Indo-European Deities and the *Rgveda*

N. D. Kazanas
*Omilos Meleton Cultural Institute, Athens*

I) The Method

In this paper are examined the names of various deities that appear in two or more branches of the Indo-European family. The examination shows that the *Rgveda* contains more of these deities than any other branch of mythology. But before proceeding it is as well to describe the method of approach to this subject.

Many studies since the 19th century have explored the correspondences, deviations and innovations in various motifs and deities in the different IE branches and these culminated in the ‘New Comparative Mythology’—Cox, de Vries, Dumézil, Littleton, Polomé, Puhvel *et al.* Several scholars have referred to mythology also in relation to establishing the PIE urheimat (Renfrew 1989: 250ff; Mallory 1989, ch V; J. P. Schodt), but they examine almost exclusively the fittingness of Dumézil’s ‘triptite structure’—which has not proved very illuminating. Dumézil’s contribution to IE studies has been invaluable (e.g., Dumézil 1968-73; also overview, Littleton 1973a), nonetheless in this paper we shall examine only a number of cognate deities leaving aside tripartition and related ideas.

Some mythological elements are common to most if not all the IE branches, e.g., the Skygod, the Sungod, the Serpent of evil or darkness, and so on. Many of these are found in non-IE cultures too, but the latter do not concern us. The elements we shall examine are the names of certain deities which appear in two or more branches and are demonstrably not borrowings of one from another at some later period. With the Romans the cult of Mithraism is clearly an adoption from the Near East while Apollo is a straight borrowing from Greece. All such cases are discarded. We shall also discard such elements as are found only in Vedic and Old Iranian sources since these two are generally regarded as constituting a distinct branch of their own.
We concentrate on names of deities because these indicate immediate correlation and provide a firm criterion for the common origin. Traits, functions, thematic and structural parallels—all these by themselves provide no such criterion, though they do afford grounds for comparison. A particular type of deity, like the Firegod, appearing under different names in different cultures, even among non-IE peoples, will display certain invariable attributes irrespective of his or her name. When gods have cognate names, on the other hand, like the Germanic Tiwaz (and variants), Greek Zeus and Vedic Dyaus, despite any small or big differences in attributes, they can be immediately correlated and clearly have a common origin. An exception should be made for the Āśvins who are very obviously the Diós-kouroi (=S dîvô nûpâtâ) in Greece and the Dievo Šûnelai (Sky-)’God’s sons’ in Lithuania, all descriptions meaning ‘bright-Skygod’s lads’. The name Āśvin is cognate with Gaulish Epona ‘horse-goddess’ (Gl ēpô ‘horse’: SGD under Ûππω).

Our aim is not to interpret any myths, find archetypes, compare and contrast themes and motifs in the different branches, trace parallels and developments, speculate about the social structure of the original IE society, and so on. Indeed we keep interpretation and speculation to the barest minimum. For this reason we shall steer clear of the “reconstructed” PIE language. This reconstruction is an entirely conjectural affair. Burrow gave a warning (1973: 11): “... in the case of Indo-European it is certain that there was no such unitary language which can be reached by means of comparison. It would be easy to produce, more or less ad infinitum [,] a list of forms like Skt nàbhi-, Gk ὠμφαλός ‘navel’, which although inherited directly from the primitive IE period, and radically related [,] are irreducible to a single original. In fact detailed comparison makes it clear that the Indo-European that we can reach by this means was already deeply split up into a series of varying dialects.” Proto-Indo-European can no more be reconstructed from its extant descendants than Ancient Greek can be reconstructed from Modern Greek or Latin from the Romance Languages without the available historical documentation: without documentation no philological laws can lead back to Gk λείχω ‘lick’ from NGk γλείψω or ῥίππω ‘throw’ from ῥίχνω and κύπτω ‘bow’ from σκύψω (pronounced skîw); for Latin it should be sufficient to quote E. Pulgram: “since all Romanic languages name a certain animal cheval, caballo, cal, etc, and
have words for ‘war’ like *guerre, guerra*, the Latins called the horse *caballum* and the war *guerram*” (Pulgram 1958: 147). A large part of the reconstruction may well be correct but since we do not know the facts and cannot verify the conjectures, it is best to stay with the generally accepted, more or less firmly established, correspondences, straying into speculation as little as possible.

The IE branches to be examined are Vedic, Avestan, Hittite, Greek, Roman, Slavonic, Baltic, Germanic and Celtic; also some additional evidence from the Mitanni and the Kassites in the Near East. The Germanic branch comprises some early Germanic material (reported by Roman authors), some Anglo-Saxon and the later, richer Scandinavian lore. The Celtic branch consists of early Gallic (again reported mainly by Romans), Britannic, Welsh and Irish. (Other IE branches like Armenian, Tocharian, etc, provide negligible relevant material.)

Hereafter we examine the various deities starting with the Vedic ones then moving westward. If we were to start with any other branch, we would soon need to shift to a different one and then another, because very few names of non-Vedic gods have correspondences in the other branches.

Abbreviations for languages used are: Av=Avestan; E=English; Gk=Greek; Gmc=Germanic; Gth=Gothic; Ir=Irish; L=Latin; Lth=Lithuanian; Ltt=Lettish (or Latvian); OHG=Old High German; ON=Old Norse; Rs=Russian; S=Sanskrit; Sc=Scandinavian; Sl=Slavonic; V=Vedic; W=Welsh. Where O or N precedes (as OFr, NGk), the old or modern form of the language is meant. For convenience are given abbreviations for some authors and books: these can be found as such and with full titles in the References.

II) The Collation
1. *The terms ‘deity’, ‘god’ etc*

   a) The word ‘deity’ comes from OFr *déité* and eventually L *deus*, which is cognate with V *deva* and this derives from ādēvā or ādevā (MSD and Whitney under ādiv and 1ādiv); from this root comes also the stem ādēvā- giving *dyaus* ‘sky, heaven’.

   Apart from L *deus*, cognates with *deva* are Av *daeva* (=demon), Gmc *tiw* (and variants; pl ON *tīvar*), Sl *divu*
(=demon, devil), Baltic diev-, Ir dia, W duw, and so on\(^1\). This stem has a wide distribution.

b) Another word for ‘god’ in Vedic is asura, which appears as Av ahura, as in Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity of the Zoroastrians: both asura and ahura are usually translated as ‘Lord’.

The stem as-u (=life) may have a relative in OE os and in ON aes/ás/āss as in Aesir (the gods, pl) or As-gard (the gods’ city). It may also be connected with the Celtic god Esus, associated with trees, the bull, and sacrificial victims hanging from trees and wounded ritually.\(^2\) But the Gmc sub-branches have a stem ans- (ansuR in runic, ans- in OHG proper names and Gth ansis, acc pl), which some take as an extension of *an-


c) Another term for god found in some IE branches is the stem bag-as in Av baga, Sl bogu, Lth bag-etc. This is cognate with V bhaga, a solar deity (āditya) dispensing Good Fortune. This is examined below in sect 10 (and 6d).

---

\(^1\)Gk θεός is rejected by most philologists. Gk ‘theta’ (θ) is thought to correspond with PIE and S dh (not d). From compounds θεόπεσις, θεόφρος etc is postulated an earlier *θε[/s]os, which has no clear cognates in other IE languages. By the same token, since Gk ph (not b) corresponds to PIE and S bh, Gk λεμφάνω ‘receive’ (but perf ελθά, with ph) should be unrelated to S lahh. For θεός, other, possibly older, dialectal forms are θεος and θιος and the verb ‘deify’ is θεόν / θεόν: SGD (this Dictionary incorporates J Pokorny, H Frisk’s Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, et al). Mycenaean has teo (Ventris & Chadwick 1973: 256 & 409); cf Mecn taranu, Gk θράνου ‘footstool’, S dh-.

Thus ‘theos’ is doubtful but not impossible.

---

\(^2\)Lucan, Pharsalia, III, 400; also for cognition see Dillon 1975: 138; MacCana 1983: 27-28, 39. BDS 22.12. Some scholars, e.g., Parpola (1988) and M. J. Shendge, The Civilized Demons, Delhi 1977, see a conflict in the RV between devas and asuras corresponding to invading Aryans and retreating natives; but they ignore that on some occasions the two terms are used appositionally as in nāmabhīr devām āsuraṃ dvāvayā ‘with salutations the deva [Rudra] adore’ (V, 42, 11), or in mahānām mitrāvāraṇaḥ/samāhā devāv-āsurāḥ ‘great Mitra-and-Varuṇa, imperial lords [being] 2 devas-2 asuras’ (VIII, 25, 4), or in full semantic identity as in mahād devānām asurasāvām ēkam ‘great is the single asuralhood of the devas’ (III, 55, If) or in id hi devānāṃ āsurāḥ ‘these-two [Mitra and Varuṇa] asuras of the devas’ (VII, 65, 2), etc. Shendge admits, “Looking at the problem statistically, the term Asura is used with good connotations 39/60 times, and 12 times with the connotation of evil, in the Rāgveda” (1977: 49); it might be added that the 12 times occur mainly in the later hymns. In later texts asura has the sense ‘demon’. For a detailed examination of “Good guys” and “Bad Guys” see Hock (1996) who rejects simplistic conflicts between Aryans and natives.
d) The word ‘god’ itself comes from OE and is related to Gth guhp, ON god and OHG got. These are thought to come from an older Gmc past participle neuter *ghu-to-m which is cognate with S hūta-m (from ṣhv/hwa ‘call’) ‘that which is invoked’ or, less probably, with hūta-m (ḥu ‘sacrifice’) ‘what is sacrificed’ (BDS, 22.12).

2. The King Skygod

a) In the Rgveda (=RV hereafter) we find two skygods—Varuṇa and Dyaus. Here we examine Varuṇa and in section 3, Dyaus.

Varuṇa is the king (samrāj) of the gods, like Odin in Asgard and Zeus on Olympus. He personifies more than the sky (space or substance) which encompasses (vṛ, vṛṇoti) everything. An ethical god, he lays down laws (dhāman) for every level of creation and rules through māyā, measuring knowledge or unfathomable power. He watches everything from his golden palace in highest heaven and has spies (spaṣṭa) everywhere. He binds the sinner with fetters (pāṣa=noose) but also liberates and grants victory in war. He is also associated with waters and oceans and retains only this feature in post-Vedic texts.

Varuṇa is almost invariably lauded with Mitra and often with Aryaman as well, in a trinity. Both Varuṇa and Mitra are called samrājā (emperors: RV I, 2, 7), and guardians of cosmic order (ṛta) in highest heaven (V, 63, 1). In some hymns (RV I, 115; AV XX, 123; etc) and later texts Varuṇa is associated with night and Mitra with day. Mitra is a daytime aspect of the sun connected with friendship and contracts.

This joint sovereignty was, of course, brought out early on by Dumézil (1940) and is an instance of the first function (sovereignty/priesthood) in his general theory of tripartition.

b) In the Iranian Avesta the supreme god is Ahura Mazda, who resembles Varuṇa in his ethical aspect and his kingship; his power of light is Mithra (= V Mitra).

Although this is doubted by many, the name ‘Varuṇa’ may appear only as varana, denoting the sky and mythical region where Thraetona smites the dragon Aži Dahāka.5 This varana is

---

5Avesta, lvii, lxii, lxvii and Fargard I,18. Av has also for ‘sky’ asman (S aśman Gk ἄκμων = stone; ie ‘the stony vault’), div- (S diu/διο), etc. W. E. Hale, Asura in Early Vedic Religion, Delhi 1986, argues (p 186ff) that since in the Avesta Ahura-‘Lord’ occurs before Mazda 40 times, after Mazda 48 times, and alone 19 times, there was a god in Indo-Iranian times called ‘Asura’ who became
described as ‘four-cornered’ cathru-goosho varoṇo as is Varuṇa(-sky) in RV, I, 152, 2 cāturaśṭīr vārūṇo.

Other affinities need not be pursued.

c) The Near-Eastern branches, Hittite, Mitanni and Kassite, have left us little relevant material. The Hittites have left substantial fragments but these contain material absorbed from the non-IE cultures of the area. The Mitanni and the Kassite texts are merely two lists of names of many gods, where the IE ones come at the end.

The Hittite wurun- may be related to ‘Varuṇa’: it is the first element in the names of the sungoddess wurun-Šemtu and that of the wargod wurun-katte (Leik 1991).

The Mitanni had uru-una-asit 4, preserved in a list of gods in their treaty with the Hittites. In this list are mentioned also Mitira (V Mitra) and other deities with Vedic kindred like Nasvatiya (V Nāsatya).

d) In Greece too we find two skygods—Ouranos and Zeus. As Zeus is cognate with Dyaus we shall leave it for section 3.

Homer presents oūρανός ‘sky’ as a solid metallic hemisphere or bowl, χάλκευν oūρανόν and σιδέρευν oūρανόν (recalling the ‘stony vault’ of Avestan) and assigns it to the exclusive control of Zeus (Il 5/504, Od 3/2; Od 15/329; Il 15/189).

Conflating diverse traditions, non-IE as well, in the Theogony (126ff), Hesiod presents starry Ouranos as the offspring of Gaia Earth and then as her consort who engenders through her the Titans, Cyclopes and other monstrous creatures. Then the Titan Kronos cuts off with a jagged sickle the generative organs of his father Ouranos and reigns in his place until his own son Zeus supplants him in turn.

Many scholars do not accept the Ouranos/Varuṇa correspondence on the grounds of strict phonology. But a little sober reflection shows that “strict phonology” has little to do with Greek/Sanskrit cognations. Take some common examples: S šātam, Gk ἕκτων, L centum ‘hundred’; S aśva Gyyk ἵππος, L equus “horse”; or the series of reduplicating verbs S/Gk dadāmi/ dīdōmi ‘give’, dadhāmi/ tīdhāmi ‘put’, pīpāmi/πιμπλημι ‘fill’,

Ahura in Iran but Varuṇa in India while ‘asura’ became a generic term for gods.

4I. M. Diakonov (1990: 64) questions the correspondence with Varuṇa taking uruwan as plural of the Iranian “mythological term urvan ‘soul’ (preserved in old Iranian)”.

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
juhomi/χέω ‘sacrifice, pour’; and with Gk δίδωμι, τίθημι and πιμπλήμι εἰ διδήμι ‘bind’: we accept all these cognations not because of any strict phonological correspondences but because there is sufficient approximate phonological and semantic correspondence—as also in Varuṇa/Ouranos. Some (Puhvel 1989: 49) postulate *worsanós as an earlier form of Ouranos connecting this with S varṣa (वर्ष) ‘rain’. This seems unnecessary. Varuṇa is also god of waters and S vār(-i) ‘water’ is clearly related to Gk ὦρ- (L ὦρι-να, ON ṣvar-ι, etc).

e) Of the remaining branches only Baltic preserves a name that seems relevant. The Baltic people had a deity Velnias, whose name is now a term for ‘devil’. Its ancient form was Vēlenas/Vēlinas (Gimbutas 1974). Surprisingly, Gimbutas does not link Velnias with Varuṇa. Vēlinas grants magical powers like clairvoyance and is associated with the underworld and with waters, swamps, bogs, rivers and lakes even in 20th century folklore. Given the correspondence il/r and l/r between Lithuanian and Sanskrit (vilka/varka ‘wolf’; saule/swer,sūrya ‘sun’ etc) the Vēlinas/Varuṇa identity seems certain. (Cf L stem vē/b ‘cover, envelop’; but also entry under Varuṇa in KEWA.)

f) The Slavs, Teutons et al, have their own Skygod but the names are different in all cases; whenever appropriate, these deities will be considered in other sections.

The Germanic Wodan (and variants) and his Scandinavian counterpart Odin presents an interesting case. The name is generally thought to come from a stem meaning ‘rage, fury’ and refer to the storm: Gth wōd-/wōð-s, OHG wōt-i, Frisian wêda, Saxon Wudan etc, all related to L vātes ‘seer’, Ir fāith ‘ecstatic bard’ (Puhvel 1989: 193) and V api-vat- ‘understand’ and its causative -vātaya- ‘awaken, excite’. He is king Skygod in Valhalla, has magic knowledge and grants victory: thus he resembles Varuṇa. That such a major deity, even if subsequent to Tīwaz (Davidson 1981: 60), should arise as a native independent development from the storm-fury alone seems unlikely, though not impossible. Wodan/Odin may be a development of a PIE deity appearing as V Vātā (=wind: an allonym of the more common Vāyu) who exhibits traits pertinent to the Gmc god. Thus Vātā’s swiftness is a standard of comparison for swift motions (RV V,31,10; VII,36,3; etc); his wrath can be roused easily (VII,62,4); he blows down from heaven with rainstorms (V,83,4) and roars in the sky thundering (X,168,4), arises from the vital breath (praṇa) of
Primordial Man *Puruṣa* (X,90,13) and has the treasure of immortality in his dwelling whereby he gives life to his devotees (X,186,3): except for the *prāṇa* of *Puruṣa*, the other traits are found also in Wodan.

3. The bright Skygod
   a) The Vedic *Dyaus* is regarded as the Sky in its bright luminous aspect. In the *RV* he is invariably coupled with *Pṛthivī*, goddess Earth, and both are called ‘Parents’ *pitarā* and ‘Engenderers’ *janitri*: such epithets are given to other deities also and in some passages it is said that they themselves have been created by other gods.

   The root *div-/dyu* (or *div/divu*) has cognate stems in most IE branches, as we saw in 1a above.

   b) The Avestan *daeva* and the Slavonic *divu* denote demonic beings and are cognate with *deva* rather than *dyu*.

   c) According to G Leik, “the Hittites venerated the Indo-European skygod *Siù*: this *Siù* is clearly IE. In two Anatolian sub-branches we find *Tiwat* (Luwian) and *Tivaz* (Palaic), both names for the sun (Leik 1991).

   d) In Greece *Dyaus* and *Siù* appear as *Zeus* (*dīa/-dīoc* in declension, or as epithet ‘luminous, clear’). He is the king of gods: like Ouranos he has the domain of the sky; like Varuṇa he guards order and justice (but can’t abstain from promiscuity); like Indra he wields the thunderbolt.

   Worth mentioning is the incident where *Zeus* grabbed Hephaistos by the foot and threw him off from the divine threshold on Olympus (*Il* 1/590-1). There is a parallel in reverse, not noticed as far as I know, where Indra, the Vedic god of the thunderbolt, grabs his father by the foot and crushes him down (*RV* IV, 18, 12). The reversal—son/father, father/son—is not all that unusual. An additional feature is the abandonment of Hephaistos by Hera (*Il* 18/395ff) in the sea; now, since Hephaistos as a smith is connected with fire, we may have a parallel with Agni, the Vedic Firegod (see sect 8a, below) who is held, again, by the foot and abandoned by his mother (*RVI*, 164, 17: so O’Flaherty 1981: 145, n 26).

   e) The Romans had *Jupiter* (the equivalent of Gk *Zeus* *pater*) written *juppiter*: the first member of the compound *jufe[s]*, and in declension *iō-em/-is*, is cognate with forms *dius, diālis* etc.
f) Among the Teutonic peoples this name of the Skyfather appears early as Tîwaz—OE Tiw, Gmc Ziu and Sc Tyr (Branston 1993: 68ff). In the later texts, however, Tyr is "most valiant and he has great power over victory in battles..." and when the gods refused to unfetter Fenriswolf, this monster bit off Tyr’s hand, which the god had placed in its mouth as a pledge: thus Tyr is “one-handed and is not considered a promoter of settlements” (Edda, 24-5: emphasis added). This final quotation indicates that Tyr/Tîwaz was originally associated with settlements and contracts (having assimilated Vedic Mitra’s attribute) and was then debarred from this because his pledge had been broken (Puhvel 1989: 199-200; Davidson 1981: 56-60).

   g) The Baltic diev- is, like Av daeva and Sl divu, cognate with deva ‘god’ rather than dyu- ‘sky’ but in some Latvian folk songs about the Sun’s daughter who is saved by the Diev’s sons, the term has the connotation ‘skygod’ rather than simply ‘god’ (Puhvel 1981: 228-9. The meaning ‘god’ is retained without hint of ‘skygod’ by D. J. Ward (1971: 414-416).

4. Thunder (-and-lightning)-god

   a) In the RV this is Indra, often called vajrin ‘he of the bolt’.

   Indra is also the chief battle-god leading his devoted Áryas to victory. Many and varied are his aspects and exploits, like drinking enormous quantities of Soma, the divine nectar, as soon as born, or attacking Uṣas, the Dawn goddess, and Sūrya, the Sungod (RV II,15,6; IV,30,9; etc). However, his most memorable feat is probably the slaying of the serpent-demon Vṛtra and his brood (vṛtra-ni), whereby he releases the waters—and is called Vṛtrahán, though the epithet is applied to some other gods (in the sense ‘victorious’).

   The name Indra is given various derivations like indu ‘drop’ or vîndh ‘lighting a fire’.

   Although the name itself does not appear much in European traditions, the slaying of the serpent by the Thunderer is not an uncommon myth.

   b) In the Avesta Indra is a demon daeva, not a god (twice in Videavdât 10, 9 and 19, 43). However, an angel of Ahura Mazda is called Verethraghna, i.e. Indra’s epithet vîtrahan: he is the god of Victory “the strongest of strength ... the best-armed of the heavenly gods”, etc (II 231ff: Yašt XIV).
c) Among the Mitannis Indra appears as *Indara* and among the Kassites as *Indaś*; in both cases it is a name in a list of gods.

Among the Hittites, descending from the Old Kingdom (c 19th cent BC), the goddess *Inar-a-s* slays the dragon Illuyanka who had offended the great Weathergod. Inara invites the serpent and its brood to a feast, gets them gorged, employs a man, Hupasiyas, to bind the dragon and then the Weathergod comes and kills it. (There are some variations in a second version of the myth.)

d) In Greece, the dragon-slayer is Zeus, the Thunderer. The tale is told first in Hesiod’s *Theogony* (ll 820-68), then gets expanded by Apollodorus (*Bibliothēkē Mythologiē*, I, 39ff.) with details borrowed from Near-Eastern myths (Graves 1977, I, 38-9; Penglase 1994: 189ff). In the *Hymn to Apollo* the Sungod also kills a dragon called Typhaon, renamed Python at Delphi, then himself places a shower of crags and hides Telphusa’s stream (!)—contrary to Indra who releases the streams. This notwithstanding, since the Vedic and Nordic myths have the element of water in some prominence, and since the Zeus mythologem in Hesiod does not whereas Apollo’s does, we could perhaps assume that Apollo’s tale is closer to the original. An additional element is Apollo’s guilt which matches Indra’s guilt after the killing of the dragon (Kazanas 2001).

Although the name ‘Indra’ does not appear in Greek mythology, the language has the stem *ánôr*— (*ánôr* Nom, *ánôroś* Gen etc: ‘valiant/virile man’) giving *ánôreta* ‘valour’, etc. The *áν*-*nôr* is accepted as cognate with S *nôr/nar-a* ‘man/male’. Here philologists generally regard the *d* as an intrusive glide consonant that facilitates pronunciation between dental nasal *n* and *r*; a similar phenomenon is to be seen in the presence of labial *β* between *m* and *r/l* as in *ámêrōs* ‘immortal’ and *mê˘-β-λοκα* ‘have come’. However, since *ánôr* has epic unsyncopated forms *ánôroś* Gen etc, and the initial *a-* which is absent in Av *nar*, S *nôr/nar-,* Albanian *njer* and Oscan *ner-* we may be faced with a different situation. The stem *ánôr—* may be a Greek development conflating the Gk cognates of S *nr* and *indra* whereby the ‘brave one’ first was *ánôr*— and then any male—the first stage being a parallel to post-Vedic *narendra* ‘an

---

5Entries in Leik (1991) ‘Inara’ and ‘Illuyanka’; also, Gurney 1990: 150ff. LEM 84, gives the name as masculine, *Inar*. In Hittite the two genders distinguish only animate and inanimate not masc and fem.
Indra among men’. The Celtic andra- (in the next paragraph) lends support to this conjecture.

e) The Iceni, a Celtic tribe of Britain, had a Wargoddess called Andrasta (who might be Andarta in Gaul: MacCana 1983: 86; MacCulloch 1948: 30, 56). According to Dio Cassius, queen Boudicca (Boadicea) invoked this goddess before her battle against the Romans. The stem andra-/andar- could well be cognate with Gk ayōp—and V Indra.

f) Other branches have their own Thunder- or Battle-god and the names are not related to Indra or among themselves. The Romans have Jove and Mars; the Celts Taranis, Lugh and others; the Teutons Thor; the Slavs Perenu and the Balts Perkunas—who will be examined in section 5.

Thor, of course, wields the hammer Mjolnir which always returns to his hand after it has hit its target. He also meets the Midgard serpent that encircles the world but fails to kill it in an episode with giant Hymir in mid-ocean, then meets it again and slays it but gets himself killed by its poison at Ragnarok (Edda 46-7 and 54), the final battle between the gods and the forces of destruction when the old world perishes.

5. Stormgod

a) Indra is the storm-deity as well but the aspect of rains and fertility are embodied in Parjanya—quickener of vegetation, father of Soma (RV IX,82,3) and producer of fertility in cows, mares and women (VII,52,2). He is closely connected with Indra (VIII,6,1; IX,29; etc) and like him is called Dyaus’s son.

b) The Slavs have Perenu/Perun (and variants). For the pre-Christian Russians he was the great Wargod, the Lord of the universe and regulator of the elements wind, thunder and lightning, rain, frost, drought, etc. (Procopius, De Bello Gothico; III, 14. Simonov 1997: 8-9.) Like Zeus and Indra he too slew a serpent and released waters and cattle.

c) The cognate in Baltic myths is Perkunas (and variants), who first appears in company with other deities in a 13th century source (Puhvel 1974). Much is conjectured but nothing else definite survives about him.

d) Among the Scandinavians we find Fjorgyn (m) and Fjorgynn (f: Thor’s mother) but nothing beyond the names.
6. Sungod

a) In the RV this deity is lauded under two names, Śūrya (svar) and Savitṛ both deriving from √śū ‘enlivening’ which shows two lines of development, hardly distinguishable. The two deities are sometimes distinguished (e.g. RV I, 52, 1-2) but mostly appear to have very similar qualities: both golden, they impel people to action, drive away evil dreams, etc (e.g. RV I, 35, 7).

We take Śūrya alone, an āditya, son of Mothergoddess Aditi and of Father-sky Dyaus. This stem has a wide distribution in the IE languages: L sölu, Gk Ἁλίος (and variants), Gth savil, Lth saule, R solnce, etc.

One interesting detail is that Indra, the Thundergod, attacks the Dawn and the Sun and crushes their chariot (RV IV, 28, 2 and 30,4). A similar incident is found in Greek-Roman mythology.

b) In Old Iranian the Sun is Hvare (cognate with S svar). He has swift horses and like the Vedic Śūrya, who is the eye of Varuṇa (VII, 63, 1), he is the eye of Ahura Mazda (Avesta II, 85 ff; Avesta I, 225).

c) The Kassite list of gods includes šuriaš (=sūrya).

(The Hittites differentiated between the ‘sun of heaven’ nepiš-as… and the ‘sun of earth’ taknaš… : nepiš-as corresponds to S nabhas ‘sky’.)

d) In Greece the Sungod is Apollo among the Olympians. Another name is Hēlios, cognate with Śūrya. Apollo and Hēlios are quite distinct in the ‘Homeric’ Hymn to Apollo, 371-374.

Apollo has the appellation Phoibos (Phoebus) and some scholars connect this with Av baṣa. Given the S/Gk correspondences bh/ph and b/g, φοῖβος corresponds to S bhaga (SGD: φοῖβος II, 1, c, above and §10, below).

In later tales Apollo has a son, Phaithon, who manages to obtain the sun-chariot in order to impress his sisters. As he drove it too high causing cold and frost or too low causing scorching heat on earth, Žeṣus struck him with his thunderbolt. ‘Phaithon’ was also the name of one of Eōs’s (i.e., Dawn’s) horses. The Orphic Fragments call the sun ‘phaithon’ (Graves 1977, I, 30-31) and so does Homer in Iliad II, 735. Thus the Greeks too preserved the motif of the clash between the Thundergod and the Sun and the Dawn.
e) The Romans borrowed Apollo but they had Sól and Janus, this unique mythological figure, who as Matutinus Pater presided over daybreak.

In Metamorphoses II, Ovid tells the story of Phaethon.

f) Among the Celts and the Teutons there is no Sungod of a similar stature as the ones examined so far.

The Irish had Lugh (W Lleu), his name meaning the ‘Shining One’. His usual epithet Lamfhada ‘long-armed’ has been linked with the upraised arm of Vedic Savitṛ. He was versatile in almost all skills and arts.

Among the Germanic people the sun-wheel was well known in the Bronze Age and may have been connected with the swastika: both are well attested on stones and on pots (Davidson 1969: 22-23.). The mythical figure of Sunna is thought to represent the girl called ‘sun’, (Davidson 1981: 27-28 and 183) but little else survives. Here we have an interesting philological consideration regarding the Gmc ‘sun’. The Germanic branch alone among the other IE traditions has a feminine sunn- which nonetheless is generally regarded as cognate with PIE *su- > V svart/sūrya etc. OE has sun and OHG sunna both feminine. Vedic has both masc sūrya and fem sūryā ‘sun’s daughter’ (also sū-ṛ masc and svart without gender) thus preserving this IE element which explains the curious Germanic exception to the otherwise masculine IE Sungod.

g) In the Slavonic branch the Sungod is the son of Zuarasici or Svarog (and variants). Svarog is clearly cognate with S swart- (=sun) and svarga (=sky) and was the Skygod. He had two sons, named Dazibogu or Dazhbog (=sun) and Svarogich or Svarogici, who was also known as Ogon (=Fire).

The second stem in Dazibogu is the familiar bag-/bhag- (1.c,above). The first may be cognate with S ṽdamś ‘shining’ or ṽdah ‘burning’ or a conflation of both roots.6

h) The Balts had Saul, the sun, but only the tales of his daughter’s (Sāules dukteryus Lth, or mieta Ltt) wooing and rescue by the [Sky-]god’s sons survive in folk songs (Ward 1970). This daughter corresponds to Vedic Sūryā, daughter of Sūrya (or Uṣas, the Dawngoddess).

---

6Puhvel 1989: 233, proposes the non-existent but not impossible *Dādhi-bhagos ‘Give Fortune’. See, however, RV VII, 15, 11: bhāga ca dātu ṣvṛyam ‘may Bhaga give the best’; also X 17,9 … bhāgaṁ- … dhehi ‘Grant [O Sarasvati] a portion [of wealth]…’.
7. Dawn

a) The hymns to Uśas, the Dawn, are among the loveliest in the RV. The name is cognate with Gk ᾨδης, L aurora (*aus-), Lth auśra, Ltt ausma, variants of Sl úsvi-, and Gmc ās/eas-/ōs- (as in E Easter).

Uśas is ever young, yet ancient, being born again and again, a maiden revealing her bosom to mortal eyes; sister and daughter of Night and, beyond all, daughter of Dyaus, she is connected with Sūrya, naturally, and is a friend of the Áśvins (or even their wife, if she is also Sūryā); she never infringes the law of order and in hymn X,15,9, the dead man is said to go to her—though, otherwise, to the Sun and usually to Yama.

b) In Greece Eōs, the rosy-fingered Dawn, is the Sungod’s herald bringing early daylight with her chariot, drawn by the horses Lampos ‘Shining-one’ and Phaethon ‘Luminous-one’ (Od 23/247-55). In Hesiod she bears to Astraios the West (=Zephyros), the North and the South winds (Theogony 371-382) and has several lovers—Tithoan, Kephalos (984 ff) and others in later tradition.

Some attempts (e.g., Cox 1963: 230) have been made to connect Pallas Athēnē with Uśas: the description of the Vedic goddess as ahanā ‘spreading daylight’ (perhaps RV I,123,4) has been stretched to link with Gk *athanā. Elsewhere (IT, 164), Uśas’s birth is given as from the forehead of Dyaus (like Athena in full panoply from Zeus’s temple), but no reference is cited for this and I know of none. Although Athena may be a distant relative of Uśas (and possibly of Sarasvati), the Vedic goddess has no warlike traits nor any association with arts and crafts; but in RVVI,64,3 she is likened to a heroic archer/thrower (āstā) and a swift warrior (vóthā) against foes and darkness. Uśas is thus more akin to Artemis (Kazanas 2001).

c) Some other branches have a cognate goddess but few definite facts other than the name survive.

The Romans have their Aurora.

The Teutons have Ostara (Keith 1989: 121) who appears under the name Eostre among the Anglo-Saxons and is,

---

7Eōs bears to Kephalos a son Phaethon “a man similar to the gods” (Theogony 987). The name is the same as that of one of Eōs’s horses which is also a name for the Sun (see 6, d, above). This indicates perhaps a complex legend regarding Eōs suggesting that she was also mother of the Sun and then, as Hēmera ‘Daylight’, his companion (or consort or daughter?).

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
according to venerable Bede, the name of April (Branston 1993: 42, 127), which becomes the Christian ‘Easter’.

Lettish Ushing, like Ostara, “represents a worship of the sun in the spring” (Keith 1989: 121).

8. Firegod

a) The firegod Agni appears to be the most popular deity in the Rgveda next to Indra. Much can be written about Agni but here we shall dwell only on two features, his parentage and his three-fold aspect.

Agni’s parents are Dyaus and Prthivi, or Tvaṣṭṛ and the Waters; or he is brought about by Indra, or the Dawn, or Idā, the sacrificial food personified. All these mythic accounts can be easily explained. Another significant account is Agni’s birth from the ten fingers or, perhaps more important, from the two fire sticks that are rubbed together. In the last account the upper stick is the male force and the lower the female: these two are seen mythically personified in Pururavas and Urvasī according to the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.1, which section takes some verses from Rgveda X.95, a hymn in the form of a dialogue between the two famous lovers, the mortal king, who eventually becomes immortal, and the apsara nymph, and explains them in terms of the sacrifice. This old mode of lighting the fire with two sticks was preserved in the rite of rekindling on March 1, the fire of Vesta in Rome (Keith 1989: 155; where a similar practice among the early Germanic people is mentioned also).

Agni is threefold: he has three births, three heads, three tongues, three stations. He has three abodes—in heaven, earth and waters or heaven, air (atmosphere) and earth. Thus he also has three altars in the ritual—the Gārhapatya, the Āhavaniya and the Dakṣina, all kept distinct from the ordinary household fire.

b) Among the Slavs one of the high god Svarog’s sons was Ogon, the Firegod. In OSl ‘fire’ is ognį: this and its variants (Serbian ognj, Polish ogn, Rs ogn etc) are obviously cognates with S agni. Of Ogon little else is recorded.

c) The other branches have their respective firegods but the names are unrelated.

The better known are the Greek goddess Hestia ‘household fire’, daughter of Kronos and Rhea, and her Roman counterpart Vesta: both names are cognate with S vāvas ‘dwelling’ and vvas ‘shining’, and related to V vāstospati ‘genius
of the house’ (RVII, 54 and 55); this < \textit{vás}vástu ‘dwelling’ (cognate with Gk 	extit{astu} ‘town’; Toch A 	extit{wasti}, Toch B 	extit{ost} ‘house’; Gth 	extit{wisan} ‘to stay’, OHG 	extit{wist} ‘inhabiting’).

Nonetheless, some of the languages have retained the IE stem for ‘fire’ cognate to 	extit{agni}: L 	extit{ignis}, OSl 	extit{ogni}, Lth 	extit{ugnis}, Ltt 	extit{uguns}. Rather surprisingly, the stem is not preserved in Old Iranian, despite the Zoroastrians’ intense fire-worship, except in a name like 	extit{dāštāpī}.

9. Watergod

a) Apart from Varuṇa, in Vedic religion the Waters themselves Āpas (plural) were divinities, and from their midst Varuṇa “looks upon the truth and untruth of people” (RVII, 49,3). In the waters resides a self-luminous spirit or essence called 	extit{Āpām Nāpāt}, ‘Offspring of the Waters’, often described as “swift-horsed”. This is clearly related to the effulgence of the Firegod, 	extit{Agni}, as is obvious by the association of the two in hymn II, 35, 15, etc, and by Agni’s entering and hiding deep in the waters (RV I, 65 and X, 51); the motif is elaborated in the 	extit{Brāhmaṇas} and post-Vedic texts. When the priests go for the water required for the sacrifice, they address a prayer to 	extit{Āpām Nāpāt}. (RV X, 30, 3).

b) In the 	extit{Avesta}, Yast 19, we find 	extit{Āpām Nāpāt}, ‘the swift-horsed, tall and shining lord, the lord of females’, and the 	extit{Xvarənah}, the ‘luminous glory’ of Kings, made by Ahura Mazda and belonging to archangels and gods: the one deity in the RV appears as two entities in the 	extit{Avesta}. The 	extit{Xvarənah} becomes the most desired object in the struggle between good and evil forces. As it flies away, it is seized—even though it “cannot be forcibly seized”—by “the swift-horsed Son of the Waters” (Āpām Nāpāt) and put down to the bottom of the mythical sea Vourukaša “in the bottom of the rivers” (II, p 299). There only the most worthy can ever approach it.

This motif appears in a Celtic tale and in Greek post-archaic poetry.

c) Greece has Poseidon, who, like the Indo-Iranian Āpām Nāpāt, is also associated with splendid horses, like Pegasus. Another one is 	extit{Pontos}, a deification of the sea, 	extit{άτρύγετον πέλαγος} (Theogony, 131-2): cognate with πόντος are L 	extit{pons}/-t- ‘bridge’, Old Prussian 	extit{pintis}, Sl 	extit{pati}, S 	extit{path}/panth-, all meaning ‘way, course’. Another one is 	extit{Okeanos (E ocean)}, the source of all waters (Iliad 21/194) which surrounds the earth (Herodotus
IV,8): this may be cognate with S āsāyāna ‘lying abundantly, surrounding’—“said of Vṛtra who surrounds the water” (MSD), although Aramaic ṣōgāna ‘basin’ has been just as plausibly suggested (West 1971: 50) There is also Nereus, father of the water-nymphs Nereids (cf S nīra ‘water’) and others, whom we need not pursue.

There is much literature on Poseidon (as there are many myths) and much speculation on the etymology of his name (Poseidōn/Potidas etc). Most interesting are the suggestions ‘husband of waters’ or ‘source of waters’ (Littleton 1973b).

However, B. Louden (1999) argues reasonably that Bacchylides 17 narrates an incident in the life of Theseus which seems to be related to the Iranian rather than the Vedic version of the myth. Minos casts a golden ring into the sea and Theseus has to retrieve it to prove that he is Poseidon’s son. Theseus dives and in the depths he encounters “a brilliance like fire… shining from [the Nereids’] radiant limbs”. Certainly, the Apām Napāt motifs are present in the Greek narrative, but no cognate name.

However, I think, Louden quite rightly mentions (1999: 73-74) the possible cognition V nāpāt, L nepotes and Gk νέποδες (Od 4.404). All early attestations in the GEL are in the plural denoting “offspring/children” as in the Odyssey passage; GEL gives “seals” but in Od 4/404 seals are φώκατα (still so in NGk). Etymologies like “wet-” or “web-” or “no-footed” for νεπός are, of course, possible, but so is the IE cognation.

d) The Romans had the well known Neptunus as their Seagod, whose name is thought to be cognate with Napāt (Puhvel 1989: 279 ff, gives similarities with the Iranian tale).

The stem appears in L nepos/nepol- and Gk ἀνεπόδες, all meaning ‘offspring, nephew, grandson’—whence E nepotism.

e) Some scholars link the stem napāt/nept with Irish necht (Ford 1974: 67; Puhvel 1989: 279). Thus in the Irish tradition, Nechtan of the Túatha Dé Danann had a secret well: only he and his three cupbearers could approach it with impunity; anyone else would suffer the loss of his two eyes because of some powerful light or energy within the well. Nechtan’s wife approaches it arrogantly and, indeed, gets so shattered, losing an eye, a hand and a leg as the water rushes against her, that she flees and drowns in the sea.

The Celts had other waterdeities with different names.

Volume 29, Number 3 & 4, Fall/Winter 2001
f) All branches have, of course, their own gods of waters or sea, but, as we have seen, these have unrelated names. The same applies to the Germanic branch. The Scandinavians had at least two gods associated with the sea and water Njord and Aegir (Davidson 1981: 106-7, 128-30), but these names, like the Celtic Ir/W Ler/Llyr and Manannan/Manawyddan (MacGulloch 1948: 33-34; MacCana 1983: 78-80, 66-67), stand isolated from names in other branches.

10. The Bountiful Provider

a) We met bhaga in section 1.c, as a generic name for ‘god’ in the Iranian and Slavonic branches. In the RV Bhaga is a specific deity, one of the Ādityas, associated with good fortune, wealth and wellbeing. As he has not one hymn dedicated to himself, he is regarded as a minor deity, brother of Ušas (I, 123,5). Together with Aryaman and Saviṅ he is invoked in the marriage ceremony (X, 85, 23 and 36) in parallel with other deities, Mitra, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Indra and Pūṣan.

The word bhaga is used as a noun ‘wealth, fortune’ and as an adjective qualifying Agni, Sūrya and Pūṣan, ‘dispenser [of wealth/fortune]’. In the Atharva-veda Bhaga is invoked not only in the marriage ceremony but also for increase in progeny (XIV, 2,13) and for deepening the ploughing (III, 12,4): he is thus a fertility god. In later times we have bhagavān ‘the blessed one’.

b) The stem appears as an adjective Bagaios applied to Zeus in Phrygia, in Anatolia. Here Gk φοῖβος (6, d, above) too would qualify.

11. Artificers

a) In the RV, as in other religions, many are the creator-gods and artificers. Here we shall deal briefly with the Rbhus only. The Rbhus are three brothers, Rhhu, Vibhvan and Vāja (I,161,6), known collectively by the name of the eldest. Sons of Sudhanvan8 ‘the good archer’, they had miraculous dexterity through unusual power of mind (I, 20,2; IV, 33,2; 36,2). Through this power, “with effective prayers” they rejuvenated the Parents, Heaven and Earth, and on the gods’ command made four out of the one chalice or ladle, fashioned by Tvāṣṭr (the divine artificer or creator-god). Because of these and

8Also IV,4,3. In some places the number seems to vary; they are called sons of Manu also.

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
similar wondrous works they were admitted into the home of Savitṛ the Sun, the Agohya ‘not to be hidden’, who then made them immortal gods (I, 110, 2-3).

This stem and its cognate arbha ‘young’ have a fair distribution in the IE branches: Gk ὀρφανός and L orbis ‘bereft’, Gth arbi, Ir orpe, AS arfi and ON arfe, ‘inheritance’ etc; also in words meaning ‘work’ like Gth arbaips, OSl rabu ‘servant’, Rs rabota ‘work’, etc.

b) In Greece the name ṛbhu appears as Orpheus, the famous poet and musician from Thrace who gave rise to the Orphic cult and mysteries. The later story about his descent into Hades to recover Eurydice may well be an echo of a rejuvenation attempt, while the shamanist aspect of the myth (Eliade 1972: 391) is maintained. Orpheus’s poetry and music links well with the ῥbhus’ poetic power in RV, 20,2-4; III, 60,2; IV, 36,7. It is therefore very curious that many philologists refuse to see this connection yet accept ὀρφά-νός ‘deprived’ (orphan).

G ἀλόγη ‘production, acquisition’ and ἀλφάνω ‘produce, acquire’ may well be cognate with S ṛbhu and ṛrabh/labh ‘get hold of’. The r/l alternation is common.

M. Estell (1999) points out the analogous cognation of V ṝ̃nu and GK ὀρνυμι but feels some uncertainty about ṛbhu/?option. His hesitation is understandable but even if we found an ancient text averring that the ῥbhus and Orpheus are related, some scholars would question its authenticity, or date, or authorship, and so on. We should ask ourselves rather whether it is likely that ṛbhu and ὀρφεύς are not cognate. Estell provides support with the father of Orpheus, Oiagros probably ‘cudgel-bearer’ (corresponding to ῥbhus’ father ‘good archer’) and the use of derivative verb-forms of the PIE *leks, Gk tekτ- and V taks ‘form, fashion’. He thinks “the root means ‘fashion’ and is used of carpenters” (1999: 332) but this is hardly warranted by Vedic usage at any rate. The ῥbhus are not, as usually considered, craftsmen-artisans but mainly poet-artists who create (kṛ or ṭaks) by mental powers (manas, dhi, dhiti, māyā) or ṣaci ‘skill, speech’ not only material things like the four ladles or the chariot but also prosperity, vision, life, fame (ṛayi, dhi, vayas, śravas) as in RV, 20, 2/4; III, 54, 17; III, 60, 1-2; IV, 36, 2/4/5/7; etc.

Another affinity between the Vedic and Greek figures is their connection with the Sungod. The ῥbhus stayed in Savitṛ’s home, served there in priestly function and thus gained
immortality \((RV I, 110, 4; \text{III}, 60, 3-4)\). Orpheus is said in one legend to be closely associated with Apollo as the Sun: he “reveres Apollo-Helios” neglecting the worship of Dionysus; for this reason the Maenad-Bassarids tore him apart (West 1998: 12-13); Graves writes that Orpheus actually served as Apollo’s priest (I, 112).

c) The same stem appears in Gmc elf (and variants). A race of fair elves lived in Alfhaim, the elves’ region, where Freyr of the Vanir also dwelt \((Edda 19)\). There was also a race of dark elves living underground. The elves, spirits that could heal, but played no significant part in the Norse mythology, were associated with the dead on one hand and with the sun, like the Rbhus, on the other (Davidson 1981: 156 & 28).

The connection with the stem \(arb\) as in \(arbeït\) ‘work’ has been mentioned.

There is no substantial reason, philological or semantic, why Gk Orpheus and Gmc elf should not be related to S \(s\bhu\).

12. The Companion on the Path, \(^9\) or harmoniser

a) Aryaman is an \(\text{\textae}ditya\) but with few distinct features. In the \(RV\) he is invoked chiefly as the third member in the triad Mitra-Varuṇa-Aryaman but also several times with Indra, once, in the marriage context, with Bhaga alone (X, 85, 23) and once with Bhaga, Savitṛ and Pūṣan, in the same hymn (85, 36). Associated with pathways, like Bhaga and Pūṣan, Aryaman, like them, promotes prosperity and concord in marriages. In hymn V, 3, 2, Agni is addressed as Aryaman who makes “wife and lord one-minded”. This harmonious order in marriage and family is obviously a reflection of Aryaman’s role as guardian of the cosmic order \(\text{\textita}\), together with Varuṇa and Mitra. He is said also to yoke Indra’s horses (VII, 36, 4).

The name itself contains the notion of order and harmony since the stem \(ar\) as in \(\text{\textarya}\) derives from \(\text{\textva}\) which produces \(\text{\textita}\). Cognates with \(\text{\textva}\) and \(ar\) are very widely distributed in the IE languages: Gr \(\text{\texto\textreti}\), \(\text{\texto-vum\texte}\) etc; L \(\text{\textalius}\), \(\text{\textaro}\) etc; OE \(\text{\texterian}\); Gth \(\text{\textarms}\), \(\text{\textrei-san}\); etc etc.

b) The Avesta has Airyaman who is connected with marriage-rites and healing-rituals: “May the much desired Airyaman come … with the desirable reward that is won by means of the law” (I, 228-35).

---

\(^9\) RVX, 64.5: “Aryaman of the unchecked (or unbroken) course (or path).” Of course, Pūṣan is strictly ‘Lord of the path’ \(\text{\textpatah p\textaith}\).
c) In Greek the stem \(\alpha\)ρεῖς gives many words like ἀρείον ‘better’ and ἀριστος ‘best’ (as E aristocracy). It is also the base of the Wargod Ar-eas, who, however, apart from his reputation, has nothing to recommend him as a Wargod but gets twice bested by Athena, once by Hercules, and on one occasion by some giants. In Mycenaean the name appears as Are-mene (Thebes III) as well, and variants Are-jo and Arei-jo (Ventris and Chadwick 1973: 126).

Scholars (see SGD) connect Ares with ἐρίς ‘strife, quarrel’ and S \(\acute{a}\)ρι ‘enemy’ and \(\sqrt{\text{\i}}\)ρ ‘envy’, OSI \(\text{reti} \) ‘struggle’, etc. This is possible. However, Ares has only the reputation of a Wargod but no actual mythologem showing him as such. It may well be that the Mycenaean Are-mene (or Are-jo) was originally akin to Aryaman and then developed into the unwarlike Ares to provide a male Wargod. A more convincing Wargod is the goddess Athene, who never lost a battle.

d) Among the Celts this name appears as Ariomanus in Gaul and as Eremon in Ireland, the latter being the warrior-king of the sons of Mil (MacCana 1983: 61-62). The very name Ireland contains the stem of cognates \(\text{erin/eire} \) and variants thereof (cf Iran for Persia).

e) The same appears among the Teutonic people in the name of god Irmin occurring in Irmin-súl, the cultic World Pillar upholding the sky, and in Irmin-theod ‘Irmin’s people’, that is mankind (Davidson 1981: 196; Puhvel 1989: 200). The name was thought to be another name for the Skygod Tâwaz but nothing else is known.

13. Wargod(s)

a) In the RV the wargod par excellence is Indra, but he is often assisted by other gods like Viṣṇu (VII, 99, 4-5) and the Maruts (VIII, 8, 24).

Here we shall be concerned with the Maruts whose name is cognate with other wargods’ names in other branches. They are invoked in 33 complete hymns and are said to be 3x7 (I, 133, 6), 7x7 (V, 52, 17) and more: thus they are always in the plural Marūtas. Sons of Rudra and Pṛśni (the mottled Cow), they carry a bright javelin, thunderbolt, bow and arrows and golden ax, riding on golden cars—probably lightning (III, 54, 13). They bring clouds and rains, thunder and lightning, causing or dispersing darkness (I, 37, 9 and 86, 10), and dispatch demons and foes of the Áryas (VII, 57; etc).
Various etymologies have been suggested as from √m ® 'dying' or √m®-n 'crushing' or *mar 'flashing, lighting' connected with maria 'particle/ray of light' (Gk μαρ δι, E marble and similar cognates).

b) The name does not appear in the Avesta but it does so in the Kassites’ list of gods. Here the name is singular Maruttaš.

The stem mar- appears in the Mittani’s name for young warriors Maria-nni/nnu (cf Gk μειρακεύοντα 'young lad').
c) Leaving the Greeks whose goddess Athénê is a more appropriate wargoddess than Ares (see 12, c, above), we find a cognate name in Roman Márs(Mart-). The Roman wargod is a more complex deity: husband of Rhea Silvia, he was the father of Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome; his early adjective ‘silvanus’ indicates that he had a vegetation and fertility aspect as well as the martial one. (KEWA II, 589: “noteworthily remains the connection Marút-Márs”)

Older names are mávors, Etruscan maris and Oscan màmers and there are many cognates and derivatives in other IE languages: e.g., L mare, W mor, Gth mæri, Sl mor- ‘sea’ (=dead water’ or ‘glistening’).
d) Other traditions have their own wargods, but with different names. The Celts have an abundance of war-goddesses and the Irish Mor-righan ‘war/phantom queen’ (MacCana 1983: 66, 86 etc) definitely seems to carry the stem mar.

14. Anthropogony

a) In the Vedic tradition the Progenitor of mankind is said in different places to be Yama, Manu and Puruṣa. (i) The word yama in Vedic has complex connotations: yàma means ‘controller’ primarily, while yamá signifies ‘twin’ or ‘pair’ and yamasì is ‘she who bears twins’ (RV I,66,4; 164,15; II,39,2; etc; For yamasì, see Vájasaneyi Samhitá XXX,15, and Tait Br III, 4,II,1). Some (SGD under ζημία) connect this stem yam- (perf yem) with Gk ζημία ‘loss, damage’ and ζημίωσις its only other putative appearance in IE languages apart from Sc Ymir, Av Yima and Læminus: yamati = ‘curb, tighten’ hence ‘damage’; also Yama’s death may be the basis for ‘loss’. Pokorny links ζημία with yātu ‘sorcery’ and ημερός ‘tame, mild’ with yam while Burrow (p 135) links ημερός with sàman-(-a). Since we have V yug- and G ζον-ζεν- (but L iug-) ‘yoke’ and V yas and G ζεν-ζεν ‘be heated’, all generally acceptable, the yam-ζημ
cognition should not be rejected. In Latin we have *geminō/geminus* ‘double/twin’.

Yama himself is king of the dead, ruler and judge; the control aspect is seen also in the line “triṣṭubḥ, gāyatri and [the other] hymn-metres, all these are placed in Yama” (X,14,16): the first half of this stanza is open to various interpretations; the second half is simpler: “triṣṭubḥ gāyatri chāndāṃsi sārvā tā Yamā āhitā. He is the son of Vivasvat (=Sun); his birth is unattended by death (X,83,5 ff); he builds the abode for the dead (X,18,13), full of light and satisfaction, immortal and imperishable (IX,113,7 ff); and all go to him by the same path to meet him and the fathers in heaven (X,14,1ff). The theme is developed further in the *Atharva Veda* where he is the first of mortals to die and go to the Otherworld as the “one who gathers people together” (*AV* XV i,3,13).

However, the *RV* hymn X,10, is a dialogue between Yama and Yami, twin brother and sister. Here Yami, who wants to unite with Yama and have his child, calls him “the only existing mortal”. This theme, too, is developed further in the *AV* (AV XVIII,1 reproduces much of *RV* X,10) and later prose texts. One important detail in *RV* X,10, is in Yami’s words, stanza 5, saying that Tvāṣṭṛ “who shapes all forms”, made herself and Yama “consorts even in the womb”; this may be connected with the Gmc legend of Ymir and Twisto (see (c) below).

ii) Manu is mentioned in several places as “father Manu” (e.g., *RV* II, 33,13). In later Vedic texts (*Satapatha Br*, I,8,1, 1ff) he is the survivor of the flood and father of a new generation of men. In post-Vedic texts he becomes a lawgiver, the guardian of a *kalpa*, etc. He was the son of Vivasvat and Sarañyū, daughter of Tvāṣṭṛ—who are also Yama’s parents.

The stem *man-* has wide incidence in most IE languages: Gk *μαν-ia, μαν-ιτ*, etc, L *mens*, Gth *muns*, OE *myne*, Ir *menme*, etc, all related to the human faculty of mind.

iii) Puruṣa signifies man in his universal, primordial aspect. In hymn *RV* X,90, this primordial Puruṣa, containing “what has been and what shall be”, gets sacrificed by the gods and from different parts of his being are created the multifarious creatures of the world.

All three elements, Puruṣa, Manu and Yama, rather astonishingly reappear in the Teutonic mythology alone. But before examining this let us glance briefly at the Old Iranian Yama.
b) In the *Avesta* Yama appears as *Yima*, son of Vivanhant (I, 10ff; II, 59ff). The Avestan tale of Yima is interesting more because of its differences from the Vedic motifs than its similarities. Yima, “the first-mortal”, becomes a king on earth and, with Ahura’s guidance, gathers creatures together in a special refuge against an oncoming winter of floods and frosts that will end all remaining life outside: thus he becomes a kind of Manu or Noah of the deluge legends as well as king of an Underworld Paradise.

c) In the *Gylfaginning* (5ff, *Edda*, p 10 ff. See Stone’s 1997 detailed study) the Teutonic legend tells how from the initial “yawning abyss” the Ginnungagap chaos, there arose from the melting ice the giant Ymir, the first creature. He fed on the milk of the primeval cow Audhumla (cf the Cosmic Cow in RV I, 180,3; III, 55,1; IV, 41,5; etc). The first part of the cow’s name “Aud” is generally accepted to be connected with the ON word for ‘wealth’ *auðr*, but no satisfactory explanation is given for the second part *humla* (Stone 1997: 144-145). Although ON for udder is *jügr*, perhaps the name is related to S *ūdha-n/-r/-s* ‘udder’ (>ādhasya/audhasa), Gk *oβθαρ*, L *ūber*, OHG *ūtar*, etc? ) From Ymir’s sweat, from under his left arm, there grew the first male and female while from his legs sprang out the frost-giants. From the ice, licked by the primeval cow *Audhuml*, whose milk sustained Ymir, there arose “a complete man” whose name was Buri and who got a son called Bor. Bor fathered on the giantess Bestla the gods Odin, Vili and Ve, who proceeded to kill Ymir. In the flood from Ymir’s blood drowned all the frost-giants except one, Bergelmir, who escaped with his wife in an ark. (The earliest ms has “on his mill”: Branston 1993: 37; also Stone 1997: 44 n 5 *tur* = box-mill. The blood of the flood may owe something to one of the plagues Moses inflicted on the Egyptians when the Nile-waters turned into blood—*Exodus* VII, 14ff.) From Ymir’s body the gods made the world: from his flesh the earth, from his blood the sea, from his bones mountains and stones, from his skull the sky.

This account seems to be full of confused echoes from earlier legends. The name “Ymir” clearly reminds of Yama and the male and female of the twins Yama and Yami. The flood and the ark remind of Manu and Noah. The creation of the world from parts of Ymir’s body resembles the creation of the world from Puruṣa’s sacrifice; even the names *Buri* and *Bor* carry echoes of *Pur-u-ṣa*. 

*The Journal of Indo-European Studies*
The affinities do not stop here. Tacitus reports (Germania, 2) an early Germanic anthropogonic version wherein earth-born god Twisto engendered Mannus and he in turn had three (or more) sons from whose names (quorum nominibus) are known the three (or more) tribes of the Germans. Here Mannus is certainly V Manu and Twisto may be cognate with V Tvaṣṭṛ, despite conjectures that the name is connected with “separation” or “twin”. After all Tvaṣṭṛ “begets mankind in varied manner” (RVIII, 55, 19 and 4,9) and has Saranyak for his daughter, who marries Vivasvat and whose ‘double’ or ‘shadow’ Savārṇā bears to Vivasvat Manu.

III) Conclusions
1. The All-inclusiveness of the Rgveda

It is obvious that the RV contains a decisively greater portion of the common IE mythological heritage. In fact there is hardly a major motif common in two or more of the other branches that is not found in the RV.

We could examine many more figures or themes. There are several names of isolated deities in the European branches that are clearly cognate with Sanskrit stems even though there are no deities with such names in the RV or post-Vedic texts. We meet Briganti-(a) in Britain who was Sulevia in Gaul and then Brighid in Ireland: the name is cognate with S bhāti ‘lofty, great, vast, strong, exalted, bright’—and so is the Av bhūrz retained in the name of the Elburz mountains. The Norse Bragi, god of poetry and wisdom (Edda 25), whose name is thought to be cognate with brag ‘chief’, may well be connected with V Bhāṣapati, the lord of prayer and poetic metre, same as Brahmānaspati in RV II, 2,3. (This connection may seem farfetched; see KEWA II, 453-454.) Frigg, consort of Odin of the Aesir and often identified with Freyja, consort of Freyr of the Vanir, is regarded as a love-goddess and her name as cognate with S priya ‘beloved, dear, favourite’ (cf Gth frijōn ‘to love’). The name of the better-known love-goddess of Rome, Venus, is


11Later transformed into St. Brighid with a monastery at Kildare that maintained a perpetual fire. In the RV there is actually a goddess called Bhaddhīyā but apart from being a Mother, nothing else is said (V, 42, 12; X, 64, 10).
cognate with S *vanas* ‘charm, desire’ (Burrow 1973: 158; Puhvel 1989: 151). Then Roman Juno, consort of Jupiter, has a name connected with S *yuni*, contracted fem of *yuvan*, ‘young, strong, healthy’. Roman *Ceres* goddess of agriculture and Greek *Kear* goddess of doom too are probably cognate with S *Śri* ‘beauty, splendour, abundance’; in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* XI, 4, 3, *Śri* is presented as a goddess of beauty and prosperity (*IT* p 162).

Apart from such names, there are many other themes or motifs in the different branches that, again, have a connection or parallel in the *RV*. The Greek Centaurs have a name (*Kentavrōi*, pl) and mythical connections that strongly recall the *Gandharva* in *RV* and the later Kinnaras.¹² The ‘horse’ theme appears with Greek *Dioskouroi* ‘the lads of bright sky’, *Castor*, the expert horseman, and *Poludeukes* (L. *Pollux*), both brothers of fair Helen, whose name *Helenea* is cognate with S *Saranyā*;¹³ the two (or more?) brothers, sons of God (or the Sky) and the Sunmaiden is a common theme in the Baltic tradition—the Lth *Dievo Sūnelai* and *Sūles dukteryus* and Ltt *Dieva deli* and *Saulės meita*; elaborations of the theme appear in other traditions also (Ward 1968; also Davidson 1981: 169, for Scandinavian ‘twin-gods’); these various strands are connected, of course, with the *Aśvin*, the ‘Two Horsemen’ and *Śūryā* ‘Sun’s daughter’ in the *RV*. Another motif is that of the preserved severed head, as when Odin keeps wise god Mimir’s head (which had been cut off by the Vanir) to consult it in times of danger and doubt (Davidson 1981: 146); in the Welsh tradition the family of Lyr preserve Bendigedfran’s head (MacCana 1983: 78); in Greek myths Bellerophon holds Medusa’s severed head, which still has the power to turn the onlooker into stone, while Orpheus’s head, after the Maenads have torn him to pieces, floats down the river still singing; in the *RV*, again, the *Aśvins* substitute sage Dadhyānc’s head with that of a horse and, after Indra cuts this off, they reinstate the original—a miraculous feat of surgery.

The ‘horse-theme’ has attracted attention from many scholars and needs some clarification. In *RV*, X, 17, 1-2, *Tvāṣṭṛ*’s

---

¹²Puhvel 1989: 64, where through oversight, no doubt, the Kinnara-form (man with horse’s head) is ascribed to the Gandharva.

¹³Here we should take into account the fact that in Greek Mythology this theme is very confused, presented variously by different sources. See *Odyssey* 11/299, two ‘Homeric’ Hymns To *Dioskouroi*, Pindar’s *Nemean Ode* X,80 and Apollodorus III, 126 (or III, 10,6ff), etc. Apart from Zeus, king Tyndareus is involved and, apart from Helen, Klytaemnēstra (Agamemnon’s wife) is another ‘twin’ sister (with Castor).

*The Journal of Indo-European Studies*
daughter Saranyū marries the sungod Vivasvat but afterwards vanishes leaving behind a pair of twins (Yama and Yami) and her double (Savarnā); then in Yāska’s Nirukta (XII, 10) Vivasvat finds Saranyū as a mare, becomes a stallion and from their union are born the twin Avins ‘horse-gods’ of healing, rescue, etc. This mythologem is linked with Pausanias’s report from Arcadia (VIII, 25, 3-7) that Demeter Erinys was found as a mare by Poseidon who turned into a stallion and mounted her and then she bore the colt Areion and a daughter whose name was spoken only in the Mysteries (Graves 1977, vol 1, 61, gives the name ‘Despoea’). Obviously, saranyu ‘swift, nimble’ is related to ἐπινυζ (singular, also attested as a deity in Mycenaean) despite the etymology in GEL ἐπινυεῖν ‘be enraged’. The literature on the Divine Twins and the ‘horse’ theme is enormous (e.g., Ward 1968; O’Flaherty 1980; O’Brien 1982;

14 O’Flaherty’s study contains much valuable material but seems regretably to be full of confusion. It is perfectly acceptable that she is not “an Indo-Europeanist” and lacks “faith in the reconstructed prototype” (p 150) or that she should consider Dumézil’s three functions “hypothetical” (p 171). A. and B. Rees back in 1961 found Dumézil’s tripartition inadequate and wrote of the need of a fourth (1961: 113ff) and even of a fifth function to cover the “five peoples” of Ireland and the “Five Kindreds” of the Rgveda (i.e., the five Indo-Aryan tribes). N. J. Allen took this up and developed the idea of a fourth function to cover everything that is “Other” than Dumézil’s three (1987: 28-29, 32). However, O’Flaherty seems to see only one function, the third one of fertility and sexuality, copulation, defloration, castration and the like: even bhakti ‘devotion’ is described in stark erotic terms including incest and homosexuality (1980: 87-90: 125-129). Surely erotic terms could be metaphors for spiritual or mystical experiences as is evidenced in so much literature? Then the ballets about “chaste Odette” and “evil (erotic) Odile” or the Valkyries in Wagner’s operas (p 182) can hardly have a bearing on early IE themes, while the Harivamṣa (p183), dated c 400 CE, can hardly be relevant to Rgvedic myths. It is easy moreover to say that texts do not record a certain mare-ritual because of “the suppression of positive mare myths and rituals in androcentric Indo-European tradition” (p 153) but it would be rather difficult to establish the existence of a PIE or pre-IE “gynaecocentric” tradition. An example from the Veda (p 182 and 136-137): “the sun … is a mortal … [who] fails to reach the gods and is born ‘to die’ (RV 10, 72, 8-9); this is a reference to martanda ‘born of a dead egg’, the eighth Aditya, son of Aditi, but the verses quoted can be and have been rendered quite differently—“[Aditi] bore Martanda for procreation and for death”, though not only his own but for the universal process; moreover, the sun seems to be born in the morning and die at night, but is resurrected the next morning and so on. On the Greek side, again, she mentions (p 198) Aphrodite’s rejection of Hephaistos (a fact only in Odyssey 8) but she is totally unaware that in Iliad 5 Hephaistos is married to Charis, as also in Theogony 945 while Aphrodite is associated with Ares (Theogony 933). I think enough has been said.
Shapiro 1982; Grottanelli 1986; Puhvel 1989; Dexter 1990; York 1995). Much of this spreads widely and covers motifs that are not directly related to the ‘Twins’ or ‘horse-deities’. To begin with, apart from Clt Epona, Mcn Iqoj-o/-a, both ‘horse-deity’ and Gk Erinus (= V Saranyā), we find nowhere else any cognate names; then, in several cases the tales, particularly some Celtic (Grottanelli 1986) and some Greek (O’Flaherty 1980: 190ff) ones, seem to be linked more to Mudgala and his wife’s winning of a race (RV X, 102, a hymn to Indra, whom Grottanelli and O’Flaherty do not mention at all) than to the Ásvins, while in others the motifs are mixed. M. R. Dexter’s mention of Medusa and her two offspring, the warrior Chrysaor and the winged horse Pegasus, is, of course, very relevant (1990: 288) but M. York’s interesting analysis of several (pairs of) deities in the Celtic Pantheon reveals neither twins nor horses: the chthonic Donn and the solar Lug form the main pair expressing duality but not “twinness” (1995). The subject obviously requires a separate study.

There are additional features. The Celts had three social classes, recorded by Caesar as druides priests, milites warriors and miserrima plebs wretched masses (De Bello Gallico, VI, 14-15): these clearly correspond to the (late) Vedic vaṇṇas of brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya and vaśya. (MacCana 1983: 12, gives a different nomenclature citing the Greek geographer and stoic, Poseidonius. See also Puhvel 1989: 167.) Then the druids avoided writing and, like the Indic brahmins, preferred the oral tradition, although “they made use of Greek letters”, according to Caesar (De Bel Gal VI,14); and in the same chapter we read that they taught reincarnation, as is later confirmed by Lucan,15 and as was clearly taught in the later Vedic texts. Then fire was worshipped both in Greece as Hestia and in Rome as Vesta while the Romans had their high priest flämen, which is an echo of V brahma. The Celts again divided Ireland into 5 districts while the Spartans had 5 demes, as the RV had 5 tribes or peoples, kṣitaḥ or caśanayah or pāncajānāḥ.

15Pharsalia, I, 454-62. Some scholars have claimed that the ‘metempsychosis’ doctrine was no more than a belief in immortality: see, T. D. Kendrick, The Druids (1927), Senate 1994, p 111-112. Whatever ideas may be found in later Celtic lore, Caesar’s words are plain enough: non interire animas sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios ‘the souls do not die but after death transmigrate from some [bodies/forms] to others’. 

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
The list of examples is by no means exhaustive but enough has been written to show that no major mythological (or religious) feature appears in two or more branches to the exclusion of the Vedic. On the contrary, feature after feature appears in the RV in common with one or two other branches to the exclusion of the rest—sometimes with the Greek and the Roman, sometimes with the Roman and the Celtic, and so on.

The only exception to the best of my knowledge is the minor motif of the golden apples of the Hesperides in Greece and the apples of immortality kept by Idunn, consort of Bragi, in the Nordic myths (Edda 25). There are, of course, many figures and motifs in every IE branch that belong exclusively to that branch. This is to be expected and, as evidence, it proves nothing one way or another.

The all-inclusiveness of the RV in the realm of mythology is also observable in the sphere of poetics. There is hardly a major poetic device in the various IE branches that is not present in the RV. A significant aspect, for example, is that in early Greek poetry (epics of Homer and Hesiod, and some epigraphic material) the fairly strict syllabic meter (the hexameter with its dactylic, iambic and other variants) is preponderant with only traces of alliteration; in Germanic poetry alliteration prevails while the syllabic meter is very loose: both are present in the RV (Kazanas 2001). The situation becomes very clear in the detailed examination of the large range of material in Watkins 2001. Early Irish poetry (6th century CE) has both meter and alliteration (and rhyme) but this hardly counts since the Irish poets knew these poetic devices “from Vergil and Ovid” (Watkins 2001: 121) and, of course, the Romans developed them from the Greek tradition. Of the Vedic poetic art Watkins writes: “The language of India from its earliest documentation in the Rigveda has raised the art of the phonetic figure to what many would consider its highest form” (Watkins 2001: 109).
2. The Table

The collated facts can be summed up in a table wherein the first line shows the incidence of the deities and the second line cites cognate stems that occur in languages where the deities are not preserved; the citations are not exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vedic</th>
<th>Other IE branches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agni</td>
<td>Slavic Ogo, L ignis, Lth ugnis, Ltt uguns. (Note even the Iranians who had Fire-worship did not preserve this name, not even as a demon like Indra, Sauru etc, though the stem appears in the name δαστάγνι.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aryaman</td>
<td>Mcn Are-mene and Greek Are-u-s; Celtic Ariomanus (Gaul)/Eremon (Ireland); Scandinavian Irmin. The ar-stem in most IE languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aśvin:</td>
<td>Celtic Epona (Gaul); Mcn Iqeja (horse-deity). Gk Ἰρικυας, (Mcn iko, dialect ikkos), L equus, OE and Ir eoh, Baltic eša.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhaga :</td>
<td>Kassite Bugas; Slavic Boga; Phrygian Bagaios (Zeus, Gk); Gk Phoibos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyaus :</td>
<td>Hittite ᵉŠiu-s Gk Zeus/Dia-; Roman Ju[s]piter; Germanic Tiwaz. Lth dievas (usually ‘god’cognate with S deva, ñdiṿ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indra :</td>
<td>Ht Inar(a); Mitanni Indara; Kassite Indas; Celtic Andrasta/Andarta. Gk ἄνδρα / ἀνδρῆς, Av indra (a demon).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marut-as</td>
<td>Kassite Maruttaš; Roman Mars; Irish Morrighan. The stem mar/mor/mer- etc is common in all IE branches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apām-Napāt:</td>
<td>Roman Neptunus; Celtic Nechtan (Irish). Gkα-νεπ-σιος– L nep; OHG nevo, OE nefa, OLth nep̣, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parjanya :</td>
<td>Slavic Perun; Baltic Perkunas (and variants); Sc Fjörgyn (-n, Thor’s mother).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rōhu</td>
<td>Gk Orpheus; Gmc Elf(and variants). Gth ar-baips(?) ; OSL rabu, R rabota; L orbu (S arbha, Gkόρφαννις); etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Kassite</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Baltic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sūrya</td>
<td>Śūriās</td>
<td>Ἡλιος</td>
<td>Aurōra</td>
<td>Saule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uṣas</td>
<td>Eōs</td>
<td>Eōs</td>
<td>Aurōra</td>
<td>Eostre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varuṇa</td>
<td>Wūrūn (ʔ)</td>
<td>Οὐρανός</td>
<td>Neptunus</td>
<td>Vēlinas (=and cf jur- = sea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāstos-pati</td>
<td>Hestia</td>
<td>Eustia</td>
<td>Vestā</td>
<td>Vēlinas (=and cf jur- = sea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Ymir</td>
<td>Ζημία (damage)</td>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>Yima</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Table the upper line shows the incidence of the deities and the lower shows the cognate stems that occur in languages where the deities are not preserved. Thus it might be argued that the Slavic ‘Ogun’ is a direct borrowing of the Vedic Agni, who is an innovation, and, less plausibly, the same for Roman Neptunus, Celtic Nech-tan, but the presence of the cognate stems in Latin and Baltic for agn- and in Greek and Germanic for nep-/nev- nullify such an argument.

The all-inclusiveness of the Vedic is all too apparent and quite remarkable. The Greek and Germanic managed to preserve only half as many deities as the Vedic. Yet, to take some examples, Gmc preserves the stems nep- (nef-/nev-) and savil/sol, but not the corresponding deities which are preserved in other branches. Greek too preserves nep-, andr- and zēm- but, again, not the deities. Just as surprising are the very meagre retentions in Baltic, Slavic and, even more, in Anatolian. This situation can arise only from loss of memory of the significance of the mythological-religious figure over a long period of time because of lengthy geographical movement and/or absorption of new elements (sometimes forcibly, perhaps, through subjection) from other culture(s). It is a well known fact of history that people on the move for a long period tend to lose elements of their culture while their language suffers changes, as they meet with other cultures and/or have little leisure to pass their lore to the new generations—much more than a people remaining sedentary (Lockwood 1969: 43; Hock 1991: 43; Lockwood 1969: 43; Hock 1991: 43).
In view of this I do not consider traditions other than the Vedic as very reliable and would not draw definitive conclusions from them unless the issue is attested in the Veda. Thus, for example, I think Shapiro is quite wrong, as is Ward, whom he follows, to ascribe the motif of dual (or multiple) paternity to the myth of the Twins “in the PIE tradition” or the list of fifteen features of the Twins (Ward 1968: 4, 9-29; Shapiro 1982: 141, 156). I would concur with these ideas for the PIE period only if they were present in the Veda, too; since they are not, such motifs cannot, in my view, be regarded as PIE. In fact, I find Shapiro’s paper totally unconvincing.

Should perhaps the antiquity of the RV be re-examined in the light of the foregone evidence and discussion? Indeed how can we satisfactorily explain the cultural evidence of the deities showing clearly that the RV preserves so much more than any other branch? Obviously this would require a separate study (Kazanas 1999, 2000).

We conclude this study by focusing on one astonishing quality some of the Āryas had, as indicated in the RV. Obviously, when the IE speakers that emerge from the mists of pre-historic Europe and come to be known as Greeks, Germans, Celts etc, they are barbarians, fond of war, pillage and conquest. The RV also speaks frequently of war and battles. Here the weapon of victory is more often than not brāhma, the mystic power inherent in ritual and prayer, an inner force of the spirit or “silent meditation” as Puhvel calls it (1989: 153) in referring to sage Atri’s rehabilitation of the sun (RV V, 40,6). This is the power used by the sage Vasiṣṭha when helping King Sudas defeat his numerous enemies (RV VII, 33) and, of course, by the Rbhus when accomplishing the wondrous deeds that earned them godhood. And hymn VI,75,19 says “My closest/inner armour is brāhma” (=this same mystic power). This very word brāhman becomes, not without good reason, the name of the Absolute in post-Rgvedic literature, mainly the Upanishads. Yet, the Absolute is not entirely absent from the RV, as Keith observed: “...India developed the conception of a power common to the various gods ... just as the unity of the gods even by the time of certain Rigvedic hymns” (1925: 446).

Hymn RV X, 90, as noted above 14, a, iii, shows how creatures and world-elements are produced from different parts of the Puruṣa, the primordial Man: thus multiplicity comes from unity. Moreso, the nāsadiya hymn X, 129, describes the
evolution of the whole creation including the gods from the One  ekam. Taking cosmogonic myths from Iran, Greece, Rome and/or North Europe, some scholars rightly state that the creation arises from two primordial elements, “the action of heat on water”, and that this “reflects a multi-layered dualism that pervades Indo-European myth and religion” (Stone 1997, ch 5; see also Puhvel 1989: 277). But in the RV Creation Hymn X, 129, it is out of the One alone, breathing without air, of Its own power (ānid avātām svadhāyā tād ēkam), that arose all else; only in the third stanza appears salilām (water?) and tāpas (heat?) within tāmas ‘darkness’, within tuchyā ‘void’; and then follows one existence, desire and so on. Here at least it is the Unity that is the basic primordial substratum. This is no different from the Absolute of the Upanishads. And this we meet in other hymns also. RV VIII, 58, 2 says ēkam voē ādām vi babhuva sārvam ‘It being One has variously (vi) become this All (and Everything)’. Hymns I, 164, 6 and X, 114, 5, say that the wise poets speak of It, being One, in many ways/forms—naming it Agni, Yama, Indra, etc. Thus the different divinities are the manifestations of that One. This is reinforced by the acknowledgement that the gods are gods by virtue of a single godhood or god-power, as the refrain in III, 55, states plainly: mahād devānām asuratvām ēkam ‘Single is the great god-power (asuratvā) of the gods’. Utilizing different material in the Rgveda, K. Werner makes the same point (1989).

This notion of a Single One, of which all divine and mundane phenomena are manifestations, is absent from all other IE branches. Thus the Vedic Āryas, far from being bloodthirsty or primitive barbarians deifying out of fear natural phenomena like the storm or the fire, would seem to belong among the most highly cultured people on earth with a culture that consisted not so much of material artifacts as of inner spiritual power.

References

Aklujkar, A.

Allchin R. and B.

Volume 29, Number 3 & 4, Fall/Winter 2001

Avesta


Basham, A. L.
1961 The Wonder that was India. London: Sidgwick & Jackson,
1975 A Cultural History of India. OUP.

BOS = Buck, C. D.


Burrow, T.,

Cardona, G., H. M. Hoeningswald and A. Senn (eds)

Cox, Sir G. W.
1963 The Mythology of the Aryan Nations, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series (1882), Benares.

Davidson, H. R. Ellis

Dexter, M.R.

Diakonov, I. M.

Dillon, M.

Dumézil, G.
1940 Miitra-Varuna (3rd Ed), Zone Books 1988, NY.
Indo-European Deities and the Rgveda


Edda = Snorri Sturluson

Eliade, M.

Estell, M.
1999 Orpheus and RBhu revisited. JIES 27: 327-333.

Ford, P. K.


Gimbutas, M.

Graves, R.

Grottanelli, C.
1986 Yoked horses, twins and the Powerful Lady. JIES 14: 125-152.

Gurney, O. R.

Hock, H. H.

IT = Sukumari Bhattacharji,

Kazanas, N.
2000 'A new date for the Rgveda' in G. C. Pande (ed) Chronology and Indian Philosophy special issue of the JICPR, Delhi.
2001 Archaic Greece and the Veda. ABORI 82, Poona (in press).

Keith A. B.

Volume 29, Number 3 & 4, Fall/Winter 2001
KEWA = Mayrhofer, M.

Larsen, J. G. (ed)

Leik, G.


Lockwood, W. B.

Louden, B.

MacCana, Proinsias

MacCulloch, J. A.

Mallory, J. P.

MSD = Monier-Williams

O’Brien, S.

O’Flaherty, W. D.

Parpola, A.
1988 *The Coming of the Aryans to Iran and India*. Studia Orientalia 64, Helsinki.

Penglase, C

The Journal of Indo-European Studies
Pokorny, J.

Puhvel, Jaan

Pulgram, E.
1958 *The Tongues of Italy*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP.

Rees, A. and B.

Renfrew, C.

Schodt, J. P.

SGD = Ioan Stamatakos

Shapiro, M.

Simonov, P.

Stone, Alby


Ventris, M. and J. Chadwick

Ward, D. J.
Watkins, C.  

Werner, K.  

West, M. L.  
1971 *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient.* Oxford: OUP.  

Whitney, W. D.  

York, M.  