

THE 'ARYAN' GODS OF THE MITANNI TREATIES

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1. The¹ discovery of 'Aryan' looking names of [Mitanni-] princes on cuneiform documents in Akkadian from the second half of the second millennium B. C. (chiefly tablets from Boğazköy and El-Amarna),² several doubtlessly Aryan words in Kikkuli's treatise in Hittite on horse training (numerals: *aika*- 'one,' *tera*- 'three,' *panza*- 'five,' *satta*- 'seven,' *na[ya-]* 'nine'; appellatives: *qart-tana*- 'circuit, course [in which horses move when being trained],'³ *ašua*- 'horse'³), and, finally, a series of names of Aryan divinities on a Mitanni-Hatti and a Hatti-Mitanni treaty (14th century B. C.),⁴ poses a number of problems that have been repeatedly discussed, since the beginning of the century.⁵

A key question is whether these data should be

¹ It is my pleasant duty to acknowledge most gratefully the generous help in *rebus Anatolicis* extended to me by A. Goetze. It went far beyond those points where his name is explicitly mentioned in the following discussions. Without it, I could not have attempted to get an adequate idea of the data, the problems, and the difficulties of the Akkadian context, or even to gather the minimum of information that is indispensable for a Vedologist interested in the Aryan divinities named in the Mitanni treaties, but unable to read Akkadian and to judge on Hurrian grammatical possibilities.

² Cf. P.-E. Dumont, *Indo-Aryan names from Mitanni, Nuzu, and Syro-Palestinian documents* (= R. T. O'Callaghan, *Aram Naharaim* [1948], pp. 148 ff.); B. Landsberger, *JCS* 8 (1954), pp. 129 ff. The Aryan names of the ruling class of the Hurrians have spread over great parts of Asia Minor: A. Goetze, *Hethiter, Churriter and Assyrer* (1936), p. 33.

³ Inferable from the title of Kikkuli's treatise: *a-aš-šu-uš-ša-an-ni* (*KUB* I 13 l. 1). Otherwise in proper names: Piridašua, Bardašua, cf. Dumont apud O'Callaghan; Landsberger. *JCS* 8 (1954), p. 130.

⁴ I leave aside the question of Indian divine names on Cassite documents (most convincing example: the sun-god *Suriša* = Vedic *Sūr(i)yas*, Goetze, *op. cit.*, p. 35 f.). Against recent scepticism: W. Eilers, *Archiv für Orientforschung* 18 (1957), 136b.

⁵ Most recent over-all discussion: M. Mayrhofer, "Zu den arischen Sprachresten in Vorderasien," *Die Sprache*, vol. V, pp. 77-95, containing a great many bibliographical references, which I have used with gratitude.

interpreted as traces of specifically Indo-Aryan speech and religion, or whether they should rather be identified as Proto-Aryan. It is obvious that an answer to it would have considerable historical implications. The historian will devise a theory to explain how 'Indians,' or 'Proto-Indians,' or 'Para-Indians,' or 'Proto-Aryans' could come into Western Asia and exercise the influence inferable from those linguistic traces.

The linguist is entitled to be more modest. At the first step, he will not attempt to offer an explanation in terms of a hypothesis, but to reach a factual decision on the linguistic character of the terms that confront him. Strictly speaking, he is not dealing with 'Indians' or 'Proto-Aryans,' but with 'Indo-Aryan' or 'Proto-Aryan' terms and names. It would be otiose for him to occupy himself with the dilemma: 'Indo-Aryan' or 'Proto-Aryan' speech?—if there were no difference between the two that could be expected to show up in our fragmentary Akkadian and Hittite material.

It is easy to see that in each case where there exists a clearly recognizable difference between Indo-Aryan and Iranian, the terms and names of the Akkadian and Hittite documentation (as far as they are safely identifiable) side with Indo-Aryan—*s* in intervocalic or prevocalic initial positions, which in Iranian appears as *h*, is preserved: *Našaattiya*- (Mitanni treaty): Sanskrit *Nāsatya*, but Iranian **Nāhathya* (Av. *Nāhathya*); *satta*- (Kikkuli): Sanskrit *sapta*, but Iranian *hafta*, *hapta*; the numeral 'one' is *aika*- (Kikkuli): Sanskrit *eka*, but Iranian *aiva*.

However, it is not possible to deny that the forms *Nāsatya*, *sapta* and a numeral *aika* might be Proto-Aryan. As far as *s* is concerned, Indo-Aryan preserves the old situation while Iranian has innovated; as to *aika*, the possibility must be admitted that both **aika* and **aiva* were Proto-Aryan and that the exclusive adoption of **aika* in Indo-Aryan and of *aiva* in Iranian is the result of a later development. The fact that Proto-Aryan **ai* and **au* are replaced in Indo-Aryan by *e* and *o*,

while in old Iranian they are preserved as *ai* and *au* and that *ai* and *au* regularly appear on the Anatolian documents (e.g., Kikkuli's *aika*), is unfortunately inconclusive. It is quite possible that at the time of our oldest Indo-Aryan records (the hymns of the Rigveda) the actual pronunciation of the sounds developed from **ai* and **au*, spoken and written by the tradition as *e* and *o*, was still *ai* and *au*. The pronunciation *e* and *o* can be a secondarily introduced change under the influence of the spoken language on the scholastic recitation.⁶

The interpretation of the 'Aryan' proper names is often highly conjectural. But, in no case do we get a decisive argument against their Indo-Aryan or Old-Indic character.⁷ A chance of finding more distinct clues is offered by the series of Aryan divine names on the Mitanni treaties. In his essay *The Aryan Gods Of The Mitani People* (Kristiania Etnografiske Museums Skrifter Bind 3 Hefte 1; Kristiania, 1921), Sten Konow vigorously maintained that a clear-cut difference between Proto-Aryan and Indo-Aryan divine nomenclature necessarily has to be assumed, and that by taking into account this difference it becomes possible to settle the Indo-Aryan (Vedic) nature of the gods named as witnesses on the treaties.

Sten Konow's arguments have been unduly neglected by several contemporary scholars. It is, for instance, hard to accept T. Burrow's statement (*Sanskrit Language*, p. 30): "It is only the antiquity and conservatism of the Indian tradition, as opposed to the Iranian, that has led scholars to

⁶ Differently J. Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.* I § 35, with an ingenious, but hardly cogent argumentation: weak perfect stems like *pec-*, *sek-*, *sep-* need not have been created in analogy to *sed-* (< **sazd-*) with old *ē*, but can be innovations after *yem-*, *yet-* (Av. *yaet-*) with old **ai*.

⁷ Cf. Dumont, *JAOS* 67 (1947), p. 253. H. S. Nyberg, *Religionen des alten Iran* (1938), p. 332 speaks of a language which is 'arisch, weder indisch noch iranisch, steht aber dem späteren Indisch zunächst.' I cannot see that our linguistic data permit us to make such subtle distinctions and to establish an answer to the theoretical dilemma: Indo-Aryan or Old Indic (theoretically more precise still: Indo-Aryan, Proto-Indian, Old Indic, or Vedic Indic)? Of 'clearly Iranian sound forms' (G. Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 105) Nyberg makes no mention. Widengren, *op. cit.*, p. 104, n. 167 and p. 105, n. 170, and Mayrhofer, *Die Sprache*, vol. V, p. 91, n. 72 fail to offer any valid instance of an 'Iranian' name, which would have to be a name for which an explanation in terms of Indo-Aryan (Old Indic) can be excluded.

regard these Aryans [in the Mitanni realm] as specifically Indo-Aryan." One of Konow's chief points was that the Vedic *Indra* must be distinguished from a presumable Proto-Aryan **Indra* and that the particular role he plays in the RV alone can be held responsible for his appearing in the Mitanni treaty in the company of *Mitra* and *Varuna*. Nor do I find it possible to concur with Mayrhofer's characterization of the relation of Vedic and Iranian to Proto-Aryan religion (*Die Sprache*, Vol. V, p. 90: "Bei den Götternamen [war] . . . was uns nur im Veda in voller Blüte erscheint, doch mit Sicherheit [*sic!*] bereits im Gemeinarischen, aber ebenso wohl im vorzarathustrischen Iranischen vorhanden . . ."), which, while being in full harmony with views held and expressed by H. Oldenberg in his time (cf., e.g., *JRAS* 1909, pp. 1096-98), cannot be derived with any cogency from our actual data, and rather rests on highly questionable simplifications. It is not quite fair to censure for 'overlooking facts' (Mayrhofer, *l. c.*) those who, like Konow, do not take such simplifying generalizations for granted. To be correct, Burrow's verdict might well have to be inverted: It is only the unquestioning acceptance of the conservatism of the Indian tradition, as opposed to the Iranian, that has led some scholars to regard the Aryan gods of the Mitanni treaty to be Proto-Aryan.

There is indeed even better reason today to suspect the dogma of Indian 'conservatism' in continuing Proto-Aryan traditions than there was in 1921 when Konow published his work. Since then our whole approach to the problems connected with the relation of Proto-Aryan to Indian and Iranian religious terms and conceptions has been shown to stand in urgent need of a complete re-orientation by E. Benveniste and L. Renou in their study *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna* (1934). The doubts that were raised as to the necessity of certain of their inferences (cf., e.g., H. Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott* [1939], pp. 46 ff.)—even if they were altogether justified—do not in any way invalidate the correctness of their leading principle: "Dans toute étude de mythologie indo-iranienne, le témoignage védique vaut par sa richesse, le témoignage avestique par sa fidélité" (*op. cit.*, p. 182).

2. The lists of the Aryan gods on the Hatti-Mitanni (KBo I 1 and duplicates) and the Mitanni-Hatti (KBo I 3) treaties read:

KBo I 1 rev. 55 f.
 dingir·meš *mi-it-ra-aš-ši-il* (var. : -el) dingir·meš *ú-ru-ya-na-aš-ši-el*
 dingir *in-dar* dingir·meš *na-ša-a[t-ti-ia-a]n-na*
 KBo I 3 rev. 41
 dingir·meš *mi-it-ra-aš-ši-il* dingir·meš *a-ru-na-aš-ši-il* dingir *in-da-ra*
 dingir·meš *na-ša-at-ti-ia-an-na*

It cannot be doubted, and indeed never was, that the onomastic elements of these texts, which are given in italics in my transcription, have exact equivalents in Vedic religious poetry. Here the stem forms of the names quoted would read: *Mitra-*, *Varuṇa-*, *Indra-*, *Nāsatyā-*.

If asked to cite them in their most common nominative forms, no Vedologist could possibly hesitate to put down the series: *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, *Indraḥ*, *Nāsatyā*.

If further asked to name a Rigvedic verse in which these names appear side by side and in this order, he would have to quote RV 10.125.1bc:

ahām mitrā-vāruṇā ubhā bibharmi
ahām indrāgnī ahām aśvinā ubhā

“I (Speech) carry (‘support, nourish’ or ‘bear [in my womb]’?) both *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, I [carry] *Indra-Agni*, I [carry] both the two *Aśvin*.”

There are two slight variations: instead of *Nāsatyā* our line uses the synonym *Aśvinā*, instead of *Indraḥ* it uses the double name *Indrā-Agnī*. The first of these is altogether irrelevant; the second can be looked upon as due to the wish to create a grammatical parallelism between the three members of the group, which now appear, all three, as duals. It may be noted that the dvandva *Indrāgnī*, in which the second member alone is accented, represents a more recent type than the dvandva *Mitrā-Vāruṇā*, in which both members retain their accent (cf. Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.* II, 2 § 63a and ff.).

It is the merit of G. Dumézil (*Les dieux des Indo-Européens*, Paris 1952, p. 9 ff.) to have pointed out the analogy of the Mitanni series and that of RV 10.125.1bc. Whether or not we follow his interpretation of the rationale of the grouping—and I for my part do not—the parallelism remains a fact worthy of consideration. There is no justification for obliterating this potential clue by choosing to quote the gods of the Mitanni

treaties in an arbitrarily changed order (Burrow, *op. cit.*, p. 28).

The Akkadian lists show certain special features which must be examined before we can be at least reasonably sure that they are indeed meant to represent the series: *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, *Indraḥ*, *Nāsatyā*.

1. The name *Varuṇa-* is spelt in two different ways. In KBo I 1 rev. 55 the orthography is: *ú-ru-ya-na-*; in KBo I 3 rev. 41 it is: *a-ru-na-*. Since in cuneiform writing the signs transcribed by *u*, *ú*, *ya* seem interchangeable,⁸ the first spelling may be interpreted as meant for *ya-ru-na*.⁹ The second form can be accounted for in different ways.

It may be due, firstly, to nothing more than a mistake, committed by a scribe to whom the name was not familiar. It is possible, however, that it represents an actual variant of the name, introduced by a Hittite who connected it with Hittite *aruna-* ‘sea.’ *Varuṇa* is in fact, closely associated with the waters, especially the ‘sea’ (*samudra*), in the RV. But would a Hittite know enough about a god of the Mitanni to be able to play with his name in this ingenious way? I should rather prefer to envisage the possibility that the compound *mitrāvaruṇā* was divided incorrectly, not into the two duals *mitrā* and *varuṇā*, but into the duals **mitrāu* and **aruṇā* (cf. English *adder*, *apron*, originated from wrong word division in ME expressions like *a naddre* > *an addre*, *a napron* > *an apron*).¹⁰

⁸ Cf. Friedrich, *Hethitisches Elementarbuch* I §§ 6b, 17a.

⁹ A. Goetze writes: ‘I do not think that you might simply read *ya-ru-na*; one might suppose that the scribe (for reasons not known to me) understood (or explained for himself) *ya-ru-na* standing for *uru-ya-na* (which may have conveyed some sense to him).’

¹⁰ Cf. also the Avestan spelling *arəmaiti* for expected **arəmaiti*, obviously to be explained as due to a wrong analysis of the sandhi in the expression: **spəntərəmaiti* or, rather, its Middle Iranian equivalent.

Of course, all this must remain guesswork. As matters stand, we can count ourselves fortunate that the context permits no doubt; the two spellings are representations of the name that appears in Indo-Aryan as *Varuṇa*.

2. Each name is preceded by the ideogram *dingir* 'god' or *dingir-meš* 'gods.' These ideograms are most likely meant as 'determinatives'—written, hardly spoken, signals indicating the nature of the following word as a divine name in the singular and plural respectively. ^d*in-da-ra* is *Indrah*, nom. sing.; ^d*meš na-ša-at-ti-ia-* is *Nāsatyā*, nom. dual—the distinction of dual and plural, which must be expressed in Aryan, being neglected, as it is done by us when we briefly refer to 'the Nāsatyas' instead of saying more accurately: 'the two Nāsatyas.' It seems to follow that ^d*meš mi-it-ra* and ^d*meš ū-ru-ua-na-* is equivalent to the two dual nominatives *Mitrā* and *Varuṇā* (thus first Ed. Meyer, *SBPAW*, 1908, p. 76, n. 2, followed, *e.g.*, by H. Jacobi *JRAS*, 1909, p. 723, St. Konow, *The Aryan Gods*, p. 4, J. Friedrich, *Orientalia*, vol. 12, p. 314), which when compounded in Vedic Sanskrit actually mean: '*Mitra* and *Varuṇa* [who form a pair].' In a Vedic compound that expresses an aggregate of two both members take the dual form.

Traces of this archaic type of compound can be found also in Old-Iranian (Avestan: *pasu-vīra* 'beast and man,' *miθra-ahura* '*Miθra* and *Ahura*') and perhaps in some other Indo-European languages (*cf.* Wackernagel, *Altind Gramm.*, II 1 § 63a). Catullus' *Veneres Cupidinesque* (3.1; 13.12) may be a late echo of this construction—preserved in a ritual formula—meaning actually: 'Venus and Cupido' (E. Schwyzer, *IF* 14, p. 28 ff.). Apart from the superabundant *-que*, the Latin expression would precisely correspond to the Akkadian orthographical rendering of *Mitrā-Varuṇā* in that it replaces an older dual, that has vanished from the language, by a plural.

From the purely grammatical point of view, the possibility that ^d*meš mi-it-ra-* and ^d*meš ū-ru-ua-na-* are meant as proper plurals cannot be excluded. Both names do occur, though only occasionally, as plurals in the Veda:

RV 7. 38. 4cd

abhī saṃrājo vāruṇo gṛṇanti
abhī mitrāso aryamā sajósāḥ

"the kings *Varuṇa*, the *Mitras* (nom. plu.), *Aryaman*, in union, welcome [it]"

AV 3. 4. 6ab

īndrendra manuṣyāṣḥ párehi
sám hy ájñāsthā vāruṇaiḥ samvidānāḥ

"O *Indra, Indra*, go away from the human woman, for you have made a pact ('given a promise': *sam + jā*) coming together with the *Varuṇas* (instr. pl.)."¹¹

The plural seems to designate the god as being in the company of other related deities: *Mitrās* '*Mitra* and so on,' *Varuṇais* 'with *Varuṇa* and so on.' Similarly *Aryamānas* in RV 3. 54. 18a would have to be taken, according to my suggestion (*Mitra and Aryaman* [1957], p. 13) as '*Aryaman* and so on.'

However, considering the extreme frequency of the dual compound *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, the likewise extreme rarity of the plural forms, and, further, the fact that never does such a plural appear side by side with another one of the same type—obviously because in '*Mitra* and so on' *Varuṇa* would be included, and *Mitra* in '*Varuṇa* and so on,' I should think the balance of the evidence decidedly favors the assumption that the Akkadian forms correspond to a dual dvandva.

3. The first two names and the last are followed by syllables which cannot be identified as either Aryan or Akkadian. Since the gods in question are among those worshipped by the Mitanni, we may interpret them as Hurrian grammatical elements, assuming that these names were given in a form that was, or could be, used in Hurrian speech.

This assumption works without difficulty in the case of the *-na* which is added after the last name: *-na* can be the Hurrian plural-indicating particle *-na*¹² (*cf.* J. Friedrich, *Orientalia*, vol. 12, p. 315). *Na-ša-at-ti-ia-an-na* would then literally be 'the Nāsatyas.'

More problematic seems the element *šil/šel* or rather *ššil/ššel* that follows each of the first two

¹¹ The verse seems to refer to Indra's adulterous relations to human wives (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Ahalyā legend). For *manuṣyāṣḥ* read *mānuṣyāṣḥ*? Whitney's numerous conjectures appear uncalled for and arbitrary.

¹² E. A. Speiser, *Introduction to Hurrian* (*Annual of the Am. Schools of Orient. Research* 20 [1940/41], p. 101 ff.).

names, since it is not met with in precisely this form in Hurrian documents. According to J. Friedrich, *Orientalia*, vol. 12, p. 316, it might contain an indication of the (grammatical) duality of each name (somehow related to Hurrian *šin* 'two'). I do not think this completely convincing. Apart from the several 'scruples' raised by Friedrich himself, we should have expected the duality to be emphasized in the case of the *Nāsatyas*, who are not only grammatically but factually two persons, rather than in the case of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, who factually are one person each. The RV seems to show where we should have the *šil/šel*, if it really were something like 'two, the two, both': 10.125.1b *Mitrā-Varuṇā_uḥhā . . . Aśvinā_uḥhā*.

It would be logically correct if the names of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, after being characterized as non-singular forms by the determinatives *dingir·meš*, were followed by an indication of the factual singularity of the gods. Apparently this is not the case.

A. Goetze would explain the expressions in quite a different way. Following his analysis,¹³ we should obtain something like 'to God *Mitra* belonging ones.' The difficulty is that this furnishes a type of expression that is neither common in Vedic nor found in Avestan. The nearest equivalent I could think of would be the Vedic hapax: *Mitrā-Varuṇavant-* 'accompanied by *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*.' It qualifies the two *Nāsatyas* in RV 8. 35.13:

Mitrā-Vāruṇavantā utā dhārmavantā
Marūtvantā jaritūr gacchatho hāvam . . . Aśvinā

¹³ A. Goetze writes: "The only way in which I can understand *dingir·meš Mi-it-ra-aš-ši-il/el* is this:

It is subject of an intransitive verb, *i. e.*, the form which with a transitive verb would mark the object. This form ends in the singular in *-n*, in the plural in *-ian* (<*-šan*). However under certain conditions the *-(a)n* would not appear on the noun itself (see *JAOS* 60 [1940], pp. 217-23). Here we have the *-(a)n*-less form in Akkadian context. The chain of suffixes is as follows: *dingir·mešMitra=š*: plural indefinite 'Mitra-gods' (to this the plural determinative properly belongs).

Mitra=šše < *Mitra=š=we*: 'genitive' (in reality an adj. of appurtenance, see *RHA* 39 [1940], pp. 193-204), "belonging to Mitra-gods"

Mitra=šše=l: 'accusative,' "some (indefinite) belonging to Mitra-gods."

The plural "Mitra-gods" probably represents the Skt. dualis *Mitrā/Mitrau*.

dingir·mešŭ·ru-ya-na-aš-ši-el should be explained in analogous fashion."

"You two *Aśvins*! Come to the singer's call, accompanied by *Mitra* (personified 'contract') and *Varuṇa* (personified 'true speech') and accompanied by *Dharma* (personified 'lawfulness' or the like), accompanied by the *Maruts* . . ."

A final, valid decision is at present hardly available. We shall have to wait for a *ššil/ššel* actually occurring in an unambiguous Hurrian context or for our list turning up in a Hittite translation.¹⁴ Till then, I tentatively proceed on the assumption, which appears to me most likely, that the text refers to forms actually used and superabundantly attested in the RV: the nom. of the dual compound *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, the nom. sing. *Indraḥ*, and the nom. dual *Nāsatyā*. Anyway, the essential points of our argument will not be affected, if further evidence should actually compel us to render (and interpret) the line of the treaty somewhat as follows: "[Gods] belonging to (accompanied by) god *Mitra*, gods belonging to (accompanied by) god *Varuṇa*, [in particular:] god *Indra*, the gods *Nāsatyā* (who are called *Mitrā-Vāruṇavantā* in RV 6.35.13)."

3. After the terms of the treaty are stated, a prohibition is given against hiding, changing or destroying it. The text of KBo I 1 rev. 38 f. continues (similarly KBo I 3 rev. 10 f., which is less fully extant):¹⁵ ". . . May the gods of the secret(?)¹⁶ and the gods whom we call lords of the oath, whom we are herewith calling, stand by, may they hear and may they be witnesses."

There follow the names of Hittite gods (40-53) and then, after a break, marked by a dividing line, the names of Mitanni gods, wedged in between which appear the names of our five Aryan divinities (in KBo I 3, the order of the Hittite and Mitanni gods is inverted and curses and blessings inserted between them).

Then we read (KBo I 1 rev. 58 ff., 70 ff.): "May they (the named gods) stand by [when]

¹⁴ A. Goetze shows me a small fragment of the treaty in Hittite translation (*KUB* XXVI No. 34). There is, then, hope for further evidence.

¹⁵ Cf. E. F. Weidner's German translation in *Bogha-zköi-Studien* 8, p. 29 and p. 49, which I follow, introducing certain precisions I owe to A. Goetze.

¹⁶ A. Goetze doubts the correctness of the text. He contemplates 'gods of the assembly' (*pu-uz-ri* 'secret' erroneously written for *pu-uh-ri* 'assembly'). The general gods (those of the 'assembly') would be distinguished from the special gods ('the lords of the oath'). Cf. also below pp. 307 and 316 n. 26.

these words of the treaty [are pronounced], may they hear and may they be witnesses. If thou, Mattiāza, son of a king, and ye the Hurri people do not keep the words of this treaty, may the gods who are the lords of the oath destroy you, thee . . . and ye the Hurri people, together with your country, together with your women, and together with your possessions . . .”

“If you . . . keep the words of this treaty and oath, may these gods protect thee, Mattiāza, together with thy wife, the daughter of the king of the Hatti-[land], her sons and grandsons, [and] ye the Hurri people, together with your wives, your sons, and together with your country. And may the country Mitanni return to its position as of old, may it prosper and may it increase . . .”

Since the Mitanni prince Mattiāza himself, his father Tušratta and other Mitanni princes bear names that are unmistakably Aryan,¹⁷ the obvious presumption is that the Aryan gods in the list are gods of the royal family—and perhaps of part of the nobility—while the Mitanni gods are those of the ‘Hurri people.’

Looking at the great many names in the enumeration of the Hatti and the Mitanni gods, one is tempted to ask why of possible Aryan gods only five are mentioned. In looking for an answer, we have, of course, to be cautious. Several reasons may be held responsible for this situation. Those Mitanni rulers may not have happened to know any more; or they may have selected some who were, for one reason or other, particular tutelary divinities of the royal family or thought to be in some other way especially representative.

The passages from the text I have quoted above make it possible, however, to look for a more specific motive. We are entitled, if not compelled, to ask: Were these gods specifically ‘lords of the oath’? Was it one of their particular functions to protect treaties, solemnly given promises, vows and oaths? Were they believed to punish the breach of a treaty and to reward those who kept their solemn promises?

¹⁷ Although the linguistic analysis of quite a few details is still doubtful, the cumulative evidence for the Aryan character of the names of the Mitanni dynasty (cf. Goetze, *Hethiter, Churriter und Assyrer*, p. 33) is strong enough to preclude a doubt with regard to Mattiāza (Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, p. 84, n. 32). “The reading *Mat-ti-ū-a-za* is not absolute certain; other possibilities are *Sat-ti-ū-a-za* (thus Landsberger) or *Kur-ti-ū-a-za* (thus proposed by Güterbock)”: A. Goetze.

Approaching the problem in this way, we are looking in the same direction as Konow did in his *Aryan Gods* . . . But we differ in several respects.

Konow really asks and answers only the much vaguer question whether the Aryan gods of the treaties can by their nature ‘have something to do with the treaty itself.’ Thus he is satisfied to motivate, e.g., the naming of *Indra* by his being ‘the god of war and battle whose activity led to the conclusion of the peace.’

Moreover, we prefer a more wary procedure. There is no gainsaying the fact that Konow’s discussion is burdened with a number of rather speculative arguments—especially in connection with *Indra*—that raise and attempt to settle points which cannot be strictly verified.

On the whole, it appears that in Konow’s treatment there is too much reliance on the general character of the Vedic gods in question, as it is formulated by modern scholars, and too little confrontation with specific Vedic statements.

I hope the following references and discussions will be helpful in partly substantiating, partly specifying, and partly correcting Konow’s conclusions. It will become clear that we can give more strictly operational answers to our questions: Do *Mitra*, *Varuṇa*, *Indra*, and the two *Nāsatyas* protect treaties in the RV? and: Is it likely or provable that they did so in Proto-Aryan times?

4.1 MITRA: “It is quite natural that the list [of the Aryan gods of the Mitanni treaty] is opened by *Mitra*, the god of compacts and the personification of friendship”: Konow, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

RV 3. 59. 1a

mitró jánān yātayati bruvānāh

“*Mitra* (God Contract), when named, causes people to make mutual arrangements (which establish peace).” Cf. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman* (1957), p. 39 f.

3. 59. 3cd

*ādityāsya vratām upakṣiyānto
vayāṃ mitrásya sumataū syāma*

“living under the vow of the *Āditya* (i. e., *Mitra*), may we be under the benevolence of *Mitra* ([God] Contract).”

The Avesta, especially the *Mihr Yašt* (Yt. 10) is even more explicit and eloquent in depicting *Miθra* as the protector of those that are faithful to their contracts and as the enemy of those who

'belie' their 'contract' or 'contractual word' (*miθra·druj*). For material see my *Mitra and Aryaman*, pp. 24-38 and J. Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra* (1959), p. 26 ff., where *Miθra's* role as 'the guarantor of orderly international relations,' as 'the god of the international treaty,' is rightly stressed, and pp. 75 ff., *passim*.

Since A. Meillet's well known paper in *JA X* (1907), p. 143 ff., it must be considered as firmly established that already in Proto-Aryan times there existed a god **Mitra* 'Contract, Treaty,' a personified and divinized abstraction. The Avestic appellative noun *miθra-* means 'contract, treaty,' so does the Rigvedic *mitra-*, e. g., in 10.34.14a, 10.108.3c, 10.89.9a (*cf.* Thieme, *Fremdling im RV*, p. 139, *Mitra and Aryaman*, pp. 20, 62). This meaning is clearly recognizable also in bahuvrīhis like *dróghamitra* 'he whose contract (contractual word) is a lie,' *hitámitra* 'by whom a contract/treaty is (was) concluded' (*mitram dhā* 'to establish, conclude a treaty': *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 39 ff., *RV* 10.132.5b *hité mitré* 'when a contract is concluded'): *cf.* H. W. Bailey, *TPS* (1953), p. 40; *amitra* means 'without contract,' i. e., 'not recognizing the sacredness of contracts' (*Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 62), only occasionally in the plural (in the expression *ubháyā amitrāḥ*, *RV* 2.12.8): 'not bound by mutual contracts' = 'enemies.'

The mention of *Mitra* in the Mitanni treaties, consequently, would be meaningful on either assumption: that the list is Indo-Aryan and that it is Proto-Aryan.

4.2 VARUṆA: "We also easily understand why the name of *Varuṇa* follows. He watches over solemn engagements and obligations connected with the treaty": Konow, *op. cit.*, p. 38. "*Varuṇa* it is who watches over oaths, ordeals and solemn verbal undertakings": *op. cit.*, p. 6.

AV. 1.10.3 [*yad*] *yád uvákthānṛtam*
jīhváyā vṛjinám bahú
rājñas tvā satyádharmaṇo
muñcāmi váruṇād ahám

"When you have spoken with your tongue any untruth, manifold crookedness—it is I (the priest) who loosen you from king *Varuṇa*, whose establishment is true (or 'truth')."

AV 19.44.8ab
bahv idám rájan varuṇá-

-nṛtam āha pūruṣaḥ
tásmāt sahasravīrya
muñcá naḥ páry āmhasaḥ

"Man speaks here manifold untruth, O king *Varuṇa*. From this anxiety release us, you of a thousand strengths."

RV 7.49.3ab
yāsām rájā váruṇo yāti mádhye
satyānṛté avapásyañ jánānām . . .

"[The heavenly waters] in whose midst king *Varuṇa* walks, looking down on the truth and untruth of the people . . ."

The whole hymn AV 4.16, one of the best known glorifications of *Varuṇa*, must be understood, as was shown by H. Lüders, *Varuṇa I*, p. 29 ff., as the versified speech of a judge addressing a witness about to take an oath. If, indeed, any god of the Vedic pantheon is 'a lord of the oath,' it is *Varuṇa*. He even might be called 'a god of the secret' (if I may quote a perhaps not genuine reading from the treaty):

AV 4.16.2cd
dvaú samniśádyā [yad] yán mantráyete
rājā tād veda váruṇas tṛtīyaḥ

"What[ever] two people, having sat down together, talk, king *Varuṇa* knows that as the third one."

In *RV* 1.136.3f *Varuṇa* is explicitly identified with *Mitra*: both are *yātayajjana* 'causing people to make mutual agreements': *mitrás táyor váruṇo yātayajjanaḥ* "Among these two (*Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, mentioned in the preceding line) *Varuṇa*, insofar as he causes people to make mutual agreements, is *Mitra* . . ." *Cf.* *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 41.

In particular, the couple *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* together induce people to make agreements and preserve peace:

RV 5.65.6ab
yuvām mitrā_imaṃ jānaṃ
yátathaḥ sám ca nayathaḥ

"You two, *Mitra* [and *Varuṇa*] keep in agreement these people (host and poets, in this case) and lead them together."

5.72.2ab *vraténa stho dhruváksemā*
dhármaṇā yātayájjanā

"You two (*Mitra* and *Varuṇa*) are of firm peace through vow (you secure peace by seeing to it that vows are kept); you cause people to make mutual agreements through [your] establishment [of truth]." Cf. *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 41, p. 67 ff.

The dvandva *Mitrā-Vāruṇā*, which occurs in the RV not less than 90 times, has no terminological equivalent in the Avesta. The Avesta has not even a trace of a god **Varuṇa*-. We can, then, by no means be sure whether there existed a Proto-Aryan **Varuṇa*, much less of a Proto-Aryan dvandva **Mitrā-Varuṇā*.

4.3 VARUṆA and ASURA: I well realize that there would be no doubt as to the existence of a Proto-Aryan god **Varuṇa*, if a majority vote could settle such a question. Whoever dissents from this generally accepted belief is liable to be blamed for not giving 'serious reasons' (cf., e. g., G. Widengren, *Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 11, n. 39). It should be obvious, however, that the burden of the proof must lie with the believers and not with the doubters, since there is no *prima facie* evidence for an alleged Proto-Aryan term **Varuṇa*, which could consist only in an exactly corresponding term occurring in Iranian, too.¹⁸ It certainly is true that a great many ideas connected with the Vedic *Varuṇa* and e. g. the Avestic *Ahura Mazda* do correspond. But even if they were still more numerous, the Proto-Aryan antiquity of the name *Varuṇa* would not follow with any necessity.

Assuming the existence of a Proto-Aryan divine name **Varuṇa*, we would have to explain why its linguistic equivalent does not appear in the Avesta. This is not easy. Of the names of the four chief Vedic *Ādityas*: *Varuṇa*, *Mitra*, *Aryaman* and *Bhaga*, the last three have clear and incontestable correspondences in the Avesta—*Miθra*, *Airyaman*, *Baya*—while the first is conspicuously lacking. This is all the more singular since *ṛta* 'truth,' the ethical concept most intimately associated with *Varuṇa* in the RV, is in its Avestic form (*ərəta/aša*) a central concept of Zarathustrian religion. The general affinity of the Rigvedic *Āditya* terminology and that of Zarathustra and the younger

Avesta is so close that deviations must be taken seriously. While, for example, the correspondence of Rigvedic *asura* and Avestic *ahura* establishes a Proto-Aryan religious term, the lack of an Avestic linguistic equivalent of *āditya* and that of a Rigvedic one of Avestic *spənta* creates a problem and may turn out to be significant. So does the non-existence of an Avestic **Vouruna*.

Just as the Rigvedic *Mitra* forms a pair with *Varuṇa*, designated by the dvandva *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, the Avestic *Miθra* appears, on several occasions, coupled with *Ahura* in the dvandva *Miθra-Ahura* (Ny. 1.7; 2.12; Yt. 10.113; 145) or *Ahura-Miθra* (Y. 2.11; 6.10; 17.10), *Ahuraēibyā-Miθraēibyā* (Y. 1.11; 3.13; 4.16; 7.13; 22.13).

There can be no doubt that of the two Avestic dvandvas *Miθra-Ahura* and *Ahura-Miθra*, the first one represents the older type. It conforms to the rhythmic rule—transparent from the Veda and still known to *Pāṇini* (2.2.34)—that in a dvandva the shorter term tends to precede the longer one (cf. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Composés*, p. 47 ff., H. Lüders, *Varuṇa* I, p. 8). *Ahura-Miθra* must be due to a rearrangement of the terms, the reason for which seems obvious: *Ahura* as the greater god was given precedence as in the phrase of Artaxerxes III A³ Pa 24 f., R. C. Kent, *Old Persian* 2 [1953], p. 156): *Aura-mazdā utā Miθra bayā*. Cf. also vārtt. 4 on Pāṇ. 2.2.34 (Wackernagel, *Altind. Gramm.* II.1 § 71a a).

This transposition of the terms of the old dvandva *Miθra-Ahura* clearly presupposes that *Ahura* was taken as a designation of the great god of Zarathustra: *Ahura Mazda*. However, there are good reasons for believing that originally it was not meant in this way. As Benveniste, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, pp. 44 ff., has shown, the Avesta originally does not designate *Ahura Mazda* by the simple term *ahura*. Rather, the use of *ahura* in the Avesta fits together with specific uses of *asura* in the RV.

As other gods and some demons, *Mitrā-Varuṇā* can be, and indeed are characteristically often, designated as *asura*; the Avestic *Miθra* is clearly called *ahura* twice (Yt. 10.25; 69).

The RV knows also a god *Asura*, distinguished from, but occasionally working together with, *Mitrā-Varuṇā*. Cf., e. g.:

RV 5.63.3d

dyāṃ varṣayatho ásurasya māyáyā

¹⁸ Unable to pronounce judgment on the Iranian evidence in its totality, I sought information from W. B. Henning. He writes: 'Irgend einen Beweis für die Existenz eines iranischen Gottes **Varuṇa* hat noch niemand zu erbringen vermocht. Es gibt keinen [Beweis] . . .'

"You two (*Mitrā-Varuṇā*) make rain the sky through the magic power of *Asura*."

and RV 5.83.6d

apó niṣīncann ásurah pitā nah

"Our father, the *Asura*, who sprinkles down the waters."

In the Yasna Haptanhāiti ('si riche en survivances mythiques': Benveniste, *op. cit.*, p. 46), the waters (*āpō*) are qualified on several instances (e. g., Y. 38.3; 68.10) as *ahurānīš ahurahyā/ahurahe* '[wives] of Ahura, [daughters] of Ahura.' There is no reason whatsoever not to connect this directly with the statements of RV 5.83.6d and 5.63.3d.

Mitrā-Varuṇā are joined with *Asura* not only in giving rain, but also in 'protecting their vows,' that is, as guardians of truth:

RV 5.63.7bc

*vratā rakṣeṭhe ásurasya māyáyā
rténa vísvam bhúvanam ví rājatah*

"You two (*Mitrā-Varuṇā*) protect your vows (= those given to you and by you) through the magic power of *Asura*; through truth (*ṛta*) you rule the universe . . ." Most closely corresponds:

Ny. 2.12 *miθra-ahura bərəzəta
aiθyajanha ašavana
yazamaide*

"We worship *Mithra* and *Ahura*, the high, who are without danger (i. e., 'who protect from danger'), who are characterized by truth (i. e., 'protect, and work through truth' [*aša = ṛta*])."

It is highly probable that the Vedic dvandva *Mitrā-Varuṇā* and the Avestic dvandva *Miθra-Ahura* are the reflections of a Proto-Aryan dvandva, in which the name **Mitra* was coupled with that of another divinity as the second term. But it is simply an error to take it for granted that this second term must have been **Varuna*. An analysis of the Vedic and Avestic terminology, exacted without reference to any preconceived theory, recommends, on the contrary, the positing of a Proto-Aryan dvandva: **Mitrā-Asurā*. Not only is the name **Asura*—in contrast to a name **Varuna*—safely reconstructible for Proto-Aryan, but *Asura* is also traceable as working together with *Mitra* [and *Varuṇa*] in the RV. Since the

presumable Proto-Aryan dvandva does not occur in Vedic, we may conclude that it was replaced by *Mitrā-Varuṇā*.

4.4 INDRA: S. Konow's motivation (*op. cit.*, p. 38) for the appearance of the name *Indra* in the treaty list seems too vague (*cf.*, above, p. 306) to be convincing. If we look at the treaty text itself, it turns out to be untenable. *Indra* is named not amongst the gods of the victorious, but of the vanquished party, the Mitanni dynasty—by the terms of the treaty, Prince Mattiūza in fact becomes a vassal of the Hatti kings. As 'the god of war and battles,' *Indra* is supposed to lead to victory:

RV 2.12.9

*yásmān ná rté vijáyante jánāso
yám yúdhymānā ávase hávante . . .
. . . sá janāsa índrah*

"Without whom people do not become victorious, whom they call for help when fighting . . . he, you peoples, is *Indra*."

In this case, he would have led his worshippers, the Mitanni dynasty, to defeat. It is somewhat less than likely that his naming should allude to, and emphasize, his role in the preceding war.

Already Dumézil (*Naissance d'archanges*, p. 33 ff.) saw that it is one of *Indra's* functions in the RV to avenge the faithless breach of covenants. He aptly quotes:

RV 10.89.9

*prá yé mitráṃ práryamānaṃ durévāh
prá samgírah prá várunam minánti
ny ámitreṣu vadhám índra túmraṃ
vṛṣan vṛṣānam aruṣám śíṣihi*

"Sharpen thy strong weapon, *Indra*, against those without contract ('who do not recognize the sacredness of contracts/treaties'), who deceive/betray a contract (concluded between former or potential enemies) [and thereby: God *Mitra*], a hospitality (the contract existing between guest and host) [and thereby: God *Aryaman*], agreements (agreed upon by mutual friends), and true speech (in general, or in particular: 'a solemn oath') [and thereby: God *Varuṇa*]." For the details of my interpretation *cf. Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 62 ff.

It does seem unfortunate that Dumézil did not

follow up this track, which he discovered himself.¹⁹ For him, the difficulty is that it leads away from the point he had firmly made up his mind to reach: an accommodation of the Mitanni-Aryan gods within his 'idéologie des trois fonctions.' Considering the perfect ease with which almost any series of men or gods divisible by three²⁰ can be accounted for by the terms of Dumézil's theory, as J. Brough experimentally established by applying it to data of the Old Testament (*BSOAS*, 22, pp. 69-85), we may forego investigating this approach. Happily, for our present purpose we are concerned not with what Dumézil, but with what the Vedic poet says. He is unequivocal. The Vedic poet insists on *Indra* slaying the *amitra* 'him who does not recognize the sacredness of contracts/treaties' to the point of becoming repetitious:

RV 1.63.2; 63.5; 100.5; 133.1; 3.30.16; 6.25.2; 33.1; 44.17; 46.6; 46.8; 73.2; 3; 7.18.9; 25.2; 32.25 8.16.10; 10.103.4; 152.3.

More generally: *Indra* punishes untruth. H. Lommel, *Der arische Kriegsgott*, p. 17, n. 2, does not think this characteristic²¹ and defines: "Er (*Indra*) grollt nicht, er kennt im allgemeinen keinen Zorn über ein Vergehen . . . Er straft kein Unrecht . . . er fragt nicht nach Recht und Unrecht." The Vedic poet himself would dissent most eloquently:

RV 2.12.10

*yāḥ śáśvato máhy éno dádhānān
ámānyamānāñ chārvā jaghāna . . .
śá janāsa índraḥ*

"Who has slain with the arrow those committing great guilt, one after the other (*śáśvatas*), when they were not thinking [of him] . . . he, you peoples, is *Indra*!" Compare the analogous idea

¹⁹ While admitting in the text (*op. cit.*, p. 33) that the explanation of *Indra* as a guarantor of the treaty is possible, Dumézil surprisingly states in the 'Sommaire' (*op. cit.*, p. 15): 'cette explication échoue pour *Indra* . . .'

²⁰ To say nothing of those, exceedingly numerous, cases where a series is not so divisible in fact, but has to be adjusted by the devices of adding, subtracting, splitting or combining.

²¹ According to Lommel, *op. cit.*, p. 7, the subjective preference accorded to certain groups of details in the picture of a given god would be a necessary, but objectionable, feature of historical analysis in contradistinction to Lommel's own method.

held with reference to *Miṭra* in Yt. 10.19 (*Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 34).

RV 7.104.8

*yó mā pákena mánasā cárantam
abhicāṣte árṛtebhir vácobhir
āpa iva kāśínā sámgrbhīta
ásann astv áсата índra vaktá*

"He who addresses me, who is walking about with an innocent mind, with words without truth (*i. e.*, who has said wrongly to me: 'you sorcerer': v. 15)—like water seized with the hand, let him, who is about to speak what is not (about to take a false oath) be one who is not (let him be annihilated), O *Indra*."

7.104.13cd

*hánti rákṣo hánty ásad vādantam
ubhāv índrasya prásitau śáyāte*

"He (*Soma*) slays harm (*i. e.*, the evil spirits and sorcerers who inflict harm), he slays him who is speaking what is not—both (the harm and the liar) shall lie [captured] in *Indra's* net." *Soma* plays his role, of course, only insofar as he exhilarates and invigorates *Indra*, the actual fighter. Cf. also Y. 9.20.

7.104.16

*yó máyātum yátudhānéty áha
yó vā rakṣāḥ śúcir asmīty áha
índras táṃ hantu mahatā vadhéna
víśvasya jantór adhamás padīṣṭa*

"Who says to me, who is a non-sorcerer: 'You sorcerer,' or who, being [himself] a harmer (= a sorcerer), says: 'I am clean'—let *Indra* slay him with his great club, let him (the sorcerer) fall [so as to be] the lowest of all [living] creation."²²

The functions of *Indra* and *Varuṇa* may be opposed in order to demarcate their respective domains:

7.83.9ab

*vṛtrāny anyāḥ samithéṣu jighnate
vratāny anyó abhi rakṣate sādā*

"The one (*Indra*) smashes the defences [of the

²² Cf. Bo I 1 rev. 28: '. . . Mattiṣyaza is not to contemplate any calumny against Bijaššili, his brother, and not to instigate another man to calumny against Bijaššili . . .'

attacked enemy] in the battles, the other (*Varuṇa*) protects the vows always.”

But this confrontation, which plays on the similarity of the words *vṛtrā* (characteristically associated with *Indra*) and *vratā* (characteristically associated with *Varuṇa*), does not exhaustively define their relationship. The essential affinity of *Indra* and *Varuṇa*, which leads to the formation of the dvandva *Indrā-Varuṇā*, consists in the fact that both of them punish those who sin against truth and in particular break their contractual word:

7. 85. 2cd

*yuvām tām indrāvaruṇāv amitrān
hatām pārācaḥ śārvā viśūcaḥ*

“You two, *Indra* and *Varuṇa*, slay with the arrow those without contract (those who do not keep their contractual word) [when they are] turned away, turned asunder [in flight before you].”

4.5 *INDRA* and *Vṛθraγna*: The name *Indra* appears twice in the Avesta (Vd. 10. 9; 19. 43) as that of a bad demon (*daēva*) together with *Saurva* (Vedic *Śarva*; AV, VS +) and *Nāphaiθya* (Vedic *Nāsatya*). He has shared the common fate of the other **daivas* ‘the heavenly,’ who were demonized throughout, with the conspicuous exception of *Haoma* = Vedic *Soma*, whereas the old **asuras* (e. g., **Mitra*, **Aryaman*) continued to exist as gods side by side with *Ahura Mazdā* in the younger Avesta. While the Rigvedic *Indra* is occasionally called an *asura*, he is most frequently designated as *deva*.

The facts call for the reconstruction of a ‘heavenly (**daiva*) **Indra*’ for Proto-Aryan times. Whether *Indra*, still more originally, was the name of hero, divinized later on, as Benveniste and Renou, *Vṛtra et Vṛθragna*, p. 168 ff., believe, is irrelevant in our context. Urgent, by contrast, is the question whether we can credit the Proto-Aryan **Indra* with the function attributed to the Vedic *Indra*—in addition to many others of quite a different nature—of victoriously fighting untruth and avenging the faithless breach of contracts or treaties. If this were so, he would have developed into his explicit contrary in Iran since, in the Bundehiś, *Indra* is the special enemy of Aša Vahišta ‘the Best Truth.’²³

The Avestan god who protects treaties by punishing those who break them is, in the first place, *Miθra* ([God] Contract), himself. He wields as his weapon the club (*vazra*), as the Vedic *Indra* his *vajra*. *Miθra* is *vṛθraγastama* ‘most victorious’ (Yt. 10. 98), *Indra* is *vṛtrahan*. As a victoriously fighting hero, the Avestan *Miθra* resembles, in fact, the Rigvedic *Indra* so closely that, since H. Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig* (1924), p. 57, there is a widespread tendency to assume that the Avestan *Miθra*, who is an *ahura* (Yt. 10. 25; 69), has borrowed a great number of features from the old *Indra*, who was a **daiva*.

The situation may have to be interpreted altogether differently. The assumption that one god has borrowed certain traits from another one becomes necessary, and hence justifiable, only if these traits do not fit his fundamental character or are in glaring contradiction to others. Now, the Avestan *Miθra* evidently stays in character and behaves with perfect consistency if, in protecting the sanctity of covenants, he not only rewards the faithful, but also punishes the deceitful. He cannot give victory to those who keep their treaty without helping to defeat those who do not. Why should not the Avesta have preserved Proto-Aryan ideas and the RV have made an innovation by making *Indra* the executive, as it were, of the gods who are the guardians of truth and covenants (as in RV 10. 89. 9)? Even the Rigvedic *Mitra*, in whose image the benign traits are usually emphasized, has snares in which to catch transgressors: RV 2. 27. 16; 7. 65. 3, and may show wrath: RV 7. 62. 4 (cf. *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 51 ff. and 58). It is true, the picture of the Avestan *Miθra*, victoriously fighting from his chariot those who belie their contractual word (*miθra-druj*) and fight against their contract-partners (*aiwi-miθri*), so eloquently evoked in Yt. 10. 124 ff., has no match, as far as colorful distinctness goes, in what the Rigvedic poet says about *Mitra* and *Mitrā-Varuṇā*. Yet RV 8. 25. 2 speaks of *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* as *tānā nā rathyā* ‘charioteers as it were in person’; 5. 63. 1 opens: *ṛtasya gōpāv ādhi tiṣṭatho rātham* ‘as the protectors of truth you mount the chariot.’ Even more explicit is AV 4. 29. 1 and 7:

*manvé vām mitrāvaruṇāv ṛtāvṛdhau
sācetasau drūhvaṇo yaū nudéthe
prā satyāvānam āvatho bhāreṣu . . .
yāyo rāthaḥ satyāvartmarjūraśmir
mithuyā cārantam abhiyāti dūśāyan . . .*

²³ For references, cf. Bartholomae, *Altiran. Wb.*, s. v. *Indra*; B. T. Anklesaria, *Zand-Akāsik* (*Greater Bundehiśn*) (1956), ch. V, 1 (p. 55).

"I think of you, *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, who are strong through truth, of one mind, who drive away the liars, who help the truthful one in the battles, . . . [you] whose chariot, of which the course is true, of which the reins are straight, attacks him who behaves with falsehood, destroying [him]."

The Avestan *Miθra*, great warrior that he is, does not fight alone. He has divine helpers. *Indra*, the *daēva*, does not appear among them. There are, however, two figures who bear at least a certain resemblance to the Vedic *Indra vṛtrahan* 'Indra, who smashes [hostile] resistance[s]', 'the victorious *Indra*': *vāta vərəθrājanō* (Yt. 10.9²⁴) 'the victorious winds' and the god *Vərəθraγna* (Yt. 10.67; 70 ff.), who accompanies *Miθra* into battle in the shape of a wild boar of miraculous properties.

We may go so far as to say that the Avestan god *Vərəθraγna* in his role as the fighting companion of *Miθra* is the equivalent of the Vedic *Indra* in his role as the helper of the *Ādityas*. This does not necessarily mean that *Vərəθraγna* has taken the place of the Proto-Aryan **Indra*; it may just as well mean that the Vedic *Indra* has replaced a Proto-Aryan **Vṛtraghna*.

A dilemma like this may be resolved, but only on the basis of an exact linguistic and exegetic analysis of the terminology such as was undertaken by Benveniste and Renou in their *Vṛtra et Vṛtragna*. Adopting their method—which I think absolutely necessary if we want to leave the domain of subjective, speculative guesswork—I cannot avoid the conclusion that the Vedic *Indra* has assumed the functions of a Proto-Aryan god **Vṛtraghna* and that one of these is his role as helper and militant executive of *Mitra* [and *Varuṇa*].

Far from being able to dispute the basic principles of the approach of Benveniste and Renou, I disagree with them only on one particular point, where I seem to find that they did not keep to their principles with all desirable consistency, but preferred to comprise with the *communis opinio*, which for the rest they combatted so successfully. I cannot accept the reconstruction of a Proto-Aryan divine name **Vṛtraghan* (*op. cit.*, p. 116). This reconstruction, which is not demanded by our

facts, leads to an impasse: Benveniste and Renou have to disregard 'la formation légèrement différente'—in reality: the incompatibility—of the Vedic and Avestan adjective *vṛtrahan-/vərəθragan-* 'smashing resistance[s], victorious' and of the Avestan personified abstract *Vərəθraγna* '[God] Victory' (*op. cit.*, p. 184). By not insisting on the difference of the two terms they themselves established, they left an open door to their prospective opponents. For example, H. Lommel (*Der arische Kriegsgott*, p. 47 ff.) bases his objections on the assumption of a Proto-Aryan God **Indra-Vṛtraghan*, with whose help he attacks the inferences of Benveniste and Renou. This would not have been possible, had they only reconstructed the necessary minimum: 1. a **daiva Indra* (possibly qualifiable, like other gods, as **vṛtra-ghan* 'victorious'), and 2. a **Vṛtraghna* m. '[God] Victory' (possibly qualifiable as **asuradhāta* 'created by the **asuras*' or 'by **Asura*').

It may be helpful to gather up into brief review the fundamental linguistic facts.

The Proto-Aryan term **vṛtra-ghan* must have been an adjective 'smashing [hostile] resistance[s]' (formed like Vedic *rakṣo-hān-*, *dasyu-hān-*, *ahihān-*: Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 116, n. 1). In the sense 'victorious' the Avestic adjective *vərəθragan* qualifies various gods—*Haōma*, *Sraōša*, *Vāta*, *Miθra*, *Ahura Mazdā*—but also a human hero—*Orāētaona* (Yt. 5.61)—and his weapon (Yt. 19.92), religious saviors, starting with *Zarathustra* (Yt. 8.20), and their prayers (*maθra*): Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 20 ff. While in later Sanskrit literature *Vṛtrahan* exists as a name of *Indra*, the RV itself uses *vṛtrahan*, essentially as an adjective (fem.: *vṛtra-ghnī*, qualifying *Sarasvatī*), which itself cannot take an epithet: Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 115. This adjective is preponderantly a qualification of *Indra*, which occasionally, especially in the vocative, may be used as a quasi-nominal designation of the god. Not too rarely, however, it qualifies other gods, too, and even the king *Trasadasyu*. In some cases this might be accounted for as a secondary transfer of an attribute of *Indra*, but, as Renou showed (*op. cit.*, p. 115 ff.), by no means is this possible in every instance. There is, then, no valid justification for supposing that the Proto-Aryan adjective **vṛtraghan* was specifically connected with **Indra* or with any other particular god (though, by *prima facie* evidence we can reconstruct a combina-

²⁴ *haθra vāta vərəθrājanō* 'together [with him (Mithra)] the victorious winds.' Cf. also Yt. 13.48 and 47 (read *-janō* here, too, with several MSS). Cf. Thieme, *BSOAS*, vol. 23, p. 267, n. 1.

tion **Soma* **vṛtraghan* [Y. 9. 16; Yt. 14. 57; RV 9. 89. 7; 10. 25. 9]). Even less reason exists for postulating a god **Vṛtraghan*.

The Avestan divine name *Vərəθraγna* m. cannot be looked upon as a derivative or an equivalent of the adjective *vərəθra-gan*. Its true linguistic analysis is obvious. It is the masculinization of the abstract neuter *vərəθraγna* 'the smashing of resistance[s]' / 'strength to smash resistances' = 'victory/victorious strength'—formed like Vedic *ahighna* n. 'the slaying of the dragon'; *parṇaya-gḥna* n. 'the slaying of *Parṇaya*'; *goghna* n., *puruṣaghna* n. 'the slaying of cattle/men'; **śva-gḥna* n. 'the slaying of the "dog"' (= 'victory in gambling'): cf. Renou-Benveniste, *op. cit.*, p. 117, n. 1; Wackernagel-Debrunner, *Altind. Gram.* II 2 § 22 ba).²⁵ The standing attribute of *Vərəθraγna*

²⁵ Av. *sataγna* n., etc. 'the killing of a hundred/hundreds,' cf. Benveniste, *Infinitifs Avestiques* (1935), p. 41, Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 28. That *sataγnāis*, etc., in Yt. 10. 43 is not 'with one hundred killings' (Gershevitch, *Avestan hymn to Mithra*, pp. 59 and 325) seems evinced by Yt. 18. 45 *daēvanam hazavrāγnāi* 'for the killing of a thousand/thousands of demons' (on the construction cf. Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 160 n.). *Amaēniγna* in Yt. 19. 54 is not the neuter of the adj. *amaēnigan* 'slaying in the assault' (as which it is taken by Bartholomae, Benveniste, *Vṛtra et Vṛtragha*, p. 11, and Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 158), but an abstract neuter again 'the slaying in the assault, strength of slaying in the assault': *təm hacāt vərəθrəm vispō-ayāram amaēniγnəm tarō-yāram* 'with him will be [strength of] resistance that lasts all days, [strength of] slaying in the assault that lasts all years.' *vərəθra* and *amaēniγna* are confronted like *vərəθra* 'resistance, defense' and *ama* 'assault' in Yt. 10. 26. Gershevitch's objections (*op. cit.*, pp. 158 ff.) against Benveniste's equation: *vərəθra* = 'resistance, strength of resistance,' seem somewhat less than convincing and his own proposal—to separate a noun *vərəθra* 'valetudo' from the first term of *vərəθraγna* 'resistance' (and Vedic *vṛtra* n. 'resistance')—seems somewhat more than unlikely. Following Benveniste does not entail describing the hero *Θraētaona* as 'the most defensive of defensive men' (thus derisively Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 149): *Θraētaona* in Yt. 19. 36 is *mašyānam vərəθraγnam vərəθravastəmo* 'most possessed of [strength of] resistance amongst the men possessed of [strength of] resistance.' For unsophisticated thinking, strength to resist, an impenetrable armor, and even magic invulnerability do not detract from, but add to, the glory of a hero celebrated for his prowess (Achilles and Siegfried, both, might be called *vərəθra-vastəma* in Benveniste's sense). *Mithra* is both *vərəθra-γastəma* (Yt. 10. 98) and *vərəθraγan* (Yt. 10. 141), like Luther's god: 'eine gute Wehr und Waffen.' Partly following Gershevitch, *op. cit.*, p. 159 f., I should translate Yt. 13. 46 *tē narō paiti-zānenti yāhva vərəθra-baodō*:

is *ahuraδāta*; with one typical exception, it belongs to him alone (Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 42). As Benveniste has shown with cogent argumentation, *ahuraδāta* cannot be interpreted as 'created by *Ahura Mazda*,' but must be taken as 'created by the *ahuras*' or 'created by *Ahura*.' *Vərəθraγna* must then be a pre-Zarathustrian deity (*op. cit.*, p. 49). He belongs in the vicinity of the *ahura Mithra* (Yt. 10. 25; 69), whom he also resembles in being the masculine personification of a neuter abstract. Though the Veda does not furnish a direct confirmation, the odds are in favor of the assumption that the Pre-Zarathustrian *Vərəθraγna* reflects a Proto-Aryan **Vṛtraghna*.

It would not be possible to maintain that *Vərəθraγna* is an Iranian innovation, created with the specific purpose to replace **Indra* as a helper of god **Mitra*. God *Vərəθraγna* is far more than a companion of *Mithra*; he is a most colorful and essential figure in the Avestan pantheon. This figure can be consistently explained as a divinization of the concept 'victory, victorious assault' (Benveniste, *op. cit.*, p. 28 ff.). There is nothing in his personality that would call for the assumption that he is a secondary creation emerging from an amalgamation of the features and functions of originally different gods.

Quite different is the situation with regard to the Vedic *Indra*. He is a most complex personality, composed of sometimes disparate, sometimes even contradictory traits. Even Lommel, who makes it his task to 'understand' *Indra* as a perfectly integrated whole: 'als einheitliches Ganzes' (*Der arische Kriegsgott*, p. 7), has to ignore certain features of his as being 'not characteristic' since they contradict his alleged unity (*op. cit.*, p. 17, n. 2). These are precisely the traits he shares with *Vərəθraγna* (cf. above p. 310). On the one hand, *Indra* is a *deva*, who kills *asuras* (*asura-han*), on the other, he is an *asura* himself who collaborates with the *asuras*, *Mithra* and *Varuṇa*, and appears closely joined to *Varuṇa* in the common dvandva *Indrā-Varuṇā*. He is the *hantā vṛtrāsya* 'the slayer of (= about to slay) the obstruction (which prevents the waters

'they (the Fravašis) recognize those (*tē*) as warriors, in whom there is the [youthful] smell of [the strength of heroic] resistance.' The feminine gender of the relative pronoun is due to the concept *tanū* f. 'body, person' being mentally substituted for *tē* 'those [men].' Cf. Yt. 10. 90; 143 (and Gershevitch's note p. 289).

from flowing),’ or of the snake (*ahi*), the ‘personified obstruction’ (*Vṛtra* m.), that obstructs the waters (RV 4. 16. 7 *āpo vṛtrām vavrivāṃsam*), and he is also the *hántā vṛtrāṇi* ‘the [habitual] smasher of [hostile] resistances.’ Accompanied by the *Maruts*, he kills the snake (dragon) with the club and frees the waters, and accompanied by the *Āngirases*, he bursts open the rock (*vala*), which encloses the cows, with the magic power of truth (cf. Lüders, *Varuṇa* I, p. 20) and releases the cows. He has traits of a human hero (Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 190), but he is also a world creator (cf. Lüders, *op. cit.*, p. 183-196), whom mankind owes the fundamental necessities of life: light, fire, water, and milk. He is the victor in the battles upon whom any fighting man, all fighting parties, will call for help that brings victory (e. g., RV 2. 12. 8; 9) and who assists even *Mitra* and *Varuṇa* in their battle for the victory of truth.

For our purposes it is not necessary to attempt to unravel the entanglement of problems connected with the prehistory of the Vedic *Indra*. It will suffice to put our dilemma (above p. 312) into a question that contains in its formulation the essential terminological data: Is it more likely that in Proto-Aryan times the helper of **Mitra* [God] ‘Contract, Treaty,’ an **asura*, was **Indra*, a **daiva*, or **Vṛtraghna* m. ‘[God] Victory,’ the personification of an abstract idea like **Mitra* himself, who, in the Avesta, is associated with the concept *ahura* by his characteristic attribute *ahura-dāta*?

Unless one is convinced of the Proto-Aryan character of everything in the RV—even to the extent that he thinks he need show no arguments—one will have to admit, at the very least, that there is no more cogent reason to reconstruct a Proto-Aryan **Indra* as helper of the gods who protect truth and covenants than to postulate a Proto-Aryan **Varuṇa*. A Proto-Aryan god **Vṛtraghna* ‘[God] Victory,’ collaborating with **Mitra* ‘[God] Contract/Treaty,’ any offence against whom must result in fight and battle, is on the contrary of considerable likelihood. It is probable that in a Proto-Aryan list not **Indra* but **Vṛtraghna* would have appeared beside *asuras* as their assistant in avenging the breach of a treaty.

4. 6. The two NĀSATYAS: Quoting the description of the *Nāsatyas* given by Macdonell in his *Vedic Mythology* (p. 51), Konow concludes (*op. cit.*, p. 38): “There is nothing in this description

which helps us to understand why the *Nāsatyas* are invoked in the Mitanni treaty.” According to Dumézil, *Naissance d’archanges*, p. 34, the *Nāsatyas* are ‘uniquement bienveillants et bienfaisants,’ and hence their character would forbid explaining their presence in the treaty list in a similar way as that of *Indra* might be explained—according to Dumézil himself—by referring to RV 10. 89. 9.

He who is not content to rely upon the word of either Macdonell or Dumézil, but listens to the Vedic poet himself, will be led to a different conclusion.

RV 8. 35. 12 explicitly says: *hatām ca śātrūn yātataṃ ca mitrīnaḥ . . . āśvinā* “You two *Āśvins* (= *Nāsatyas*) slay the enemies and array (= keep in agreement) those who are connected by a contract/treaty” For the phraseology, compare RV 7. 36. 2d *jānaṃ ca mitrō yatati* “[God] Contract arrays (brings to agreement, keeps in agreement) people,” 5. 65. 6 ab *yuvām mitremām jānaṃ yātataḥ sām ca nayataḥ* ‘you two, *Mitra* [and *Varuṇa*] (i. e., God Contract and God True-Speech) array (bring to agreement, keep in agreement) these people and lead them together’: *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 40-42.

From this passage it becomes evident that the two *Nāsatyas* may be regarded not only as divine ‘healers and wonder-workers,’ but that their role as ‘helpers’ may involve fighting and have an ethical motivation. In ‘arraying’ the *mitrin* (cf. Avestan *aiwi-miθri-* [fighting] against a contract/treaty partner’), they share a function with *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*; in ‘slaying’ the enemies, with *Indra*.

This is, after all, nothing else but what the opening lines of the next verse explicitly say:

8. 35. 13ab

*mitrāvāruṇavantā utā dhārmavantā
marūtvantā jaritūr gacchatho hāvam*

“You two (*Nāsatyas*) come to the singer’s call, accompanied by *Mitra* and *Varuṇa*, accompanied by *Dharma*, accompanied by the *Maruts*.” The difference to what the statement of the preceding verse already indicates is only that the poet adds the more general concept of ‘ethical Establishment, Lawfulness’ (*Dharma*) to the divinized concepts ‘Contract, Treaty’ (*Mitra*) and ‘True Speech’ (*Varuṇa*), and, instead of naming *Indra* himself, speaks of *Indra*’s companions in battle, the *Maruts*. Abstracting from what evidently is nothing but poetic elaboration (the addition of *Dharma*) and

variation (the substitution of the *Maruts* for *Indra*), we obtain in fact again—in addition to RV 10. 125, 1bc, see above p. 303 a Vedic pendant to the Mitanni treaty list, whether it is taken as: 'Mitrā-Varuṇā, Indraḥ, Nāsatyā' or (cf. above p. 305) as: 'Mitrā-Varuṇavantah, Indraḥ, Nāsatyā.'

Cf. also 1.120.8a *mā kāsmai dhātām abhy amitriṇe nah* "Do not (you *Nāsatyas*) hand us over to anyone who does not keep his treaty."

In RV. 8.10.2 the *Ásvins*, named by the side of *Indrā-Viṣṇū*, are called *āsuheṣasā* 'whose weapon is swift' (Lüders, *Philologica Indica*, p. 783 ff.); in 8. 8. 9. and 22 they are characterized by the adjective *vṛtrahantamā* 'most victorious,' which again brings them into the vicinity of *Indra*; the horse they have given is *ahihan* in 1.118.9, 'dragon killing' like *Indra* himself; the attribute *rudravartanī*, RV 1.3.3, most probably does not allude to their peace loving nature, but to their character as fighters [against evil], whether we translate 'of terrible [chariot-]course' or 'of the course of Rudra.'

The mention of these belligerent traits of the *Ásvins* seems limited as already noted by Lüders, to *Kāṇva* hymns (8th *maṇḍala* and first part of the first *maṇḍala*). This can hardly be due to chance. We are quite likely dealing with a special development within Vedic religion, which is, moreover, not difficult to understand. The *Nāsatyas* appear again and again as heavenly charioteers. As such they were apt to be endowed with the qualities of those gods whose essence is victorious fight. Thus they readily came into the vicinity of *Indra* and *Mitra*. In particular, as divine 'healers,' they were logically qualified as *vṛtrahantama* (8.8.9; 22), for 'la quérison équivalent à une victoire sur les agents de la destruction' (Benveniste-Renou, *op. cit.*, p. 21). Avestan *vərəθragan* is associated with *baēšazyā* 'healer' (Yt. 1.1-2, 3.5: Benveniste-Renou, *l.c.*) and *Mithra*, who is *vərəθrajastama* (Yt. 10.98), is asked to come *baēšazyāi* (Yt. 10.5, cf. *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 82, n. 58) 'for healing.'

The assumption that this idea—that the *Nāsatyas* fight enemies in general and preserve peace by keeping treaty partners in agreement (RV 8. 35.12)—was the result of a special development within Vedic religion is not contradicted by Avestan evidence. In fact, the Avesta knows of one *Nānhaiθya* only, who is mentioned as a *daeua* in company with *Indra* and *Saurva* (Vd. 10.9;

19.43). Consequently, the reconstruction of a Proto-Aryan dual **Nāsatyā* must remain doubtful. It must be borne in mind that a single *Nāsatyā* is known to the RV also (4.3.6) and, moreover, the RV once forms a dual dvandva *Indra-Nāsatyā* (8.26.8), which can only mean 'Indra and the [one] *Nāsatyā*.' Konow's statement (*op. cit.*, p. 37): 'The existing state of things makes it necessary to infer that the dual designation *Nāsatyau* is of Indian growth,' seems to me to stand unimpaired. Anyway, even if a dual dvandva **Nāsatyā* did exist in Proto-Aryan times, we have good reason to think that, in association with the name *Indra*, *Nāsatyā* was in the singular: Rigvedic *Indra-Nāsatyā* (8.26.8) and Vd. 10.9 *Indrəm . . . Nānhaiθim* correspond in a way that is, to say the least, strongly suggestive. In this context it is noteworthy that in RV 4.3.6 *Nāsatyā* (sing.) is associated with Rudra (*pārijmane nāsatyāya . . . rudrāya nrghné*), in the same way as *Nānhaiθya* is joined with *Saurva* in the Vd. (*Saurum . . . Nānhaiθim*), and that *Śarva* (not attested in the Rigveda) is a Vedic and Classic equivalent of *Rudra*.

5. It is now possible to gather up the results of our investigation into a reply to our questions: Do *Mitra*, *Varuṇa*, *Indra* and the two *Nāsatyas* protect treaties in the RV? and: Is it likely or provable that they did so in Proto-Aryan times? (above p. 306).

To the first question a strictly factual answer can be given: all the named gods indeed are said to protect treaties in the RV, even the two *Nāsatyas*, though these only occasionally.

The second one cannot be answered with the same confidence, since we have no primary sources of Proto-Aryan religion and must rely upon the resources of techniques of reconstruction. I hope my discussions have made it clear, what ought to have been clear before: we cannot reconstruct Proto-Aryan religious terms—and much less Proto-Aryan religious ideas—by simply and naively projecting Rigvedic data into Proto-Aryan times. A reconstruction can be attempted only by a careful confrontation of Vedic and Avestan terminology. Such confrontation yields the result that but one name in the Mitanni list can be postulated safely as that of a Proto-Aryan god whose function it was to protect treaties—**Mitra* m. 'Contract, Treaty.' All the other items of the list are doubtful with respect either to the form of the

name or to the functions of the god in Proto-Aryan times.

It is highly questionable whether a Proto-Aryan god **Varuna* is to be postulated; it cannot be proved that a dual **Nāsatyā* 'the two *Nāsatyas*' was formed. The function of the Proto-Aryan **daivas*, **Indra-* and **Nāsatya*, can hardly have been to assist *asuras* in their role as guarantors of a treaty.

If I am right, a meaningful Proto-Aryan series of gods, invoked as witnesses to a treaty as 'lords of the oath,' would have been: **Mitrā*.**Asurā*, **Vṛtraghnas*.

Disregarding the aspect of function, we should have to reconstruct as a Proto-Aryan series that would correspond to the Mitanni list: **Mitrā*.**Asurā*, **Indras*, **Nāsatyas*.

In sharp contrast to the uncertainties, the discrepancies, and the contradictions that are created by summarily identifying the Mitanni list as a Proto-Aryan series, the actually given—not reconstructed—Vedic chain: *Mitrā-Varuṇā*, *Indra* . . . , *Aśvinā* (= *Nāsatyā*), fits flawlessly together in form and function with the Mitanni one, when the treaty protecting actions of the different gods in the Veda, such as they are explicitly extolled by the Vedic poets, are taken to be the idea around which they are grouped. As treaty-protecting gods, who watch over truth and untruth and punish the breach of solemnly given pledges, they make sense as witnesses to the Mitanni treaties, and also as children or dependents—according to whether we take *bībharmi* as 'I bear [in my womb]' or simply as 'I support'—of the goddess Speech (*Vāc*) in RV 10.125.1cd.

6. The weightiest objection against the assumption that the Vedic gods on the Mitanni treaties were chosen because of their specific connection with the conclusion and maintenance of treaties can be based on the fact that the great number of Mitanni and Hatti gods invoked beside them certainly cannot be, all of them, gods with this special function. The intention in enumerating them obviously is to name as many divinities as there are: 'the male gods, the female gods, one and all, from the country Hatti; the male gods, the female gods from the country Kizzuatni; the gods of the nether world' (KBo I 1 rev. 51).

Yet even this objection is not necessarily fatal. We have to bear in mind that Mesopotamian and Anatolian polytheism, on the one hand, and Vedic

polytheism, on the other, represent two distinctly different types.²⁶

The first one is a temple religion. In such a religion generally each god has his temple where his image is worshipped. If the same god has different temples, he is likely to be regarded as a different god in each place (A. Goetze, *Kulturgeschichte des alten Orients*² [1957] p. 131). Within the district dominated by the temple and the sphere of its fame, the god is liable to become omnipotent, even if originally he was a god of special, limited functions. The greatness of the god depends on the greatness of the temple: the 'Sun-goddess of Arinna,' for example, who was the state goddess of the whole Hittite realm (Goetze, *op. cit.*, p. 136), must have been worshipped in an all-important sanctuary. All the temple gods would have the power and the function—besides many others—to avenge broken oaths and vows. But in concluding a treaty it was essential to invoke as many gods as possible in order to cover the vastest area without leaving, perchance, a gap where a fugitive might obtain immunity. Thus we find in our treaty text the Hatti and Mitanni gods qualified by geographical indications on innumerable occasions. Of course, evidently in order to make quite sure that there be no place left where some god would not rule and deal out punishment and reward, other more general deities, who hardly had temples, are invoked, thus (KBo I 1 rev. 53) not only 'Heaven' and 'Earth,' but also the ubiquitous 'Winds' and 'Clouds.' In case they should violate their treaty, the Mitanni prince and his subjects are threatened: "Thou Mattiṭṭa and the Hurri people, you shall indeed be enemies to the thousand gods, may they hunt you" (KBo I 1 rev. 68).

Vedic religion does not know temples or images. The power of a god has no geographical limits and has no relation to the importance of a place of worship. His omnipotence is limited only functionally; for each god has his special task and character. In concluding a treaty it was, then,

²⁶ A. Goetze writes: "The text itself seems to classify the involved gods in two categories:

- a) *ilāni ša pu-uz-ri* (or rather *pu-uh-ri* [cf. above p. 305, note 16]) "the gods of the assembly." (This is, of course, the assembly of the gods, as though you may invoke the 'Olympian gods').
- b) *ilāni ša bēli mamīti niltazu* (var!) "the gods whom we call 'Eidhelfer'."

essential to invoke—not as many gods as possible, but—those gods who would be the first to intercede efficiently if a breach of the treaty was contemplated or committed. From the point of view of Vedic religion, the choice of the five names *Mitra*, *Varuṇa*, *Indra* and *Nāsatya* would seem logical and to be such as to leave no gap. *Mitra*, that is, '[God] Contract/Treaty,' would watch over the terms of the treaty; *Varuṇa*, that is, '[God] True-Speech/Veridicitas,' would watch over the oaths that accompany the conclusion (RV 5.72.2, cf. *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 67); both would persecute the transgressor with their wrath and give rain, vegetation, and cows swelled with milk to the land of the faithful (RV 5.62.3, cf. *Mitra and Aryaman*, p. 43). *Indra* would destroy the faithless treaty partner in battle and give victory to the party that kept its promises. The two *Nāsatyas* would help to defeat the enemies who fight against their partners (RV 8.35.12a) and reward the righteous by giving progeny and riches (RV 8.35.12b).

Later Hinduism is in type much more similar to old Anatolian religion than Vedic religion is. It presents us with the impression of a chaos, scarcely less than Hittite religion does according to Goetze (*op. cit.*, p. 131), with a 'bunt Gewimmel' just as

Greek polytheism does according to Goethe (*Braut von Korinth*). Each city, each town, each village has its temple or temples and gods, and each house its images, its '*kula-devatās*. True, there are, since olden times, certain gods emerging from the multitude and aspiring to the rank of universal gods. Yet, in many cases the geography of the temple still clings to their name. *Śiva* is still called *Kāśīnāth* 'Lord of Banaras' and in this resembles the 'ŠAMAŠ of Arinna,' the 'Apollo of Delphi' or the 'Black Mother of God of Czenstochau.'

The geographically limitless power of the Vedic gods is, of course, a heritage from the, equally templeless, Proto-Aryan times. It is emphasized, for example, in the case of the Avestan Mithra: 'His place is of the width of the earth' (Yt. 10.44), 'he touches [by his width] both ends of this wide . . . earth, which has far-away borders; he looks upon all that is between earth and heaven' (Yt. 10.75). The Rigvedic poet states the same conviction, more briefly, but not less eloquently: "Mitra, the wide one, who holds embraced heaven with his greatness, [holds] embraced the earth with his glory" (RV 3.59.7). In this, God Mitra resembles the God of a monotheistic religion.

AN AFRO-ASIATIC PATTERN OF GENDER AND NUMBER AGREEMENT

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IT IS WELL-KNOWN that in the West Semitic languages, outside of North Arabic and Ugaritic, the masculine singular demonstrative pronoun and adjective **š*i has a variant with suffixed -*n* (**š*i-*n*) and that somewhat less frequently a similar suffix appears with forms from the plural suppletive base **ʔ*illi (**ʔ*illi-*n*). The feminine singular **š*ā likewise displays two variant forms, with and without a -*t* suffix. This latter element is, of course, the most widespread indicator of the feminine singular in Semitic and in Afro-Asiatic languages generally.

Brockelmann considered the -*n* suffix of the

masculine singular and of the plural as an instance of a general -*n* demonstrative element and did not acknowledge its specifically masculine character in the singular.¹ Barth on the other hand considered -*n* suffix of **š*i-*n* as a masculine element which he used to explain the third persons masculine prefix of the East Aramaic verbal form *neqtol*. He cited as a further parallel the third person masculine singular pronoun *ni* of the Cushitic languages.²

¹ Brockelmann, Carl, *Grundriss einer Vergleichenden Grammatik der Semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1908-13), I, 317.

² Barth, J., *Die Pronominalbildung in den Semitischen*