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Hanbych well hyd bell bwyll ardderchawc
O Duw yn gyntaf naf niuerawc
Heneuyt dedwyt odidawc dy bar
Anefcoy dy wur toymenawc (24)

Y fyt yn arglwyt eurglet genllaw
Yffaut tgynnelw arddelw urtaw
Yf da y gampeu heb, gympaw yn afyrdwl
Yfyawn difgwl ol uyygythyaw (25)

Kollef kymry wawr gwawr gweyitaf
Gwreitlafyn efgud gloeuddyud glewaf
Gweyitlyw nyd byw ba wney ol golled
Gweyit lew hyged rotged rwytaf (26)

Gwertheuin dewin Duw ym gwared
Gwerthuawr byiodawr gwawr gwaredyed
Wrth y uot ym rwyf am roted awen
Awdyl dec dtghedwen amgen ym gred (27)

Compare the above quatrains or *ruba'i* with those of the Persian poets. I do not believe that anyone will seriously suggest that the Welsh poets of the 12th-13th centuries were influenced by Omar Khayyam.

After the Roman Conquest of Spain, the linguistic transition from Celtic to Vulgar Latin or Romance must have taken at least 300 years. During this long period of bilingualism, it would have been very easy and natural that verse forms passed from Celtic to Vulgar Latin or Romance. Later these forms passed from Romance to the Vulgar Arabic of the *zejels* and finally to the Classic Arabic of the *muwashshaha*. This, I believe, is the origin of the *zejel* or *muwashshaha*.

In this connection it is interesting to note that *ibn Quzman* does not use the various types of rhyme of Classic Arabic verse;

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like the Provençal troubadours, he uses exclusively the type of rhyme called odl in Welsh, which consists of the final consonant and the vowel or diphthong which precedes it(28).

As we said in chapter I, it is well to remember that Spain is a land of heather as well as olive trees, of bagpipes as well as guitars, and this is true of Muslim Spain as well as Christian Spain.

Old Castile, or, in geographical terms, that part of the great Central Plateau of Spain which lies to the North of the Sierra Guadarrama, is a land which, to an Iranian, must be of very special interest. In Old Castile, as in Iran, the epic verse appears earlier than the lyric. In Castile the lyric is really quite late in making an appearance. Old Castile is also homeland of Spanish Christian Mysticism (Muslim and Jewish Mysticism in Spain is, of course, another matter), as Iran is the homeland of Sufism. Indeed, it is probably true that Old Castile has produced more Christian mystics than any other part of the world. In Iran, the great lyric poets Rumi, Attar, Hafiz, Saadi, Jami - were Sufis or were heavily influenced by Sufism. The great lyric poet of the Castilian language, St. John of the Cross, was from Old Castile, and his poetic style, particularly that of the Spiritual Canticle and Living Flame of Love, so closely resembles that of the Persian sufis that in translation it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. The Hispano-Muslim Sufi ibn Abbad of Ronda is now generally considered to be his forerunner; this is highly probable, since St. John of the Cross lived for a number of years

among the Moriscos of Granada.

In spite of language barriers, it is perfectly evident that elements of Persian Sufism found their way to Muslim Spain and there found fertile soil. Later the works of the great Hispano-Muslim Sufi ibn Arabi al-Mursi, disciple of the great woman sufi Fatima bint Ibn al-Muthanna of Cordoba, profoundly influenced the thought of the later Persian Sufis, *ishraqis* and *hakims*, thus completing the cycle.

The climate and landscape of Old Castile, harshly and austerely beautiful, is very favorable to mystical contemplation.

It is said that no one may understand Spanish Christian Mysticism who does not know Old Castile. But our main topic at the moment is the epic. The hard blue sky, the semi-arid character of much of the land, the harsh climate with extremes of heat and cold, as well as the seemingly infinite number of castles (the name "Castile" means "land of castles") give the land a warlike as well as mystic and ascetic character. It is indeed a "land of swords and saints". History as well as geography has conspired to make Old Castile a land of epic poetry. As the great number of castles constantly brings to mind, Old Castile was for two centuries a frontier area, constantly lacerated by wars between Muslims and Christians. As was said of the Vikings, the Castilians "had breastplates for cradles and were fed from the blades of swords".

In contrast to the other Romance languages of the Peninsula, the pure, *castizo* Castilian spoken in Old Castile is a somewhat harsh language; it sounds very well when spoken by a man, as was said in

the Middle Ages, "it resounds like a trumpet and a cymbal". But, so masculine a tongue is it that when spoken by a woman it sounds more than a little strange and unpleasant.

In another sense history has conspired to make Old Castile a land of epic poetry. The two principle ethnic groups who form the ancestors of the people of Old Castile are the Celts and the Visigoths, two peoples with a very strong epic tradition. So strongly was the Castilian language identified with the epic that until the 14th Century in the Kingdom of Castile and Leon lyric verse was written not in Castilian but in Gallego-Portuguese.

For our purposes the fact that the Castilians are descended from Celts and Goths is important in yet another way. The Celts are an Indo-European or Aryan people closely akin to the Iranians and Indo-Aryans in many respects, and the Goths, though of Germanic origin, were strongly Celticized due to contact with Central European Celts and Iranized due to prolonged and intimate contacts with the Sarmatians and the Alans, two Iranian nomad or "Saka" peoples. Therefore, for yet another reason the Iranian reader should feel a very special affinity with Old Castile.

From archaeological discoveries and other sources, it now appears evident that part of the Great Central Plateau which is to the North of the Sierra Guadarrama was the first part of Spain to be Celticized and where the Celtization was most intense. The Celts were Aryan nomads and felt more at home in relatively level, open land. Also, in the Northern Plateau they found an area much more sparsely populated than the rest of the Penninsula. Any

traveler may observe that it is here in the Northern Plateau, together with the mountainous regions of Asturias and Santander, where the Celtic blood runs strongest and most viril. Here the Celtic physical type - tall, dolicephalic, dark of hair but often with blue or green eyes, broad shouldered and wiry without being "beefy" or corpulent - is more numerous than the blond, "beefy" Gothic, the short, swarthy Mediterranean and the swarthy, corpulent, long-nosed Basque types combined. Here too the Celtic character, with its fierce individualism, keen sense of honor and personal dignity, almost suicidal bravery, relative lack of concern for material security, fierce attachment to identity and tradition and a deep piety tending to asceticism and mysticism, is perhaps more faithfully preserved than anywhere else in the world. The notorious Hispanic vice, i.e., envy, no doubt a heritage of Romans and Jews, is very nearly absent in Old Castile and Leon.

Admittedly, more of the obvious aspects of the Celtic have been preserved in the mountainous regions of Galicia, Asturias and Santander than in the Plateau. This is easily explained if one remembers that the Northern Plateau, though very little Romanized, was profoundly affected by the Germanic invasions. The Muslim conquest really had very little permanent effect in the cultural and ethnic fields, but the shifting and mixing of populations caused by said conquest and the later Christian reconquest undoubtedly caused a great many local traditions to be lost and forgotten. The mountainous regions of the far North were barely

touched by either the Germanic or the Muslim invasions, and so were able to conserve the more obvious aspects of the Celtic heritage, such as bagpipes (though bagpipes remained popular in all Spain, both Christian and Muslim, until almost the end of the Middle Ages) and the construction of carts.

For reasons which will be fully explained later, it is very difficult to show positive proofs of a Celtic substratum in the Castilian epic. Nevertheless, if one is going to speak of the Castilian epic, one must speak of Old Castile, and if one is going to speak of Old Castile one must speak of the Celts. Besides, the topic is of special interest to the Iranian reader, because the Celts and the Iranians are closely related.

The typical Irish get-together is notorious, as I know from much experience: everyone talks at once, producing a "wall of noise", the party lasts hours longer than expected, at the end everyone sings "Galway Bay" and weeps. Highland Scots parties are the same, except at the end everyone sings a song about Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie) and begins to weep. Several months ago I was at a party in which I was the only non-Kashmiri. Everyone talked at once, producing a "wall of noise". The party was supposed to break up at 5:00 PM, but in reality did not break up until 8:00 PM. At the end, everyone sang a Kashmiri song and began weeping.

In the first place, both the Iranians and the Celts called themselves "Aryans". The Old Irish *Eriu* (accusative *Erinn*) is

cognate with the Sanskrit *Arya* or *Aryan*, Avestan *Airya*, Persian *Iran*(29). Mercenaries recruited in Ireland by the Romans were called *Ariani*(30). Periplus of Avienus uses the name *Aryium* to designate the coast of Asturias and the northern coast of Galicia(31). This is quite obviously the Sanskrit Arya plus the Latin genitive plural case ending of the third declension.

As is well known, the name "Celt" is not Celtic, being derived from the Greek *Keltoi*. Perhaps the most widely extended names by which the Celtic peoples called themselves were those derived from the stem *gal* or *gaul*. The examples of this are very numerous: Gaul, Galicia (in Spain), Galizia (in Poland), Galatia (in Western Anatolia, mentioned by St. Paul in his epistles), Gael, Galway (in Ireland), Galloway (in Scotland), the "gal" in "Portugal" and a long etc. In fact, from Ireland to Anatolia, wherever the Celts were present at some time in history (relatively recent history at least) one finds tribal, clan and place names derived from the stem "gal" or "gaul". The etymology of this stem is unknown.

Keeping in mind the Celtic reverence for the cow - something very visible even today - perhaps the most reasonable etymology of the stem "gal" or "gaul" is one suggested by James Tod (32). According to Tod, said stem is related to the Sanskrit *gao*, *gau* or *go* (Persian *gav*), which means "cow". "Gal" or "Gaul" would therefor mean "cowherd", perhaps shortened from *gaulashanika*, meaning "one who knows the good points of a cow"(33).

In the field of art also the Celts show their relation to

the Iranian peoples. So close is the resemblance in this field that it is often impossible to distinguish between Celtic and Scythian pieces(34).

The similarities between the Hindu Brahmins, the Persian Magi and the Celtic Druids have been noted by many. Says Henri Hubert:

"Here one is dealing not only with comparable priesthoods, but with identical priesthoods, which were only well preserved in the two (geographical) extremes of the Indo-European peoples."(35)

And Henri Beer:

"Certain elements of Druidism proceed from the depths of the Indo-European souls, and are related to the doctrines of the Brahmins and the Magi."(36)

The existence of the belief in reincarnation among the Hindus is well known. Although the Avesta and other Zoroastrian books tend to be ambiguous on the subject, the persistence of the belief in reincarnation in Persia in Islamic times certainly indicates that said belief was very deeply rooted and widely extended in pre-Islamic Persia. There are abundant testimonies of the belief in reincarnation among the pagan Celts. Said belief is very persistent among people of Irish origin. In Celtic literature this belief is evident from the Welsh poet Taliesin in the 6th Century to the Irish poet W.B. Yeats in the 20th. Constantino Cabal noted the persistence of the belief in reincarnation in Asturias(37), and I myself have encountered it in Galicia. Says Henri Hubert:

"The Druids apparently believed in metempsychosis, of which we find evidence in myths and stories."(38)

Geoffrey Plantagenet, called *Li Bel* (the handsome), son of Henry II and brother of Richard *Couer de Lion* (the lionheart), was killed in an accident in 1186. A short time later, his wife, the beautiful countess Constance of Brittany, gave birth to a son. Geoffrey being dead, Constance hesitated in giving the child a name. A Breton bard proclaimed the new-born prince and count to be the reincarnation of King Arthur. This was believed by nearly everyone in Brittany and Wales, and the child was forthwith named Arthur(39).

Geoffrey Plantagenet *Li Bel* was of the great Plantagenet or Angevin dynasty, who, as the name "Angevin" indicates, were not of Norman origin, but rather were originally the Counts of Anjou from Anjou, that lovely and fertile land so near to Brittany and La Vendee, where the *planta genesta*, from whence the name "Plantagenet", still grows in profusion. The family name of the Counts of Anjou was "Lusignan", which, as we said in another place, indicates an ancient Gaulish and Celtic pedigree rather than a Roman, Frankish or Viking origin.

Raymond de Lusignan was one of the earliest of the Counts of Anjou. According to legend, Raymond fell in love with a beautiful girl with the very Celtic name *Melusine* (sometimes spelled *Melusina* or *Melisinde*). Melusine married Raymond on the condition that he never see her on Saturday. But finally curiosity got the better of Raymond, and, horrified, he saw that on Saturday Melusine became a blue and white serpent from the waist down. Melusine died of the shock, but her ghost continued to haunt the

castle of Chinon, frightening people with the swishing of her tail. To this day visitors to the ruins of the castle of Chinon are warned to watch for and beware of snakes with blue and white tails. Melusine was a female ancestor of the Plantagenets or Angevins.(40) In a Scythian origin myth recounted by Herodotus, the Mixoparthenos, mother of Scythes, ancestor of the Scythians, was a woman from the waist up but a snake from the waist down.(41)

As is well known, chiefs of the Scythians were interred with rich grave goods in mounds called *kurgans*, said mounds being topped with life-size monolithic stone sculptures.(42)

In certain periods at least, the Celtic chiefs were interred in a manner identical to that of the Scythian chiefs, complete with a life size monolithic stone sculpture topping the burial mound.(43)

It is well known that the ancient Aryan peoples used a hallucinogenic drug called *soma* in Sanskrit, *haoma* in Avestan (44). The juice was pressed from said plant, mixed with cow's milk (*haomayo gava* in Avestan)(45) and drunk after an elaborate ceremony(46). The Druids rigorously preserved the *soma* or *haoma* ceremony even though they had migrated to areas where said plant does not grow (47), the only difference being the absence of the *soma* itself. The words which have to do with religious ceremonies are nearly identical in Sanskrit and Celtic. Lighting a fire (part of the *soma* ceremony) is *andaid* in Celtic, *inddhe* in Sanskrit(48); to drink, Celtic *ibim*, Sanskrit *pibami* (49) (Sanskrit *piba* = drink, *mi* = approach)(50). This seems to indicate

that by drinking the sacred beverage one approaches the gods. Cow's milk as the sacred beverage was called *suth* by the Druids, which means "pressed"(51). In Sanskrit *suta-soma* means "prepare the soma"(*suta* = producir)(52). Arthur MacDonell relates the word soma or haoma to the Sanskrit *su*, Avestan *hu*, which means "to press"(53). The above appears to me to be conclusive proof that the Celts separated from the Indo-Aryans and the Iranians after the discovery of the hallucinogenic properties of soma. I cannot think of any other reason why cow's milk as the sacred beverage should be called by a name which means "pressed". In the book by Alwyn and Brinley Rees cited so many times in this work, it is difficult to find a single page without a reference to the Indo-Aryans or the Iranians.

The Druids as well as the Magi had their sacred fires, called *Atarsh* in Avestan, *Atur* in Pahlavi. Says H. Hubert:

"In Kildare (Ireland) the nuns of St. Bridget - who took the place of a goddess (of the same name) - avoided the contamination by their breath of the sacred fire which they maintained with the same care as did the Persian Magi.(54)"

In pagan times said sacred fires were far more numerous. Among the pagan Celts, the sacred fires, whether permanent or temporary sacrificial fires, were always triple. The ancient Indo-Aryans apparently had no permanent sacred fires, but were always triple and were called *Ahavaniya*, *Garhapatya*, and *Dakshina*(55). This was also true among the ancient Iranians. In Sassanian times the three sacred fires were called *Farnbag*,

Gushnasp and *Burzin Mihr* (56). In Ireland the main permanent sacred fires were at Tara, site of the royal capital and at Uisnech, traditionally considered to be the geographical centre of Ireland. In the Rig Veda one may read: "Agni (god of fire) is at the centre of the universe"(57).

In Gallego and Asturian *Bable* the word *aturuxo* (aturusho) refers to a sort of yell generally though to be derived from a Celtic war cry. This word is obviously not of Latin derivation, nor does it resemble any word in the surviving Celtic languages. However, its resemblance to the Avestan *Atarsh* and the Pahlavi *Atur* is perfectly clear. Since the Celts as well as the Iranians had their sacred fires, the most logical explanation is that "Aturuxo" comes from a Celtic word meaning "sacred fire". Said word, because of its pagan connotations, was suppressed and did not survive in the written Celtic languages (which date from the 6th-7th Centuries AD). In this connection it is interesting to