peaking at the *saññā-vedayita-nirodha* (“the annihilation of consciousness and sensation”).

“The Bhagavat is finally extinguished!” declared the affectionate, but ever-hasty Ananda.

“No, dear Ananda,” disagreed the more perspicacious Anuruddha, “the Bhagavat is not extinguished; he has merely attained the *saññā-vedayita-nirodha*.”

But not for long, since the Śākyamuni descended the aforementioned ecstatic stages one by one until he was once again at the first *jhāna*. But then he rose back up to the second and the third, once again to the fourth *jhāna*. And when he rose from this level, the Śākyamuni immediately attained *nirvāna*, the “extinction” of desire that ends rebirth. There followed a *mahā-bhūmi-cāla* (or “big earthquake”), some peals of *deva-dundubhi* (lit., “godly drumroll”), and eulogies, including the following words by the astute Anuruddha:

Nāhu assāsa-passāso T̥hita-Cittassa tādino.
Anejo santim ārabba yaṃ kālam akarī Munī
Asallīnena cittaṇa vedanaṃ ajjhavāsaya.
Pajjotassēva nibbānaṃ vimokkho cetaso ahū 'ti.²³

The Mind-Controlled One didn't breathe in or out.
Free from lust from that time on, the Muni made his peace.
With unsluggish mind he endured his pain.
His mind's release was like *pradyotasya nirvāṇam*,
the snuffing of a lamp.

[§8] The Meaning of *Sūkara-maddava*.

Some of the Śākyamuni's rivals, the Jains, maintain that his death followed the eating of meat after having been invited to dinner, and there is

indeed some indication that the Śākyamuni of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. may not have been as strict a vegetarian as his later devotees would have us believe. In his day it was apparently proper for a mendicant to take meat, so long as the animal had not been slaughtered specifically for the beggar's benefit.²⁴

Given this possibility, the commentaries may not have been all that absurd in suggesting that *sūkara-maddava* really was *sūkara-maiṃsa*, literally "pig-meat" or 'pork'. Oldenberg accepted this interpretation:

Our text, with a *nāivṛtē* far removed from modern affection, has in the course of the narrative of Buddha's last addresses, preserved to us the information that his illness was brought on by eating pork, which Cunda, the son of a goldsmith at Pāvā, put before him.²⁵

But this would have been inconsistent with the somewhat later Laws of Manu. A member of the kṣatriya class, such as Siddhārtha Gautama, should have been revolted at the thought of eating pork due to its explicit proscription:

Chatrākāṃ vidvarāhaṃ ca, laśunāṃ, grāma-kukkuṭam, palāṇḍuṃ
grñjanāṃ caiva matyā jagdhvā pated Dvijah.

A Twice-Born shall fall from his caste if he deliberately eats mushrooms, domesticated swine, garlic, a tame rooster, onions, or leeks.²⁶

Perhaps a renegade from his caste, born to be a *rājā* but renouncing his fate, would not have had any qualms, however, about an unorthodox diet, so that even the analysis of *sūkara-maddava* as an *ahi-cchatta*, or 'mushroom' (lit. "snake-umbrella") that had been *sūkarehi maddita-ppadese jātaṃ*, or "grown in a spot trampled by pigs", cannot be totally discounted in principle, even if its etymologizing is not up to modern philological standards (although certain modern literary theorists encourage just such antique imprecision). Another medieval folk-etymology theorizes *sūkarehi maddita-vaṃsa-kaṣira*, "pig-trodden bamboo shoots", which we can view as nothing more than a desperate grasping at paronymic straws.

It seems odd that the use of meat, either raw or cooked, would belong in any ascetical or shamanistic repertoire for soliciting mantic experiences, although we do indeed have anecdotal and folkloric evidence for hallucina-

tions and madness being caused by spoiled meat.²⁷ The Celts certainly placed great mythic significance on their swine. In Dyfed the chief was a swineherd and in Munster swineherds were freemen closely associated with the kingship; and, although tending swine may have been even for the Celts a servile occupation, there was the belief that "swine belong to the Other World."²⁸ That "Hogs can see the wind" is still a modern folk belief of southern Ireland, and "anyone who will suck milk from a sow will have the gift of seeing the wind forever after."²⁹ Still, even acknowledging all this porcine folkloric trivia, can simply chewing on a piece of pork be enough to solicit a trance? What bothered N.K. Chadwick in her Irish data was not that the ingestion of raw pork or even horsemeat could be associated with ritual hallucination, but that the eating of cat or dog had no Irish parallel, and that as a matter of fact it was taboo for Cúchullain to eat dog meat.³⁰ But we do have good anthropological evidence as to how modern ascetics can induce an inspired condition, whether by fasting and isolation, by mortification and self-torture, or through the use of drugs.³¹ This last alternative seems to be the easiest way out for some modern scholars to explain these ancient puzzles.

[§9] Fudging the Facts in the *Dīgha-Nikāya*.

Modern scholars have taken up the suggestion that *sūkara-maddava* must have been some sort of entheogenic mushroom. In his discussion of the Śākyamuni's last supper, R. Gordon Wasson presents a thorough argument.³²

First of all, in lieu of the ancient *soma* (drug of choice of the Rigvedic brahmins), Wasson identifies a modern surrogate used by a Munda tribe, the Santal of Western Bihar and Orissa. The Santal refer to an underground fungus, fetched by pigs, as *putka*, which is identified with the *pūtika* of the Brahmanas that was used as an ingredient in making the Mahāvīra pot during the Pravargya sacrifice. Curiously enough, the Santal believe that *putka* is begotten by thunderbolts, much as the Vedic *soma* was believed generated by Indra's *vāja*. They also distinguish three varieties of the fungus: The *hor* [or "man"] *putka*; the *seta* [or "dog"] *putka*; and the intoxicating *rote* [or "toad"] *putka*. Wasson supposes that the Santal may have been the Dasyus mentioned in the Vedas and the Mahābhārata, and so near enough to the Brahmanical sacrifices to have picked up some of the occult practices. *Putka* was substituted for *soma* since the latter, which he had previously identified as *Aminita muscaria*, or fly-agaric, had become difficult to obtain.

Why would the Theravadins of Śrī Lānka have mentioned this use by

the Śākyamuni of the enrapturing *sūkara-maddava* in their holy scriptures, the *Dīgha-Nikāya*, if such an episode were so dogmatically embarrassing? Because, Wasson reasons, "Too many had witnessed the episode with the mushrooms to permit the Theras to suppress it . . .";³³ and since they could not suppress it they coined "an *ad hoc* neologism", *sūkara-maddava*, or "pig-softness": ". . . to avoid confusing the people as to the [Śākyamuni's] attitude toward the Putika . . . the Buddhist Theras fudged the facts in the *Dīgha Nikāya* . . ."³⁴

[§10] An Indo-European Perspective of *sūkara-maddava*.

Wasson's conclusion is a *non sequitur*. It seems less likely that *sūkara-maddava* was a designedly obscurantist invention, an attempt to conceal the Śākyamuni's entheogenic proclivities, than that it would be, as a *lectio difficilior*, a no-longer understood archaism referring to an ancient mantic rite, but retained by the Theravadin redactors precisely because the original *signifiant* and *signifié* had been prised apart, whether accidentally through familiar historical semantic processes, or by a deliberate pleasurable disruption of the text's naive reading by monks with a dogmatic axe to grind. In either case, it is a structuralist task to reconstruct what *sūkara-maddava* really meant as originally used. If later Theravadins had been aware of the original referent, we can rest assured that they would have expunged the episode from the canon, as have later dogmatists done with any embarrassing hint of carnivorousness on the Śākyamuni's part, for example. This is why from a strictly modern Buddhist point of view the Pali word *sūkara-maddava* can make little sense. From a broader perspective, however, the import of "pig-softness" can be guessed at, not only from an ancient Indic point of view, but perhaps even from a broader Indo-European one.

[§11] Reconstructing an Indo-European Shaman.

A comparison of the characteristics of the Indic and Celtic first function figures associated with the second function yields then the following observations.

(1) Parallels between Finn mac Cumail and Siddhartha Gautama.

(a) Both the fili and the Śākyamuni are religious (first function) figures having close ties to the warrior class (second function); cf. Celtic type (1.2) in §3 above. Finn mac Cumail is a warrior-seer outside of his

society;³⁵ in a sense, that description could also fit the Śākyamuni.

(b) Both had peculiar fosterages.

(c) Both received epithets connected with their Otherworldly experiences.

(d) The saga explanation of the name *Finn* as meaning "fair" would match the legendary wanness of the Śākyamuni.

(2) The mantic practices of Cormac's Irish fili and the Rigvedic muni are both clearly shamanistic.

(3) The Irish filid and the Śāky-muni ingested something having "pig" in its name, with remarkable results.

(4) Smiths (and pigs) figure prominently in Celtic lore. In the *Magni-martha Finn*, for example, Finn gives a pig's head to the smith Lochán as a bride price. Smiths and pigs do *not* figure prominently in Indic lore. Outside of a comparative framework, the Chunda episode in the *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta* would remain inexplicable: Within the Indic tradition there is no reason for a lower caste smith's son to prepare something with a taboo name like "pig-softness" for a kṣatriya-turned-muni; unless it were the relic of a common Indo-European tradition. In either case, an exchange with a smith-figure has taken place involving something porcine.

From the evidence, I would reconstruct a non-sacerdotal first-function figure closely tied to the martial second function among the proto-Indo-Europeans, himself outside of the "colleges of priests" firmly reconstructed at great time depth. Both the Irish fili and the Rigvedic muni used strikingly similar ecstatic techniques, and the terminological correspondence between the Irish *mír dó charna dirg muicce*, "a morsel from the red flesh of pig", and the Pali *sūkara-maddava*, "pig-softness", is certainly greater than accidental.

Notes

1. The English word was borrowed from German *Schamane*, which in turn was borrowed from Russian *šaman*, which came from Tungus *šaman*, which are related to the seventh century Tocharian forms A *šaman* and B *šamāne* 'monk'. The Tocharians were one of the two Indo-European tribes converted to Buddhism. They borrowed their words from Prakrit *samaṇa*, which referred to a Buddhist monk, itself inherited from Brahmanical Sanskrit *śramaṇaḥ* 'an ascetic'.
2. A classic statement of the problem is Vendryes (1916), "Les Correspondances de Vocabulaire entre l'Indo-iranien et l'Italo-celtique," *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 20, 265-285. E.g., **kred-dhē* 'imbued with magical power' > Sanskrit *śrad dhā*, Avestan *vrazdā*, Old Irish *cretim*, Latin *crēdō* 'I believe';

Pokorny's *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, p. 580.

3. Cf. C. Scott Littleton (1980), *The New Comparative Mythology*, "Introduction," pp. 1-19; Rees & Rees (1961), *Celtic Heritage*, p. 112f. & p. 116f.
4. Rees & Rees (1961), *Celtic Heritage*, chapter VI.
5. Rees & Rees, p. 17.
6. P. 169 in Binchy (1982), "A Pre-Christian Survival in Mediaeval Irish Hagiography," *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by E. Whitelock, et al.; Binchy compares the Brahmanical *prāya* with the pre-Christian Irish *troscad*, a creditor's "legal fast" to the death on the debtor's property to force a higher-ranked debtor to pay up.
7. Item 756 in *Sanas Cormaic*, p. 64, ed. by Kuno Meyer [included in vol. IV of *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. by Bergin, et. al. (1912)]. Translations by Stokes and Meyer are discussed by N.K. Chadwick (1935) in *Scottish Gaelic Studies*, 4,2,97-135, esp. p. 98f.
8. *The Tripartite Life of Patrick* is replete with his struggle with the druids in a series of magical competitions; and it is clear that in usurping the pagan holy men, the Irish saints inherited some of their traits. When Loegaire mac Niall set an ambush for Patrick and his monks to prevent their preaching at Tara, they shape-shifted into deer. The *Fáeth Fiada* ("Deer's Cry") includes Patrick's invocation of God's powers *fri brichtu ban ocus gobann ocus druad* ("against spells of women and smiths and druids"), and of Christ's protection *ar neim, ar loscud, ar báduid, ar guin* ("against poison, burning, drowning, and wounding"). Stokes & Strachan, *The-saurus Paleohibernicus* v. II, p. 354 & 357.
9. In the *YBL*; Chadwick (1935; note 7 above), p. 112ff., and p. 277 of her *The Celts* (1970); R.D. Scott (1930), *The Thumb of Knowledge in Legends of Finn, Sigurd, and Taliesin (Studies in Celtic and French Literature)*, p. 6f., et passim.
10. Irish *bean sidhe* 'woman of the shee' has been borrowed into English as *banshee*.
11. The version of the *Senchas Mór* in ms. H.3.18.
12. *Ordu*, curiously enough, can mean 'thumb, great toe' or 'a piece, morsel, portion, esp. of fish or meat' according to the Royal Irish Academy Dictionary.
Scott, op. cit. p. 280, traces the thumb (or finger) of knowledge motif in Scandinavian, Welsh and Scottish stories to an Irish source; while Chadwick (1935, p. 134) would want the Irish forms at any rate to go back to a British source, with *imbas forosnai* being "a specifically female accomplishment" of Brythonic warrior seeresses.
13. Rigveda 10, hymn 136, vss. 2-5. Cf. the seven-day journey of the Araviras, the Iranian poison-drinkers.
14. B. Walker, *The Hindu World*, 1,312.
15. *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (1921-1925), p. 721A.
16. W. Geiger, *Pāli Literature and Language*, §4 [= p. 12. in Ghosh's 1943 English translation].
17. From the Sanskrit words *sūkaraḥ* 'wild boar'; and *mārdavam* 'softness, weakness, gentleness' derived from *mydú-* 'id.' which can go back either to an Indo-European **myd-* 'soft' or to a **myd-* 'grind, chew'.
18. This and the other Pali citations have been adapted from *The Dīgha Nikāya*, vol. 2 (1903), ed. by T.W. Rhys Davids & J.E. Carpenter, p. 127, §4, 17.
19. *Ibid.*, §4, 18.
20. *Ibid.*, §4, 19.
21. *Id.*, p. 136, §42.
22. *Id.*, p. 156, §67. A more literal translation of this would be: "Well, now, oh

monks! I address you! The elementary processes are perishable. Strive with earnestness."

23. Id., p. 157, §6,10.

24. Cf. L. Alsdorf (1962), *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Vegetarismus und Rinderverehrung in Indien*.

According to A. Wezler (1978), *Die Wahren "Speiseresteesser": (skt. vighasāsīn), Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Indischen Kultur- und Religionsgeschichte I, the vānaprastha* ("forest ascetics") in ancient times could eat the remnants of a predacious animal's prey, and considered themselves to be *vighasāsīn* ("eaters of scraps").

25. *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, p. 200 in Hoey's English translation, 1882.

26. *Manusmṛiti*, §5,19.

27. A. Della Volpe has informed me that there are Italian folktales involving the inducement of hallucinations from spoiled meat; cf. also Lizzy Borden's plea of temporary insanity from eating spoiled lamb casserole that had been left on the stove for three days.

28. Rees & Rees (1961), *Celtic Heritage*, p. 178.

29. *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (1949), 1,499.

30. Chadwick (1935), p. 115. There is, however, a Biblical parallel to the Śākyamuni's eating a forbidden food and the fili's chewing of cat and dog: In *Acts* 10,10ff., the apostle Peter falls into an ecstasy in which a voice commands him to kill and eat all manner of unclean animals.

31. Å. Hultkrantz (1980), *The Religions of the American Indians*, p. 75.

32. "The Last Meal of the Buddha," *JAOS* 102,591-603 (1982).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 598.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 600.

35. Marie-Louise Sjoestedt (1949), *Gods and Heroes of the Celts*; Joseph Nagy, *ZCP* 40,23-39, & (1981), "Shamanic Aspects of the 'Bruidhean Tale', *History of Religions* 20,302-322.

