

# Banquet of the gods

Mel Copeland



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By Mel Copeland

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## Preface

The role of heroes and gods in Western mythology is essentially a string of precepts that involve messiahs – usually given the title, king, and overcoming evil, often depicted as a dragon or snake. In their pursuit or labor to overcome evil they often must encounter and defeat a bull. Theseus had to defeat the Minotaur of King Minos, for instance, and Gilgamesh had to defeat the Celestial Bull. On the bottom of the Celtic Gundestrop bowl we find the Celestial Bull and far away in India we read in the Rig Veda a similar conflict. Associated with the conflict with otherworldly beings, our heroes become intertwined with the heavenly pantheon and relate their lineages and dominions, all of which becomes an explanation of how we human beings came to this garden called earth.

The gods behave like we do and have their preferences for our heroes. They take sides, defending one over another, and sometimes they send in the Divine Twins to set matters straight. The Divine Twins can be seen in the stories of Helen of Troy, of Theseus, of Apollo and Artemis, of Osiris and Set, of the birth of Dionysus, of Gilgamesh, of the ancient Mitanni, and the far off gods and heroes of India and its ancient scripture, the Rig Veda. They also appear in the Bible. The Divine Twins tend to be connected to the cause of eternal life, where mere mortals become gods. Some heroes, such as Herakles, did not want to be worshipped as a god, but temples were raised in worship to him anyway.

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## Book I, Etruscans, Greeks, Trojans, & Scythians

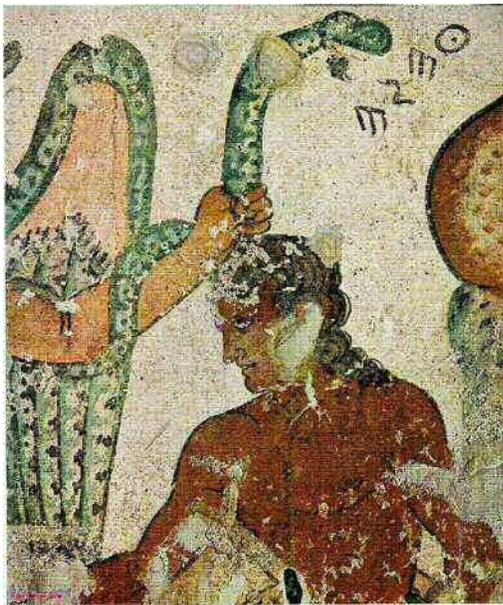
From ancient times it has been a tradition to celebrate through banquets important events, such as weddings and funerals. While special feasts were ordered in celebration of other events and memories, particularly of a society's faith, among the Indo-Europeans the mourning of a lost chief, king or hero called for a special event. It appears that twelve days — that period also being concordant with the 12 months — was the prescribed period for such events. Here we attempt to understand a peculiar, mysterious people, the Etruscans, by examining their work and other Indo-Europeans of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (circa. 1,200-850 B.C.) heritage.

Through artifacts, including murals in tombs, and holy scriptures and other writings, we can learn to understand what the ancients believed, and also, as in the case of the Etruscans, we can learn a bit more about their language. Images left behind a society, whether as a writing or a painting, must be used together to reconstruct what a society such as the Etruscans may have believed. For instance, the Etruscans left elaborate tombs carrying grave goods, such as pottery and replicas of their earthly possessions, and wonderful murals and paintings on sarcophagi. These in themselves tell us of a society that deeply believed in an afterlife. A considerable expense in time and money was proffered by the Etruscans to their departed, whom we can see in the tombs, who hoped to be transported to a place which we would today call heavenly. Today there are societies that still believe that after death their loved ones are transported to a heavenly place, paradise, as with the Judao-Christian-Moslem ethic, to be with God. In the days before Christ, the banquet included a pantheon, many gods. Among the Greeks, Zeus and the gods ruled from the heights of Mt. Olympus. Born from Chronos and Rhea, Zeus and two other gods made up a triad: Zeus ruled over the heavens, and his brother, Poseidon earthshaker, ruled over the sea, whilst his other brother, Hades, presided in the Underworld, the place of the dead, called Erebus. The consort of Zeus was Hera, daughter of Cronus, a very jealous wife, who had given birth to several gods, one of whom was, Typhaon or [Typhöeus](#). Zeus found him to be his worst enemy and ended up throwing the island of Sicily upon him. In the image from the Tomb of Orcus, we can see Typhöeus, whose legs are serpents, bracing himself beneath the land. His constant struggle causes Mt. Etna to roar. Poseidon's name means either "husband of the earth: or "lord of the earth," and while he reigned over the sea and springs, he was known as the cause of earthquakes. Hades, who ruled in the underworld, abducted Persephone and she was required, by agreement with Hades, to spend six months of the year in Hades and allowed to spend the other six months on earth.

The Etruscan pantheon included Tini (Tinia), who was like Zeus, a sea-god yet unidentified, and Aita (Hades). Tini, like Zeus, had many wives, but his principal consort was Uni (Hera). The consort of Atia

was Phersipnei (Persephone). The two can be seen in a mural in the [Tomb of Orcus](#) (another word for Erebus, the Underworld). The other character in the scene before the throne of Atia is Ceron (Geryon), a three-headed monster who had a herd of cattle in Spain. One of Hercules' labors (the 10th) was to steal Geryon's cattle who ruled the island of Erytheia (now Cadiz). Geryon was later killed at the river Anthemus (Apollodorus 2.5.10).

Like the Romans who followed them in time, the Etruscans had a pantheon of gods, some of whose names can be traced to Greek gods. We don't know at this time whether the Etruscans had a mythological base as rich as that of the Greeks. All we can ascertain at the moment are the correlations of Etruscan gods to the Greek pantheon and their associated stories. For instance, in the Tomb of Orcus — a grim tomb to enter for both the living and the dead, it would appear —the family that owned the tomb took care to include a mural for the divine banquet. Here we see the hero Theseus (Etr. THESE) who is facing what appears to be the demon Tuchulcha whose image is as modern versions of the devil (pointed ears, beaked nose). Another threat in the Etruscan netherworld was the ferryman Charon, who is seen holding a mallet over the head of the dead, ready to make sure they are dead. The



Etruscan tombs contained doors, and Charon can be seen chasing the departed as they escape through a doorway. Thus, part of the Etruscan experience involved escaping Charon's mallet.

What happens when one dies has been something mankind has yet to resolve. It appears, for the most part, man during the past 30-40,000 years has believed that life after death can be much as it is on earth. To assure that the departed continue with the blessings of earth, grave goods were sent with the dead. And these could be anything from flowers (seen even in Neanderthal graves of 50,000 years ago, as well as today) to fancy settings including pottery vessels, gold, silver and bronze articles, clothing, baskets and sacrificial offerings, including cattle, horses and attendants.

In war, in particular, a hero's tomb may include captives, which we shall see in the description of the burial of Achilles' friend Patroclus. The description from the *Iliad* of Patroclus' burial gives us good imagery of what the Greeks and Trojans were expected to do for their dead heroes. The practice involved at the



least pouring an oblation, usually accompanied by the sacrifice of rams, sheep or cattle on an altar. A particular god was the recipient of a particular sacrifice. And if the priests who offered the sacrifice (sometimes the chief or king acted as the priest) neglected one god in favor of another, then there could be a disturbance in heaven, sufficient to cause a war among the gods. This happened to have been, as a matter of fact, a cause of the Trojan War, where one goddess was slighted over another. In "The Judgment of Paris," a

play recording the episode where Paris (also known as Alexander) was required to judge the most beautiful goddess of three — Hera, Aphrodite, and Athena — Aphrodite was selected. This enraged Hera who swore to take out her wrath against the Trojans and was joined in the enterprise by Athena.

Aphrodite (Etruscan Turan) became the mother of Aeneas, a hero on the Trojan side of the Trojan War. Aphrodite (Greek aphros = sea foam) was born from the foam raised up by the genitalia of Uranus, as it floated near Crete. Uranus was castrated by his son, Cronus. Cronus (called Saturn by the Romans) was the ruler of the Titans. They were children of Ge (earth) and Uranus (sky). Cronus deposed his father Uranus by castrating him with a flint sickle. But he became as tyrannical as his father, and swallowed all but one of his children by Rhea, his sister and wife. These children were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades and Poseidon. When Zeus was born Rhea sent the child to Ge in Crete and fed Cronus a stone wrapped in Zeus' swaddling clothes instead of Zeus. On reaching maturity Zeus married the Oceanid Metis. She offered an emetic to Cronus who vomited up his other children. Zeus subsequently went to war with Cronus and the Titans and threw them all in Tartarus.

One of the first things we are served in this opening is the fact that the gods fed on one another. They were bloodthirsty and they had to be appeased. And they loved a good feast just as men do. Witness Zeus' view of the matter, as he discusses the fate of the Trojan hero Hector (Etruscan Ector), who was killed by the Greek hero, Achilles (Etruscan Akle):

But when the twelfth dawn came, Phoebus Apollo said at last: 'You are hard, you gods, you are torturers! Has not Hector in times past burnt you thigh-pieces of bulls and goats without blemish? Yet you can't bear to save his dead body for his wife to see, and his mother and his son, and Priam his father and his people, to let them burn him in the fire, and perform the rites of burial...' <sup>1</sup>

Apollo, the son of Zeus and the Titaness Leto and the brother of Artemis, was born on the island of Delos. He was worshipped as a shepherd god and god of wisdom and he had an oracle at Delphi where he had killed a huge snake or dragon. He had taken the side of the Trojans in the Trojan War and on several occasions managed to save Hector and others. But the argument over the body of Hector continued. Achilles dragged Hector's body behind his chariot, around the barrow of Menoitiades for eleven days, after killing Hector. Zeus closed the argument over Hector's body, suggesting that Achilles must accept ransom for Hector's body from King Priam:

'My dear Hera, don't go and get spiky with the gods. They shan't be in the same rank at all, but Hector really was a prime favorite with the gods more than any man in Troy — at least, I thought so, for he never failed in his friendly offerings. My altar was never without a good feast, or libations and spicy savors...'

The old king, Priam, aided by Hermes, the messenger of the gods, was able to get into Achilles' compound which was surrounded by a dirt and stake reinforced wall and moat. Though Priam did not see the body until it had been turned over to him, balmed and wrapped, Hector's flesh had not decayed. <sup>2</sup>

Achilles gave king Priam eleven days for the funeral of Hector, and on the twelfth day the Greeks would resume their attack of the Trojan citadel. Until that time the Trojans were free to gather what they needed, including large amounts of logs from the forest atop the mountain, free from fear of Greek attack. Nine days they gathered with oxen and mules with infinite quantities of wood:

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<sup>1</sup> (1) *The Iliad*, translated by W.H. D. Rouse, Mentor, New American Library, NY, (by arrangement with Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1938), pp. 282, 283 (2) *ibid*, p. 290

<sup>2</sup> Rouse's note: A boy kept one part of his hair uncut and this he dedicated to his river-god at puberty: *Aeschylus Choephoroe*.

"When the tenth day dawned, they carried out brave Hector weeping, and laid the body on the pile and set it on fire.

"When on the next day Dawn showed her rosy fingers through the mists, the people gathered round about the pyre of Hector. First they quenched the flame with wine wherever the fire had burnt; then his brothers and his comrades gathered his white bones, with hot tears rolling down their cheeks. They placed the bones in a golden casket, and wrapt it in soft purple cloth; they then laid it in a hollow space and built it over with large stones. Quickly they piled a barrow, with men on the look-out all round in case the Achaeans should attack before their time. This work done they returned to the city, and the whole assemblage had a famous feast in the palace of Priam their King. That was the funeral of Hector."

What was done for Hector seems to be a good summation of what was probably done for Etruscan nobles, as seen from their tombs. Because the story says there was limited time to raise the barrow, the large stones that were placed over the body could not have been megalithic in size. The barrow follows



the description of most barrows which we can see today. What this ceremony also tells us is that there was no family barrow, or at least there was not a custom to use a family barrow among the family of Priam, otherwise Hector's urn or casket would have been placed in an existing barrow or tumulus. In Britain and Ireland barrows were often used over again and urns can be found on the perimeter of a barrow. Such tumuli can be seen on [www stone pages](http://www.stone.pages). We can compare this rite to the one given to Patroclus. These rites we can also compare to the rites of the Aryans in the Indus

Valley.

While tumuli or dolmens can be traced from Britain to Korea, where they appear in India is nowhere the traditional Aryan homeland of India is (the traditional area being the Punjab and Indus River valley). Interestingly, the earliest Hindu documents, the Rig Veda, describe an area in the northwest of India and Pakistan, whereas the megaliths of India are found in the south of India, among the brown-skinned Dravidians.

The *Rig Veda* records five tribes of Indo-Europeans whose primary concern was cattle-raids, gaining wealth through warfare against the brown-skinned natives. As we progress through the ten books of the *Rig Veda* we find ourselves dealing with a people whose concerns have transformed from those who were trying to lodge a place in the land to a people who were fighting not only their ancient enemies but also each other. Is it possible that in the episode the original pastoral Aryans were forced into the South of India where they left the Indo-European-like megalithic monuments? Following the *Rig Veda* in antiquity, and placing the foundations of the gods in the *Rig Veda* into sacred prose is the *Mahabharata*. This book bends towards a memory of a people who are definitely Iron Age and the Pandava heroes in the story are brown-skinned, but their gods, like Indra, tend to be fair-skinned — Indra, a god that throws lightning bolts, has yellow hair.

The god Shiva is hardly mentioned in the *Rig Veda* and becomes more prominent in



the *Mahabharata*. There Shiva is often greeted in the forest, seen as an old man of the forest. This is an early view of Shiva being connected to the animals of the forest that is common to the view of the Celtic god Cernunnos (Greek spelling, *karnonou*, from the Montagnac inscription recorded in *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise* by Xavier Delamarre), who is depicted with stag horns coming out of his head and accompanied by a ram-headed serpent and a stag. He is pictured on coins and in the

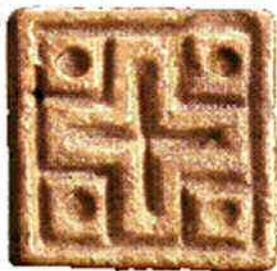
center of a Gallo-Roman altar from Reims, as well as the Gundestrup cauldron.

On either side of him in the Gallo-Roman altar from Reims are two gods. On his right is a god with a

harp (Apollo) and the god on his left is believed to be Mercury (Caesar's Galic Wars says Mercury was a prominent god among the Celts). On the Gundestrop cauldron the Celtic god is holding in his right hand a torque, wears one around his neck, and in his left hand he holds a ram-headed serpent, also a symbol of the sun-god. To view Celtic coins go to <http://www.kernunnos.com>. The extensive coin collection, which can be reviewed by clicking on a map, includes an image of the Horned God. Between his horns is a wheel, a sign of the sun-god. "The Celtic Horned God is born at the winter solstice, marries the goddess Beltane, and dies at the summer solstice. He alternates with the goddess of the moon in ruling over life and death, continuing the cycle of death, rebirth and reincarnation," says <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/c/cernunnos.html>.

The Horned God of the Celts is nearly identical to the *Mahabharata* picture of Shiva and is also like images on the Indus Valley (Harappa) seals. To view more seals and follow the progress of the Indus Valley archaeology go to: <http://www.harappa.com/>. To read the *Rig Veda* and associated documents go to: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/>.

## The Indus Valley Seals:



The Indus Valley seals — about 400 of them have been found — carry inscriptions which have not been translated and date to about 1,800-1,500 B.C. Note how the Indus character here represented has two faces, like the Latin Janus. He is identified, like the Phoenician Melqart, with a bull. The sacrifices to

the sun-god Melqart involved human sacrifice, which was also a practice of the Celts in their sacrifice to Cernunnos. We know that in the *Iliad* part of the memorial feast at the burial of a hero, such as Patroclus (Patroclus), involved the sacrifice of captives. While the Celtic sacrifice is connected with the seasons, rebirth, the sacrifice of the Trojan captives in the *Iliad* may not have involved such. However, the sacrifice and burial ceremony took place at dawn.



In the burial of Patroclus animals are sacrificed and care is taken to make sure that the bodies of the victims were placed away from the bier of the hero which was in the center of the pyre. Instructions are given to put them along the edge of the sacrificial ring. Important to the sacrifice was the offering of a bull. This can be seen in the

Indus Valley seal above and it was a practice of the megalith builders of Ireland and Britain. Evidence of Bull sacrifice is at Stonehenge, for instance.

Megalithic monuments, including tumuli, were oriented with respect to the solstice and no doubt there were ceremonies conducted at dawn, probably also at dusk. The rite at dusk among the Celts and Germans involved at least the god Odin (Woden, after whom the day, Wednesday, is named), who is known for human sacrifice and his wild hunts on the full moon. Beheading was the common method of sacrificing humans, and the Celts had a reputation for riding into war and cattle-raids with the heads of those whom they conquered hanging from their horses. Hanging was another form of sacrifice and punishment. Odin was believed to pass by the hanging corpses of the dead during the evening. Odin has an interesting history, since the Norse tradition, which perhaps has given us the most complete memory

on Odin, records that he and his people were originally located in Asia Minor, near the Black Sea. To read the story, called the *The Ynglinga Saga*, go to: <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/OMACL/Heimskringla/>.

According to Herodotus the Celts were "the most westerly of all the nations of Europe, excepting the Cynetians" (Herodotus, Book IV, <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.4.iv.html>).

## Greek and Trojan Burial Rites

When we examine paintings and images on artifacts, such as vases, sarcophagi or the walls of tombs, we need to keep in mind that the images tell a story, and to understand the story being told we need to read the inscriptions with them, if they exist, and compare the images to written and drawn images of which we know. We should also keep in mind that funerals of heroes were great social events — no less so than a modern day funeral of a soldier fallen in the (currently on-going, as of 8.22.04) Second War of Iraq. When we watch funeral processions in the streets of Iraq, where the dead are carried in caskets above the shoulders behind a multitude of shouting and furious mourners, we can see at least in part the reaction that Achilles and his comrades could have held when they buried their hero and friend Patroclus. So let's get to it, with reference to the *Iliad*, translated by W. H. D. Rouse:

**Iliad**, Book XVI, p. 201, 202: When Hector [the Trojan hero] saw him retreating and wounded, he came near and stabbed him in the belly: the blade ran through, he fell with a dull thud, and consternation took the Achaeans. So fell Patroclus, like a wild boar killed by a lion, when both are angry and both are parched with thirst, and they fight over a little mountain pool, until the lion is too strong for the panting boar. Patroclus Menoitadês had killed many men, but Hector Priamidês killed him: and then he vaunted his victory without disguise:

"So Patroclus, you thought that you could sack our city! You thought you would rob our women of the day of freedom, and carry them off to your own country! Fool! In front of them are the horses of Hector prancing out to battle. My spear is well known among my brave Trojans, for I defend them from the day of fate: here you shall stay and feed the vultures! Ah, poor wretch, your Achillês is a good man, but he was no help to you, although no doubt he warned you earnestly when you started (and he stayed behind) — 'Don't come back to me, my brave Patroclus, until you have stript the blood-stained shirt from Hector's body!' No doubt he must have said that, and you thought you could do it — no more sense in you than that!"

Patroclus replied, half fainting:

"For this once, Hector, make your proud boast; for you are the victor, by help of Zeus Cronidês and Apollo, who mastered me — an easy thing: they stript off my armor themselves. But if twenty men like you had confronted me, my spear would have slain them all on the spot. No, it was cruel fate that killed me, and Leto's son, and of men Euphorbos; you come third and take my armor. One thing I tell you, and you should lay it up in your mind: you have yourself not long to live. Already death and fate are beside you, and Achillês Aiacidês shall lay you low."

Even as he spoke, the shadow of death covered him up. His soul left the body and went down to Hadês, bewailing his lot, cut off in his manhood and strength. But Hector answered him though dead:

"What is the prophecy of certain death to me, Patroclus? Achillês may be the son of the divine Thetis, but who knows if I may not strike him with my spear, and he may be the first to die!"

Then he set one foot upon the body, and treading it away from the spear, pulled out the spear, and went at once with the spear after the driver Automedon. He wanted to kill him too, but the immortal horses which the gods had given to Peleus were carrying him out of the way.

**Iliad**, Book XXII, pp. 262, 263 [Achillês, having just killed Hector] Hector answered him dying: "Ah, I know you well, and I forebode what will be...As he spoke, the shadow of death

encompassed him; and his soul left the body and went down to Hadês, bewailing his fate, bidding a last farewell to manhood and lusty strength. Hector was dead, but even so Achillês again spoke:

"Lie there dead! My fate I will accept, whenever it is the will of Zeus and all gods to fulfil it."

He drew the spear out of the body and laid it aside. Then he stripped off the armor, and the other Achaeans came crowding round. How they gazed in wonder at Hector's noble form and looks! Yet no one came near without a stab; they beat him and stabbed him, saying to each other: "Ha, ha! Hector feels very much softer now than when he burnt our ships with his blazing brands!"

Achillês, when he finished stripping the spoils, turned to the crowd, and made them a speech in his downright manner: "My friends, " he said, "princes and captains of the nation, since as you see the gods have granted me to kill this man who has done us more damage than all the rest put together, let us go round the city ready for battle, and find out what they mean to do: whether they will leave their fortress now that this man is dead, or whether they will still confront us although they have no Hector. — But stay, what am I thinking about! Patroclos lies beside our ship unmourned, unburied! Patroclos I can never forget so long as I live and move! And even if in the house of Hadês men forget their dead, yet I will remember my dear comrade even there. Come on, my lads, let us march back to our ships singing our hymn of victory, and bring this man with us. We have won a great triumph; we have killed Hector, to whom the Trojans prayed as if he were a god!"

And then he thought of a shameful outrage. He cut behind the sinews of both Hector's feet from ankle to heel and strapped them together with leather thongs, and fastened them to his chariot leaving the head to drag. Then he laid the armor in the car, and got in himself and whipt up the horses. Away they flew: the dust rose as the body was dragged along, the dark hair spread abroad, there in the dirt trailed the head that was once so charming, which now Zeus gave to his enemies to maltreat in his own native land. And as the head was bedabbed thus in the mire, his mother tore her hair and threw away the covering veil, and wailed aloud seeing her son; his father lamented sore, the people wailed, and lamentation filled the city. Such lamentation there might have been, if all frowning Ilios were smouldering in ashes.

**Iliad**, Book XXIII, pp265-281. While the Trojans were mourning within their city, the Achaeans made their way to the ships beside the Hellespont. Most of them dispersed to their own vessels, but Achillês would not let the Myrmidons disperse until he had addressed them in these words: "Your horses have done good service today, my brave comrades; but we must not unyoke them yet. Let us go, horses and chariots and all, to mourn for Patroclos, for that is the honour due to the dead. When we have consoled ourselves with lamentation, let us unharness them and take our meal."

Then he led the cavalcade three times round the body, all mourning and crying aloud; and Thetis lamented with them. The sands were drenched, so much their hearts longed for that mighty man. And Peleidês led their lamentations, as he laid his manslaying hands on his true friend's breast:

"Fare thee well, Patroclos, even in the house of death! See now I am fulfilling all that I promised! I said I would drag Hector to this place and give him to the dogs to devour raw; and in front of your pyre I would cut the throats of twelve noble sons of the Trojans, in payment for your death."

Then he did a vile outrage to royal Hector; he stretched the body on its face in the dirt beside the bier of Menoitadês.

After that all took off their armor, and unharnessed the loud-whinnying horses, and sat down beside the ship of Achillês in their thousands. There he provided a fine funeral feast. Many bellowing bulls fell under the knife, many sheep and bleating goats; many tusker boars bursting with fat were stretched out to singe over the fire. Around the dead body the blood of the victims poured out in cupfuls was running all over the ground.

Meanwhile Prince Peleion was being led by the Achaean chieftains to Agamemnon. They had trouble to persuade him, so deep was his sorrow for his comrade. At the King's headquarters orders were given to set a cauldron of water over the fire, that his body might be washed clean of the bloodstains, but he flatly refused and swore to it:

"No, by Zeus highest and greatest of gods! It is not lawful that water may come near my head, before I lay Patroclos on the fire and build him a barrow and cut off my hair! For no second sorrow like this shall come upon me so long as I am among the living. Yet, for this present we must consent to the meal which we hate. Then tomorrow, my lord King Agamemnon shall be for bringing firewood and providing all that is proper to send the dead down into the dark. The fire shall burn him quickly out of sight, and the people shall return to their work."

[They did accordingly and Patroclos appears to Achillês in a dream that evening] ..."You sleep, Achillês, and you have forgotten me! When I lived you were not careless of me, but now that I am dead! Bury me without delay, that I may pass the gates of Hadês. Those phantoms hold me off, the souls of those whose work is done; they will not suffer me to join them beyond the river, but I wander aimlessly about the broad gates of the house of Hadês. And give me that hand, I pray; for never again shall I come back from Hadês when once you have given me my portion of fire...do not lay my bones apart from yours, Achillês, but with them, as I was brought up with you in your home...Then let one urn cover my bones with yours, that golden two-handed urn which your gracious mother gave you."

...They were still mourning when Dawn showed her fingers of light. Then King Agamemnon sent out mules and men from the whole camp to bring firewood..On the foothills of Mount Ida they felled the tall trees busily...Down on the shore they laid their logs in order, in the place where Achillês designed a great barrow for Patroclos and himself.

When the logs were laid in their places, the men sat where they were, all together. Then Achillês ordered his Myrmidons to don their armor and harness their horses; they mounted the cars, fighting men and drivers, chariots in front, a cloud of footmen behind, thousands, and in the midst was Patroclos borne by his comrades. They had cut off their hair and thrown it over the body like a shroud. Achillês came behind him clasping the head; his own unspotted comrade he was escorting to the grave.

At the place which Achilles had appointed, they laid him down and piled great heaps of firewood. Then Achillês did his part. He stood away from the pile, and cut off the golden tress which he had kept uncut among his thick hair for the river Spercheios, and spoke deeply moved as he gazed over the dark sea:

"O Spercheios! This is not for thee! That vow was vain which Peleus my father made, that when I returned to my native land I would consecrate my hair to thee, and make solemn sacrifice, and that he would sacrifice fifty rams without blemish into thy waters, at the altar which is in thy precinct at the same place. (2) ...Now therefore, since I am not to return to my

native land, I would give the warrior Patroclus this to carry with him."

Then he laid the hair in the hands of his well-beloved companion. All present broke into lamentation with all their hearts; and they would not have ceased while the sun shone, but Achilles drew near to Agamemnon and said to him:

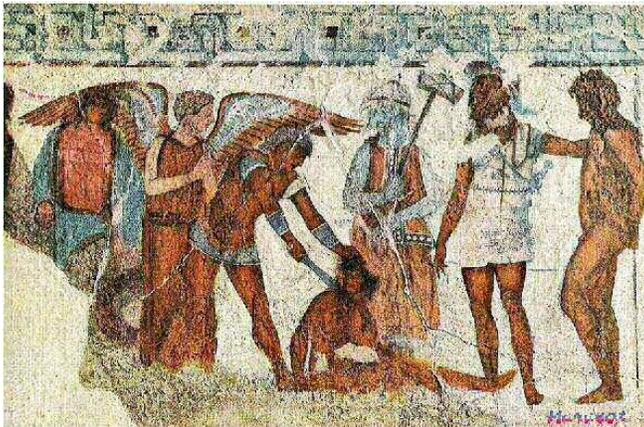
"Atreidês, you are our lord paramount, and it is yours to command. There is plenty of time for the people to mourn, but just now I ask you to dismiss them from this place and tell them to get ready their meal. All this is the business of those who are nearest akin to the dead; and let the chieftains remain with us."

Agamemnon accordingly dismissed the people, while the mourners remained, and piled up the wood, and made a pyre of a hundred feet each way, and upon it they laid the body. They killed flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in front of the pyre, skinned them and cut them up; Achilles took away all the fat, and covered the dead with it from head to foot, and heaped the flayed bodies about him. Jars of honey and oil he placed leaning against the bier. Four horses he laid carefully on the pyre, groaning aloud. Nine dogs the prince had, that fed from his table; two of these Achilles took, and cut their throats and layed beside him. The twelve noble young Trojans he slew without mercy. Then he applied the relentless fire to consume all, and with a groan he called on his comrade's name:

"Fare thee well Patroclus, even in the grave fare thee well! See, I now fulfil all that I promised you before. Here are the twelve noble sons of Trojans — the fire is eating them round about you! Hector Priamidês the fire shall not have to eat, but the dogs!"

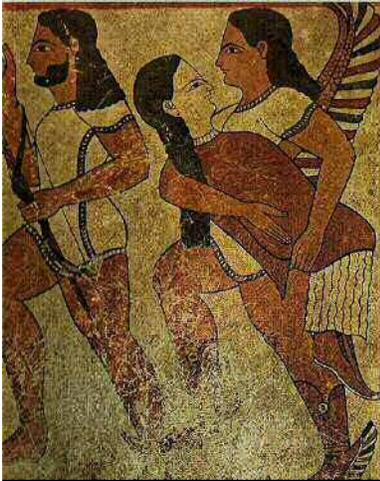
[Image "Sacrifice of Trojan Captives" from [http://www.maravot.com/Etruscan\\_Murals.html](http://www.maravot.com/Etruscan_Murals.html)]

But his threat was in vain: no dogs were busy about Hector, for the dogs were driven off by the daughter of Zeus, Aphrodite herself, by day and by night. She washed the skin with rose-oil of ambrosia that it might not be torn by the dragging; and Phoebus Apollo drew down a dark



cloud from heaven to earth, and covered the place where the body lay, that the sun might not scorch the flesh too soon over the sinews of his limbs. But the pyre would not burn, and Achilles did not know what to do. At last he stood well away from the smouldering heap, and prayed to North Wind and West Wind promising

them good sacrifices; many a libation he poured from his golden goblet, praying them to come and make the wood quickly catch fire, to burn the bodies.<sup>3</sup>



Etruscan god Turms, slab from Caere, Louvre, Paris, ~6th century B.C. Image from [Etruscan Murals.html](http://Etruscan_Murals.html).

Iris heard his prayers, and flew quickly to the Winds with her message...Her message given, away she flew, and the Winds rose with a devil of a noise and drove the clouds in a riot before them. They swooped upon the sea and raised the billows under their whistling blasts; they reached the Trojan coast and fell on the pyre till the flames roared again. All night long they beat upon the fire together blowing and whistling; all night long stood Achillês holding his goblet, and dipt into the golden mixer,<sup>3</sup> and poured the wine on the ground, till the place was soaked, calling upon the soul of unhappy Patroclos. As a father laments while he burns the bones of his son, newly wedded and now dead, to the grief of his bereaved parents, so Achillês lamented as he burnt the bones of Patroclos, stumbling up and down beside the pyre with sobbings and groanings. But at the time when the morning star goes forth to tell that light is coming over the earth, and after him the saffron mantle of Dawn spreads over the sea, at that hour the flame died down and the

<sup>3</sup> In the *Rig Veda* — which is a book of prayers — there are divinities who are the principal recipients of the prayers. Usas, the dawn; Surya, the sun-god, whose symbol was a bull. To bind the bull and sacrifice it at dawn is to secure the blessings of sunlight [Rig Veda Book 1, Hymn 121. 7]; Indra, the god of thunder and lightning (like Zeus, Jupiter and Thor), Agni, the god of fire and the messenger of the gods; Varuna, the sky-god (like Uranus, who was castrated by his son Cronos; Aphroditê was born from the foam from his discarded genitals). The wind-god, cloud-gods, called Maruts, Mitra, Vishnu and many other gods are called upon in three principal ceremonies during the Hindu day: the dawn, high-noon, and dusk. Like the Greeks and Trojans of the *Iliad*, the Indo-European Aryans of the *Rig Veda* ~1200-1,500 B.C. cremated their dead, as the Hindus do today. A large part of the hymns in the *Rig Veda* are dedicated to Agni, because Agni not only bore messages to the gods, he invited the gods to the sacrifice and carried the dead to the gods (heaven).

The Etruscan god Turms can be seen carrying a body in an Etruscan mural. The *Rig Veda* does not address the deep, dark Hadês of Greek, Trojan and Etruscan thought. In contrast it anticipates the continuation of the soul back on earth, recycled like the vegetation or grass upon which the communion participants and invited gods sat. Imagine a circular altar with a trench around it, around which were placed the Aryan chiefs and their priests. Next to the fiery altar was a post to which sacrificial animals were tied (probably a similar device was used by the Greeks at Patroclos' funeral). Like the Greeks of the *Iliad*, the fats of the animals, offered in slabs, was most prized by the gods. The Greeks and Trojans poured wine as an oblation, but a butter-like oil, or gee, is also mentioned, which was a principal oblation mentioned in the *Rig Veda* that was continuously ladled upon the fire (upon the god Agni). But the Aryans had an oblation which we shall discuss latter, called Soma, which was drunk by the participants and fed to the gods. They had large wooden vats near-by in which they brewed Soma, a sap beaten out of a plant (probably cannabis) gathered in the mountains. They filtered the brewed sap through a woolen cloth and mixed it with honey, milk, curds and barley (The barley may have been part of the brew in the wooden vat). This mix was put in jars, from which they ladled the meath (mead) into the fire or into beakers bowls and cups. Beakers are frequently mentioned, and a significant feature of megalithic burials along the Atlantic coast of Europe and in the Balkans, was beakers. Drinking honeyed-mead was an integral part of the Celtic celebrations and the Greeks, Trojans and Etruscans had their mead as well. In the Etruscan Tomb of the Baron we can see a particularly large, cauldron-like vase as well as a jug used for pouring wine. The rites we are reviewing in the *Iliad* were not too far from the rites of the *Rig Veda* or those that took place with reference to the Etruscan rites.

"Achillês holds a goblet, and dipt into the golden mixer, and poured the wine on the ground" — The Greeks and Trojans of the *Iliad* mixed their wine with water.

burning faded away. Then the Winds returned over the Thracian gulf to their home, while the waters rose and roared.

And then Achillês moved away from the pyre, and sank upon the ground tired out; sleep leapt upon him and gave him peace.

Now the people were all gathering round Agamemnon. They made such noise and uproar that Achillês sat up and said:

"Atreidês, and you other princes, you must first quench the pyre with wine wherever the flames have touched. Then let us gather the bones of Patroclos Menoitidês, and be careful to find the right ones. They are easy to know, for he lay right in the middle and the others were on the edge, horses and men together. His bones we must wrap in a double layer of fat and lay them in a golden urn, until I myself shall be hidden in Hadês. But I do not wish any great mound to be raised for him, only just a decent one. Afterwards another can be raised both broad and high, by those of you who are left behind me."

They did his bidding at once. First they quenched the pyre with wine wherever it had burnt and the ashes were deep; then weeping they gathered the bones of their gentle companion, and laid them covered with fat in a golden urn, which they wrapt up in fine linen and put away safely in the hut. <sup>4</sup> Round the pyre they set up a circle of stone slabs to mark the outside limit, and shovelled earth within.

As they were about to go after finishing this task, Achillês told them to stop, and made them sit in a ring while he sent back for prizes: cauldrons and tripods, horses and mules and fine cattle, women also and grey steel. <sup>5</sup>

The next step in the burial ceremony is the conduct of games, in competition for the prizes offered by the host (Achillês). Many of these prizes represent items found in tumuli, from among the Scythians to the British. The Etruscans not only painted these games in their tombs, many items of the games and everyday things were carved on the walls of the tombs. A view of the games venerated in the Iliad can be seen through the Etruscan tombs. To view the murals click here: [Etruscan Murals.html](#). We abbreviate the games conducted by Achillês:

For the chariot-race he offered as first prize a woman skilled in women's work, and a tripod of two-and-twenty measures with handles to it. The second prize was a mare...The third was a

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<sup>4</sup> "in the hut." Note that Patroclos' burial is in a "hut." Hector's remains were placed within a group of stones (like a dolmen). Patroclos' burial, in fact, resembles the "Germanic" and Scythian style of burial, where the remains were placed within a wooden frame structure, in the *Iliad* presumably "the hut." Tumuli across Europe and Asia, including the tholos tombs of the Etruscans, had at least one ring of stones (sometimes stakes) marking the boundary of the mound. Sometimes the stone boundary would be double-walled.

<sup>5</sup> "and grey steel." There are several references to steel and iron in the Iliad, giving more reason for an Iron Age event, than that of an earlier Bronze Age. Thus, the event must be ~1,200 B.C. to 850 B.C. "Iron Age" and "Bronze Age" or "Stone Age" may not refer to a specific time period, but can serve as a guide. For instance, American Indian tribes were in the "Stone Age — neolithic" when American settlers were driving their wagon trains across the western prairies in the 19th century. My grandmother, who was able to watch the Apollo landing on the moon several years before she passed away, told me at that time that she had crossed the United States in a covered wagon from Missouri to Montana. She made the comment with regard to my question, asking her how she felt about the event, knowing that I had directly participated — working in the "think tank" of North American Aviation's Space & Information Systems Division, the Prime Contractor of the Apollo Program. No people, other than her generation, have been able to witness such a marked change in technology in such a short span of time! From horses to space travel in one generation!

cauldron of four measures, brand-new and still white. The fourth, two ingots of gold, and the fifth a brand-new basin with handles... [on how to win the chariot-race] "And the tricks of the trade make driver beat driver. One man leaves everything to horses and car, wheels wide to this side or that side carelessly, the horses go roaming over the course, he does not hold them in hand; but he that knows his tricks may have inferior horses to drive — yet he keeps his eye always on the post, wheels close in, does not forget how much to stretch the horses at first by the handling of the reins, but keeps them well in hand and watches the man in front.

"Now I will tell you the mark — you can't miss it. There's a dry stump at the turn of the road standing about a fathom above the soil, oak or fir, which does not rot in the rain. Two white stones are set against it, one on each side, and the land round this is smooth for horses. It may be the mark of some man dead long ago, or set up for a post in former days, and now Achillês has fixed it for the turning-point of his race.<sup>6</sup>... [a description of one of the chariots] and the car with its gold and tin plates gleaming rolled behind: the tires left hardly a trace in the light dust, so quickly they flew....Next he displayed the prizes for boxing. a hard battle that is! And the prize was a much-enduring mule, a six-year-old yet unbroken, the hardest age to break. The prize for the loser was a two handled goblet...Euryalos rose alone, a splendid fellow...Tydeidês got him ready. He put on his belt, gave him the gloves of good oxhide straps, cheered him up, and wished him luck....Without delay Peleidês displayed the third set of prizes, for the wrestling — and a hard bout that is! He showed the prizes all round. For the winner, a large tripod to stand on the fire, which the spectators valued at twelve oxen. For the loser, he brought out a woman well skilled in women's work, valued at four oxen...Achillês now brought out prizes for the footrace. There was a silver mixing-bowl finely wrought, holding six measures. It was the most beautiful bowl in the world, for it was the work of Sidonian artists, and Phoenician merchants had brought it over the sea to the harbor of Lemnos and given it to Thoas as a gift; his grandson Euneos Isasonidês gave it to Patroclus as the price of Lycaon. This bowl Achillês offered as first prize, for the second a great fat ox, and for the last a half-nugget of gold.<sup>7</sup>

...Now Achillês brought out the armor of Sarpedon which Patroclus had taken in the field — the long spear and the shield and helmet, and said:

"We invite the two best men to contend for these. Let them arm themselves and take their blades, and try one another before us. Whichever shall first pierce through the armor to what is within and touch the flesh and draw blood, to him I will give this fine Thracian sword silver-

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<sup>6</sup> One of the items used as a prize in the games was a raw hunk of iron. While it is described as a captured weapon of Eëtion, Achillês does not value it as a weapon but rather as a source of metal from which to make plowshares. The *Mahabharata*, which is a Vedic story about the Pandavas, states in the battle, "Down upon the Pandava army fell ten thousand arrows with fiery mouths and ten thousand gleaming darts; one hundred thousand swords and maces and axes; a million razor-edged wheels spinning; and heavy iron balls roaring and tumbling [*Mahabharata*, Book 13, "Trees of Gold," p. 280, retold by William Buck, University of California Press, 1973]. The razor-edged wheels recall a discus-like weapon. The discuss is mentioned in the *Iliad*, but representations of the Celtic "Horned God" Cernunnos show him carrying a wheel. One may wonder whether the wheel had a razor edge and was thrown as a weapon. Indra had such a weapon. The wheel is another symbol of the sun-god of the Indo-Europeans. The modern discuss thrown in the Olympic Games is made of wood with a steel edge. Another Olympic Games competition involves the shot-put, the throwing of a large steel ball. In Scottish games the ball has a chain attached to it, the means of which allows for a longer throw, as the thrower whirls around before releasing the ball.

<sup>7</sup> The Sidonian bowl brought by Phoenician merchants suggests a time-line of about 850 B.C. for the *Iliad*. Had the bard said, "captured from Sidon," suggesting a raid, such as the raids of the Sea Peoples ~ 1,200 B.C. one might be able to argue a Late Bronze Age date for the story. The merchant suggests 1,200-850 B.C.

bossed which I took from Asteropaios, but the armor both shall hold together; and we will make a good feast to entertain them." ...Again Achillês brought out a lump of roughcast iron which that mighty man Eëtion used to hurl. When he killed Eëtion, he brought it away with the rest of the spoils. He rose now and said:

"Rise you who wish to contend for this prize. Any man will have enough here to use for five revolving years, even if his fat fields are far away. No shepherd or plowman will need to visit the city for iron, there will be plenty at home." ...and Epeios took up the weight, circled it round his head and put it, and the people roared with laughter. Next to put the weight was Leonteus, that veritable sprig of Arês; third Telamonian Aias lifted it and hurled it. The cast from that strong man went beyond the others. But when Polypoitês raised the lump, he threw it as far beyond all the others as a herdsman sends his cudgel flying over the herds of cattle. (6)..Next for the archers Achillês brought forward blue steel — ten axes and ten half-axes...Again Peleidês brought out a long spear, and a brand-new cauldron ornamented with flowers, worth one ox..."

By the time of Herodotus (~484-420 B.C.), of Halicarnassus, Asia Minor (now Bodrum, Turkey), the citadel of Troy was "insignificant." Click here <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.1.i.html> to read his view, as a historian of his time under Persian dominion at Halicarnassus. Here you can read his view of the history of Lydia. In Book II (link below) Herodotus points out that the Pelasgians who occupied Greece before the Greeks had not assigned names to their gods. Herodotus says of Homer and Hesiod, who lived 400 years before his time: "For Homer and Hesiod were the first to compose Theogonies, and give the gods their epithets, to allot them their several offices and occupations, and describe their forms; and they lived but four hundred years before my time, as I believe."

**Egyptian Sacrifices, according to Herodotus ([from http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.2.ii.html](http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.2.ii.html))**

Male kine are reckoned to belong to Epaphus, and are therefore tested in the following manner: — One of the priests appointed for the purpose searches to see if there is a single black hair on the whole body, since in that case the beast is unclean. He examines him all over, standing on his legs, and again laid upon his back; after which he takes the tongue out of his mouth, to see if it be clean in respect of the prescribed marks (what they are I will mention elsewhere); he also inspects the hairs of the tail, to observe if they grow naturally. If the animal is pronounced clean in all these various points, the priest marks him by twisting a piece of papyrus round his horns, and attaching thereto some sealing-clay, which he then stamps with his own signet-ring. After this the beast is led away; and it is forbidden, under the penalty of death, to sacrifice an animal which has not been marked in this way.

The following is their manner of sacrifice: They lead the victim, marked with their signet, to the altar where they are about to offer it, and setting the wood alight, pour a libation of wine upon the altar in front of the victim, and at the same time invoke the god. Then they slay the animal, and cutting off his head, proceed to flay the body. Next they take the head, and heaping imprecations on it, if there is a market-place and a body of Greek traders in the city, they carry it there and sell it instantly; if, however, there are no Greeks among them, they throw the head into the river. The imprecation is to this effect: — They pray that if any evil is impending either over those who sacrifice, or over universal Egypt, it may be made to fall upon that head. These practices, the imprecations upon the heads, and the libations of wine, prevail all over Egypt, and extend to victims of all sorts; and hence the Egyptians will never eat the head of any animal.

The disembowelling and burning are, however, different in different sacrifices. I will mention the mode in use with respect to the goddess whom they regard as the greatest, and honor with the chiefest festival. When they have flayed their steer they pray, and when their prayer is ended they take the paunch of the animal out entire, leaving the intestines and the fat inside the body; they then cut off the legs, the ends of the loins, the shoulders, and the neck; and having so done, they fill the body of the steer with clean bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and other aromatics. Thus filled, they burn the body, pouring over it great quantities of oil. Before offering the sacrifice they fast, and while the bodies of the victims are being consumed they beat themselves. Afterwards, when they have concluded this part of the ceremony, they have the other parts of the victim served up to them for a repast.

The male kine, therefore, if clean, and the male calves, are used for sacrifice by the Egyptians universally; but the females they are not allowed to sacrifice, since they are sacred to Isis. The statue of this goddess has the form of a woman but with horns like a cow, resembling thus the Greek representations of Io; and the Egyptians, one and all, venerate cows much more highly than any other animal. This is the reason why no native of Egypt, whether man or woman, will give a Greek a kiss, or use the knife of a Greek, or his spit, or his cauldron, or taste the flesh of an ox, known to be pure, if it has been cut with a Greek knife. When kine die, the following is the manner of their sepulture: — The females are thrown into the river; the males are buried in the suburbs of the towns, with one or both of their horns appearing above the surface of the ground to mark the place. When the bodies are decayed, a boat comes, at an appointed time, from the island called Prosopitis, - which is a portion of the Delta, nine schoenes in circumference, — and calls at the several cities in turn to collect the bones of the oxen. Prosopitis is a district

containing several cities; the name of that from which the boats come is Atarbechis. Venus has a temple there of much sanctity. Great numbers of men go forth from this city and proceed to the other towns, where they dig up the bones, which they take away with them and bury together in one place. The same practice prevails with respect to the interment of all other cattle — the law so determining; they do not slaughter any of them.

Such Egyptians as possess a temple of the Theban Jove, or live in the Thebaic canton, offer no sheep in sacrifice, but only goats; for the Egyptians do not all worship the same gods, excepting Isis and Osiris, the latter of whom they say is the Grecian Bacchus. Those, on the contrary, who possess a temple dedicated to Mendes, or belong to the Mendesian canton, abstain from offering goats, and sacrifice sheep instead. The Thebans, and such as imitate them in their practice, give the following account of the origin of the custom: — "Hercules," they say, "wished of all things to see Jove, but Jove did not choose to be seen of him. At length, when Hercules persisted, Jove hit on a device — to flay a ram, and, cutting off his head, hold the head before him, and cover himself with the fleece. In this guise he showed himself to Hercules." Therefore the Egyptians give their statues of Jupiter the face of a ram: and from them the practice has passed to the Ammonians, who are a joint colony of Egyptians and Ethiopians, speaking a language between the two; hence also, in my opinion, the latter people took their name of Ammonians, since the Egyptian name for Jupiter is Amun. Such, then, is the reason why the Thebans do not sacrifice rams, but consider them sacred animals. Upon one day in the year, however, at the festival of Jupiter, they slay a single ram, and stripping off the fleece, cover with it the statue of that god, as he once covered himself, and then bring up to the statue of Jove an image of Hercules. When this has been done, the whole assembly beats their breasts in mourning for the ram, and afterwards bury him in a holy sepulchre.

...The Egyptians were also the first to introduce solemn assemblies, processions, and litanies to the gods; of all which the Greeks were taught the use by them. It seems to me a sufficient proof of this that in Egypt these practices have been established from remote antiquity, while in Greece they are only recently known...Besides this form of divination [referring to the Dodonaean, women oracles who sounded like doves] the Greeks learnt also divination by means of victims from the Egyptians.

The Egyptians do not hold a single solemn assembly, but several in the course of the year. Of these the chief, which is better attended than any other, is held at the city of Bubastis in honour of Diana. The next in importance is that which takes place at Busiris, a city situated in the very middle of the Delta; it is in honor of Isis, who is called in the Greek tongue Demeter (Ceres). There is a third great festival in Sais to Minerva, a fourth in Heliopolis to the Sun, a fifth in Buto to Latona, and a sixth in Papremis to Mars.

The following are the proceedings on occasion of the assembly at Bubastis: — Men and women come sailing all together, vast numbers in each boat, many of the women with castanets, which they strike, while some of the men pipe during the whole time of the voyage; the remainder of the voyagers, male and female, sing the while, and make a clapping with their hands. When they arrive opposite any of the towns upon the banks of the stream, they approach the shore, and, while some of the women continue to play and sing, others call aloud to the females of the place and load them with abuse, while a certain number dance, and some standing up uncover themselves. After proceeding in this way all along the river-course, they reach Bubastis, where they celebrate the feast with abundant sacrifices. More grape-wine is

consumed at this festival than in all the rest of the year besides. The number of those who attend, counting only the men and women and omitting the children, amounts, according to the native reports, to seven hundred thousand.

The ceremonies at the feast of Isis in the city of Busiris have been already spoken of. It is there that the whole multitude, both of men and women, many thousands in number, beat themselves at the close of the sacrifice, in honour of a god, whose name a religious scruple forbids me to mention. The Carian dwellers in Egypt proceed on this occasion to still greater lengths, even cutting their faces with their knives, whereby they let it be seen that they are not Egyptians but foreigners.

At Sais, when the assembly takes place for the sacrifices, there is one night on which the inhabitants all burn a multitude of lights in the open air round their houses. They use lamps in the shape of flat saucers filled with a mixture of oil and salt, on the top of which the wick floats. These burn the whole night, and give to the festival the name of the Feast of Lamps. The Egyptians who are absent from the festival observe the night of the sacrifice, no less than the rest, by a general lighting of lamps; so that the illumination is not confined to the city of Sais, but extends over the whole of Egypt. And there is a religious reason assigned for the special honor paid to this night, as well as for the illumination which accompanies it.

At Heliopolis and Buto the assemblies are merely for the purpose of sacrifice; but at Papremis, besides the sacrifices and other rites which are performed there as elsewhere, the following custom is observed:— When the sun is getting low, a few only of the priests continue occupied about the image of the god, while the greater number, armed with wooden clubs, take their station at the portal of the temple. Opposite to them is drawn up a body of men, in number above a thousand, armed, like the others, with clubs, consisting of persons engaged in the performance of their vows. The image of the god, which is kept in a small wooden shrine covered with plates of gold, is conveyed from the temple into a second sacred building the day before the festival begins. The few priests still in attendance upon the image place it, together with the shrine containing it, on a four-wheeled car, and begin to drag it along; the others stationed at the gateway of the temple, oppose its admission. Then the votaries come forward to espouse the quarrel of the god, and set upon the opponents, who are sure to offer resistance. A sharp fight with clubs ensues, in which heads are commonly broken on both sides. Many, I am convinced, die of the wounds that they receive, though the Egyptians insist that no one is ever killed.

The natives give the subjoined account of this festival. They say that the mother of the god Mars once dwelt in the temple. Brought up at a distance from his parent, when he grew to man's estate he conceived a wish to visit her. Accordingly he came, but the attendants, who had never seen him before, refused him entrance, and succeeded in keeping him out. So he went to another city and collected a body of men, with whose aid he handled the attendants very roughly, and forced his way **in to his** mother. Hence they say arose the custom of a fight with sticks in honor of Mars at this festival.

The Egyptians first made it a point of religion to have no converse with women in the sacred places, and not to enter them without washing, after such converse. Almost all other nations, except the Greeks and the Egyptians, act differently, regarding man as in this matter under no other law than the brutes. Many animals, they say, and various kinds of birds, may be seen to couple in the temples and the sacred precincts, which would certainly not happen if the gods

were displeased at it. Such are the arguments by which they defend their practice, but I nevertheless can by no means approve of it. In these points the Egyptians are especially careful, as they are indeed in everything which concerns their sacred edifices.

...In the neighborhood of Thebes there are some sacred serpents which are perfectly harmless. They are of small size, and have two horns growing out of the top of the head. These snakes, when they die, are buried in the temple of Jupiter, the god to whom they are sacred.

### **The Funny Bald Men east of the Scythians, the Argippaeans**

(according to Herodotus, Book IV, <http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.4.iv.html>)

Beyond you enter on a region which is rugged and stony. Passing over a great extent of this rough country, you come to a people dwelling at the foot of lofty mountains, who are said to be all — both men and women — bald from their birth, to have flat noses, and very long chins. These people speak a language of their own,...the dress which they wear is the same as the Scythian. They live on the fruit of a certain tree, the name of which is Ponticum; in size it is about equal to our fig-tree, and it bears a fruit like a bean, with a stone inside. When the fruit is ripe, they strain it through cloths; the juice which runs off is black and thick, and is called by the natives "aschy." They lap this up with their tongues, and also mix it with milk for a drink; while they make the lees, which are solid, into cakes, and eat them instead of meat; for they have but few sheep in their country, in which there is no good pasturage. Each of them dwells under a tree, and they cover the tree in winter with a cloth of thick white felt, but take off the covering in the summer-time. No one harms these people, for they are looked upon as sacred — they do not even possess any warlike weapons. When their neighbors fall out, they make up the quarrel; and when one flies to them for refuge, he is safe from all hurt. They are called the Argippaeans.

The Argippaeans seem to have imbibed something like the Soma made by the Aryans of the *Rig Veda*, yet to be discussed. Recent discoveries in Siberia and Kyrgyztan revealed Scythian tumuli with cannabis among the offerings.

#### **The Issedonians, according to Herodotus, Book IV:**

The Issedonians are said to have the following customs. When a man's father dies, all the near relatives bring sheep to the house; which are sacrificed, and their flesh cut in pieces, while at the same time the dead body undergoes the like treatment. The two sorts of flesh are afterwards mixed together, and the whole is served up at a banquet. The head of the dead man is treated differently: it is stripped bare, cleansed, and set in gold. It then becomes an ornament on which they pride themselves, and is brought out year by year at the great festival which sons keep in honor of their fathers' death, just as the Greeks keep their Genesia. In other respects the Issedonians are reputed to be observers of justice: and it is to be remarked that their women have equal authority with the men. Thus our knowledge extends as far as this nation.

The dressing of heads with gold is a practice of the Celts. They also used the golden heads as cups. In Jericho (6,000 B.C.) the heads of the dead were plastered and painted.

### Scythian sacrifices, according to Herodotus, Book IV:

Thus abundantly are the Scythians provided with the most important necessities. Their manners and customs come now to be described. They worship only the following gods, namely, Vesta, whom they reverence beyond all the rest, Jupiter, and Tellus, whom they consider to be the wife of Jupiter; and after these Apollo, Celestial Venus, Hercules, and Mars. These gods are worshipped by the whole nation: the Royal Scythians offer sacrifice likewise to Neptune. In the Scythic tongue Vesta is called Tabiti, Jupiter (very properly, in my judgment) Papaeus; Tellus, Apia; Apollo, Oetosyrus; Celestial Venus, Artimpasa; and Neptune, Thamimasadas. They use no images, altars, or temples, except in the worship of Mars; but in his worship they do use them.

The manner of their sacrifices is everywhere and in every case the same; the victim stands with its two fore-feet bound together by a cord, and the person who is about to offer, taking his station behind the victim, gives the rope a pull, and thereby throws the animal down; as it falls he invokes the god to whom he is offering; after which he puts a noose round the animal's neck, and, inserting a small stick, twists it round, and so strangles him. No fire is lighted, there is no consecration, and no pouring out of drink-offerings; but directly that the beast is strangled the sacrificer flays him, and then sets to work to boil the flesh.

As Scythia, however, is utterly barren of firewood, a plan has had to be contrived for boiling the flesh, which is the following. After flaying the beasts, they take out all the bones, and (if they possess such gear) put the flesh into boilers made in the country, which are very like the cauldrons of the Lesbians, except that they are of a much larger size; then placing the bones of the animals beneath the cauldron, they set them alight, and so boil the meat. If they do not happen to possess a cauldron, they make the animal's paunch hold the flesh, and pouring in at the same time a little water, lay the bones under and light them. The bones burn beautifully; and the paunch easily contains all the flesh when it is stripped from the bones, so that by this plan your ox is made to boil himself, and other victims also to do the like. When the meat is all cooked, the sacrificer offers a portion of the flesh and of the entrails, by casting it on the ground before him. They sacrifice all sorts of cattle, but most commonly horses. Such are the victims offered to the other gods, and such is the mode in which they are sacrificed; but the rites paid to Mars are different. In every district, at the seat of government, there stands a temple of this god, whereof the following is a description. It is a pile of brushwood, made of a vast quantity of



fagots, in length and breadth three furlongs; in height somewhat less, having a square platform upon the top, three sides of which are precipitous, while the fourth slopes so that men may walk up it. Each year a hundred and fifty waggon-loads of brushwood are added to the pile, which sinks continually by reason of the rains. *An antique iron sword is planted on the top of every such mound, and serves as the image of Mars*<sup>8</sup>: yearly sacrifices of cattle and of horses are made to it, and

<sup>8</sup> *ving as the image of Mars*; note the sword between the feet of the Etruscan Aule Serelus on the tomb-stone from Vetulonia (See Script T, [http://www.maravot.com/Translation\\_Short\\_Scripts.html](http://www.maravot.com/Translation_Short_Scripts.html). The lines radiating from the sword suggest power, as in the lines that radiate from the Egyptian sun god, Aten, Amon-re, etc. Coincidentally, the Thalpan rock art of northern India includes human figures and an axe that has lines radiating from it, like the spear point on the Vetulonia tomb-stone. See:

more victims are offered thus than to all the rest of their gods. When prisoners are taken in war, out of every hundred men they sacrifice one, not however with the same rites as the cattle, but with different. Libations of wine are first poured upon their heads, after which they are slaughtered over a vessel; the vessel is then carried up to the top of the pile, and the blood poured upon the scymitar. While this takes place at the top of the mound, below, by the side of the temple, the right hands and arms of the slaughtered prisoners are cut off, and tossed on high into the air. Then the other victims are slain, and those who have offered the sacrifice depart, leaving the hands and arms where they may chance to have fallen, and the bodies also, separate.

Such are the observances of the Scythians with respect to sacrifice. They never use swine for the purpose, nor indeed is it their wont to breed them in any part of their country.

In what concerns war, their customs are the following. The Scythian soldier drinks the blood of the first man he overthrows in battle. Whatever number he slays, he cuts off all their heads, and carries them to the king; since he is thus entitled to a share of the booty, whereto he forfeits all claim if he does not produce a head. In order to strip the skull of its covering, he makes a cut round the head above the ears, and, laying hold of the scalp, shakes the skull out; then with the rib of an ox he scrapes the scalp clean of flesh, and softening it by rubbing between the hands, uses it thenceforth as a napkin. The Scyth is proud of these scalps, and hangs them from his bridle-rein; the greater the number of such napkins that a man can show, the more highly is he esteemed among them. Many make themselves cloaks, like the capotes of our peasants, by sewing a quantity of these scalps together. Others flay the right arms of their dead enemies, and make of the skin, which stripped off with the nails hanging to it, a covering for their quivers. Now the skin of a man is thick and glossy, and would in whiteness surpass almost all other hides. Some even flay the entire body of their enemy, and stretching it upon a frame, carry it about with them wherever they ride. Such are the Scythian customs with respect to scalps and skins.

The skulls of their enemies, not indeed of all, but of those whom they most detest, they treat as follows. Having sawn off the portion below the eyebrows, and cleaned out the inside, they cover the outside with leather. When a man is poor, this is all that he does; but if he is rich, he also lines the inside with gold: in either case the skull is used as a drinking-cup.

They do the same with the skulls of their own kith and kin if they have been at feud with them, and have vanquished them in the presence of the king. When strangers whom they deem of any account come to visit them, these skulls are handed round, and the host tells how that these were his relations who made war upon him, and how that he got the better of them; all this being looked upon as proof of bravery.

Once a year the governor of each district, at a set place in his own province, mingles a bowl of wine, of which all Scythians have a right to drink by whom foes have been slain; while they who have slain no enemy are not allowed to taste of the bowl, but sit aloof in disgrace. No greater shame than this can happen to them. Such as have slain a very large number of foes, have two cups instead of one, and drink from both.

Scythia has an abundance of soothsayers, who foretell the future by means of a number of

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[https://www.academia.edu/3811495/Similarities\\_between\\_Syrian\\_stone\\_circles\\_and\\_Thalpan\\_rock\\_altars\\_-\\_suggesting\\_a\\_route\\_of\\_the\\_Aryans\\_from\\_Anatolia\\_via\\_Syria\\_to\\_India](https://www.academia.edu/3811495/Similarities_between_Syrian_stone_circles_and_Thalpan_rock_altars_-_suggesting_a_route_of_the_Aryans_from_Anatolia_via_Syria_to_India).

willow wands. A large bundle of these wands is brought and laid on the ground. The soothsayer unties the bundle, and places each wand by itself, at the same time uttering his prophecy: then, while he is still speaking, he gathers the rods together again, and makes them up once more into a bundle. This mode of divination is of home growth in Scythia. The Enarees, or woman-like men, have another method, which they say Venus taught them. It is done with the inner bark of the linden-tree. They take a piece of this bark, and, splitting it into three strips, keep twining the strips about their fingers, and untwining them, while they prophesy.

Whenever the Scythian king falls sick, he sends for the three soothsayers of most renown at the time, who come and make trial of their art in the mode above described. Generally they say that the king is ill because such or such a person, mentioning his name, has sworn falsely by the royal hearth. This is the usual oath among the Scythians, when they wish to swear with very great solemnity. Then the man accused of having foresworn himself is arrested and brought before the king. The soothsayers tell him that by their art it is clear he has sworn a false oath by the royal hearth, and so caused the illness of the king — he denies the charge, protests that he has sworn no false oath, and loudly complains of the wrong done to him. Upon this the king sends for six new soothsayers, who try the matter by soothsaying. If they too find the man guilty of the offence, straightway he is beheaded by those who first accused him, and his goods are parted among them: if, on the contrary, they acquit him, other soothsayers, and again others, are sent for, to try the case. Should the greater number decide in favour of the man's innocence, then they who first accused him forfeit their lives.

The mode of their execution is the following: a wagon is loaded with brushwood, and oxen are harnessed to it; the soothsayers, with their feet tied together, their hands bound behind their backs, and their mouths gagged, are thrust into the midst of the brushwood; finally the wood is set alight, and the oxen, being startled, are made to rush off with the wagon. It often happens that the oxen and the soothsayers are both consumed together, but sometimes the pole of the wagon is burnt through, and the oxen escape with a scorching. Diviners — lying diviners, they call them — are burnt in the way described, for other causes besides the one here spoken of. When the king puts one of them to death, he takes care not to let any of his sons survive: all the male offspring are slain with the father, only the females being allowed to live.

Oaths among the Scyths are accompanied with the following ceremonies: a large earthen bowl is filled with wine, and the parties to the oath, wounding themselves slightly with a knife or an awl, drop some of their blood into the wine; then they plunge into the mixture a scimitar, some arrows, a battle-axe, and a javelin, all the while repeating prayers; lastly the two contracting parties drink each a draught from the bowl, as do also the chief men among their followers.

The tombs of their kings are in the land of the Gerrhi, who dwell at the point where the Borysthenes is first navigable. Here, when the king dies, they dig a grave, which is square in shape, and of great size. When it is ready, they take the king's corpse, and, having opened the belly, and cleaned out the inside, fill the cavity with a preparation of chopped cypress, frankincense, parsley-seed, and anise-seed, after which they sew up the opening, enclose the body in wax, and, placing it on a wagon, carry it about through all the different tribes. On this procession each tribe, when it receives the corpse, imitates the example which is first set by the Royal Scythians; every man chops off a piece of his ear, crops his hair close, and makes a cut all round his arm, lacerates his forehead and his nose, and thrusts an arrow through his left hand.

Then they who have the care of the corpse carry it with them to another of the tribes which are under the Scythian rule, followed by those whom they first visited. On completing the circuit of all the tribes under their sway, they find themselves in the country of the Gerrhi, who are the most remote of all, and so they come to the tombs of the kings. There the body of the dead king is laid in the grave prepared for it, stretched upon a mattress; spears are fixed in the ground on either side of the corpse, and beams stretched across above it to form a roof, which is covered with a thatching of osier twigs. In the open space around the body of the king they bury one of his concubines, first killing her by strangling, and also his cup-bearer, his cook, his groom, his lackey, his messenger, some of his horses, firstlings of all his other possessions, and some golden cups; for they use neither silver nor brass. After this they set to work, and raise a vast mound above the grave, all of them vying with each other and seeking to make it as tall as possible.

When a year is gone by, further ceremonies take place. Fifty of the best of the late king's attendants are taken, all native Scythians — for, as bought slaves are unknown in the country, the Scythian kings choose any of their subjects that they like, to wait on them- fifty of these are taken and strangled, with fifty of the most beautiful horses. When they are dead, their bowels are taken out, and the cavity cleaned, filled full of chaff, and straightway sewn up again. This done, a number of posts are driven into the ground, in sets of two pairs each, and on every pair half the felly of a wheel is placed archwise; then strong stakes are run lengthways through the bodies of the horses from tail to neck, and they are mounted up upon the fellies, so that the felly in front supports the shoulders of the horse, while that behind sustains the belly and quarters, the legs dangling in mid-air; each horse is furnished with a bit and bridle, which latter is stretched out in front of the horse, and fastened to a peg. The fifty strangled youths are then mounted severally on the fifty horses. To affect this, a second stake is passed through their bodies along the course of the spine to the neck; the lower end of which projects from the body, and is fixed into a socket, made in the stake that runs lengthwise down the horse. The fifty riders are thus ranged in a circle round the tomb, and so left.<sup>9</sup>

Such, then, is the mode in which the kings are buried: as for the people, when any one dies, his nearest of kin lay him upon a wagon and take him round to all his friends in succession: each receives them in turn and entertains them with a banquet, whereat the dead man is served with a portion of all that is set before the others; this is done for forty days, at the end of which time the burial takes place. After the burial, those engaged in it have to purify themselves, which they do in the following way. First they well soap and wash their heads; then, in order to cleanse their bodies, they act as follows: they make a booth by fixing in the ground three sticks inclined towards one another, and stretching around them woolen felts, which they arrange so as to fit as close as possible: inside the booth a dish is placed upon the ground, into which they put a number of red-hot stones, and then add some hemp-seed.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> A great overhead photo of Celtic Hallstatt burial site is at: <http://www.unc.edu/celtic/topics/burial/burial.html>. Hartwick College has a great commentary on chariot warfare, with an illustration of a Kurgan chariot burial photographed by N. Vinogradov. The page is at: <http://users.hartwick.edu/iaes/horseback/chariots.html>. British chariot burials are at: <http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/archaeology/chariot.htm> and <http://www.hullcc.gov.uk/archaeology/is03.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Here we find testimony on the use of hemp seeds (Cannabis) among the Scythians, but not as mead, but as a smoke in a sauna! The customs of the Scythians, for the most part, are like the Celts; the red-headed Tocharians of Scythia, dressed in tartan plaids, draw a closer comparison. Scythian tumuli fields also seem to be centralized, like

Hemp grows in Scythia: it is very like flax; only that it is a much coarser and taller plant: some grows wild about the country, some is produced by cultivation: the Thracians make garments of it which closely resemble linen; so much so, indeed, that if a person has never seen hemp he is sure to think they are linen, and if he has, unless he is very experienced in such matters, he will not know of which material they are.

The Scythians, as I said, take some of this hemp-seed, and, creeping under the felt coverings, throw it upon the red-hot stones; immediately it smokes, and gives out such a vapor as no Grecian vapor-bath can exceed; the Scyths, delighted, shout for joy, and this vapor serves them instead of a water-bath; for they never by any chance wash their bodies with water. Their women make a mixture of cypress, cedar, and frankincense wood, which they pound into a paste upon a rough piece of stone, adding a little water to it. With this substance, which is of a thick consistency, they plaster their faces all over, and indeed their whole bodies. A sweet odor is thereby imparted to them, and when they take off the plaster on the day following, their skin is clean and glossy.

The Scythians have an extreme hatred of all foreign customs, particularly of those in use among the Greeks, as the instances of Anacharsis, and, more lately, of Scylas, have fully shown. The former, after he had travelled over a great portion of the world, and displayed wherever he went many proofs of wisdom, as he sailed through the Hellespont on his return to Scythia touched at Cyzicus. There he found the inhabitants celebrating with much pomp and magnificence a festival to the Mother of the Gods, and was himself induced to make a vow to the goddess, whereby he engaged, if he got back safe and sound to his home, that he would give her a festival and a night-procession in all respects like those which he had seen in Cyzicus. When, therefore, he arrived in Scythia, he betook himself to the district called the Woodland, which lies opposite the course of Achilles, and is covered with trees of all manner of different kinds, and there went through all the sacred rites with the tabor in his hand, and the images tied to him. While thus employed, he was noticed by one of the Scythians, who went and told king Saulius what he had seen. Then king Saulius came in person, and when he perceived what Anacharsis was about, he shot at him with an arrow and killed him. To this day, if you ask the

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the Celts and the Cnutes (British). A detailed examination of the use of hemp and Cannabis seed can be viewed at <http://www.calyx.net/~olsen/HEMP/IHA/jiha5208.html>. Maps of the distribution and use of the plant 5,000 years ago are on the site to aid in the illustration of its use. The Asian map shows the distribution and use among the Siberian Scythians and in China. Interestingly, though we suspect the use in India in ancient times, no archeological evidence of its use in India, they say, has been revealed: "By ca. 3000 BP, Cannabis had most likely migrated west and south over the Himalayas and into India, probably coming with nomads and traders over the trade routes that crossed the region. In light of the accepted antiquity of Cannabis in India, it is noteworthy that no Cannabis remains have been recovered from archeological sites there." This site is well worth visiting for those who are interested in the subject. We shall be reviewing the Rig Veda and its divine substance, Soma, which I believe — as do others — was made from Cannabis stalks. There is no agreement among the Rig Veda scholars that Soma produced a reaction that might be expected from a drug like Cannabis. While poppies might be another source of the effect produced through the Soma, the instructions for making Soma did not describe a flower as an ingredient. The ingredient that produced the "trip" in Soma was a grass-like plant gathered in the mountains — probably hemp. Based upon the maps and study at calyx.net I would believe that the main ingredient of Soma was Cannabis. Also, with respect to the Scythian use of Cannabis, of throwing the seeds on hot rocks in a sauna, I suspect they were drinking the sap: like the Aryans to the south of them who composed the *Rig Veda*, the Scythians may have been grinding the plant and throwing it into their mead — and possibly trading it to the Aryans to the south of them in the Indus Valley.

Scyths about Anacharsis, they pretend ignorance of him, because of his Grecian travels and adoption of the customs of foreigners. I learnt, however, from Timnes, the steward of Ariapithes, that Anacharsis was paternal uncle to the Scythian king Idanthyrsus, being the son of Gnurus, who was the son of Lycus and the grandson of Spargapithes. If Anacharsis were really of this house, it must have been by his own brother that he was slain, for Idanthyrsus was a son of the Saulius who put Anacharsis to death.

## The Sacrifice of Zarpīya, physician of Kizzuwatna, when the year is ruinous

(see [http://www.maravot.com/Hittite\\_Treaties.html](http://www.maravot.com/Hittite_Treaties.html))

(1 [Thus says Zarp]iya, physician of Kizzuwatna, (regarding) [when the year] is ruinous (and) in the land there is continual dying. [Then] in which (ever) city (there is) ruin as a result [the master of (each)] house will do as follows:

(2 I hang up the kelu — of the client. Its huppali — is bronze. Its hazziul are of a shaggy lion-skin. But its footstool is of basalt, and its (the footstool's) hazziul is of lapis. The paw is strong. (It) is the paw(?) of a bear [...] but he h[angs the ...] of a wild goat.

(3 And the ali-s are of black wool and red wool (and) the yellow wool of the town of arnuwaila. Before the sinew of a dog is sakalsan, he [...] three [...s]. On one side he hangs one (piece) on a peg (made of) apricot (?— wood, (2) while on the other side he hangs one (piece) on a peg (made of) cornel wood.

(4 First and foremost, in front on that side he hits the apricot (?— wood peg into the gate. He hangs a cooked kuggula of barley flour, a kuggula of hariyanti- barley flour, and one jug of wine. On this side, however, he hits [the peg] of cornel wood i[n]to the gate], and from it (the peg) he hangs a cooked kuggula of barley flour, a kuggula of hariyanti- barley flour, and one jug of wine.

(5 With the pegs, a white bush is stuck in/planted. Downwards from the ground [...] downwards at the front. On either side he buries wassi-, whose name is huwallari. Furthermore, the gate behind the door of the courtyard on which he hangs the kelu-s-down in front of the kelu-s he places a wicker table and on top of it he sets an ax (3) of bronze, one warm bread, thick bread (and) cheese. Thereon (he sets) a bronze ax, a bronze dagger, a strung bow, [and] one arrow.

(6 Down in front on the wicker table he places one huppar-vessel of wine from the puri-stand, and from the puri-stand he places one pitcher of PIHU drinking beer. Into the pitcher of PIHU drinking beer he inserts one straw.

(7 They bring in one billy-goat and the master of the estate libates it with wine before the table for Santas. Then he holds out the bronze ax and says as follows: "Come Santas! Let the Innarawant-deities come with you, (they) who are wearing bloodied (clothes), who have bound on (themselves) the sashes (?) of the mountain dwellers,

(8 who are girt (?) with daggars, who hold strung bows and arrows. "Come and eat! We will swear (an oath)." When he is finished speaking, he places the bronze ax (4) down on the table and they slit (the throat of) the billy-goat.

(9 He takes the blood and and the straw that was left in the mug-he anoints that (-an) with the blood. Then they bring the raw liver and the heart and the master of the estate holds them out for the gods. Further he takes a bite (and) they imitate (him). (5) He puts (his) lips on the straw and sips and says as follows:

(10 O Santas and Innarawant-deities, we have just taken the oath.

(11 We have bitten from the raw liver; from a single straw we have drunk. O Santas and Innarawant-deities, do not step to my gate again. They cook the liver and heart on a fire and they butcher the entire goat "plain."

(12 Then, when the fat arrives, they bring out the liver and heart and the flesh — everything — to the god. With it they bring two times nine thick loaves (made) from wheat flour of one-half handful (of flour). He breaks nine loaves. Over these they place the liver and heart and he sets them back on the table and says as follows: "Eat, O Sun God of Heaven above and below. Let the

gods of the father of the house eat! Let the thousand gods eat.

(13 And for this oath be witnesses. Next he libates the wine nine times before the table of the Innarawant-deities. He takes the shoulder and the breast (of the sacrifice) and breaks nine loaves of bread.

(14 He scatters them on the potstand and pours wine opposite. Then they bring (in) nine (!) (6) boys who have not yet gone to a woman. On one boy they put a goatskin and that one walks in front and calls (out) in the manner of a wolf. They surround the tables and devour the shoulder and breast.

(15 But for eating [the liver and heart are also (7)] good, and he brings (them) in the same way and they devour the li[ver and heart]. They also drink. [He brings] the pitcher [of PIHU drinking beer] and they drink the pitcher of PIHU beer.

(16 The master of the house a staff/branch from a suruhha-tree, steps into the gate and in Luwian conjures as follows: ÛÛ17-18 {Luwian incantation} Û19 He breaks a thick bread, while reciting as follows in Luwian: ÛÛ20-21 {Luwian incantation}

(22 They take up the ritual implements and he closes the door. He anoints it with fine oil, and says:

(23 "Let (the door) shut out evil and let it keep in good."

(24 One tablet. Finished. The word of Zarpiya, physician from Kizzuwatna. If a year is ruinous and the land is dying, then the kelu- rituals he offers in this way.

## Book II, Hindus & the Celts

Generally, as Margaret Mead so aptly pointed out in her "Patterns of Cultures," the furthest reaches of a culture tend to hold to the original. That is to say, as a culture spreads across continents and seas it mixes with other peoples and in the blending becomes unlike the original. But on the outposts of a culture the people tend to cling to the original way. They tend to be conservative with regard to the inherited traditions of their ancestors. We may use the American people in this regard, who established a new culture to reestablish old British traditions of freedom. The British believed that they were of the stock of Brutus, a patriarch who came from the region of Troy, Lydia with his kindred after the Trojan War. The Aeneid of Virgil follows the same thesis, claiming that the early settlers of Rome were also refugees from Lydia as a result of the Trojan War. Like them the Etruscans — who made the same claim but arrived in Italy much earlier than the refugees of Aeneas — had established a new culture in a new land, keeping in remembrance the early patriarchs of their migration. Like them also were the patriarchs of the Parisians who claimed ancestry from the Trojans.

In the case of America, in place of the original British patriarchal tradition is an "American" Constitution of the United States of America, a history that describes how the Constitution came about, and a sacred city, its sacred lands and sacred images, in which the Constitution is preserved. Thus, in the American sacred city, Washington D.C., one can discover everything one needs to know about the ancestors of the Americans, what they promise, and how inviolable that promise is. In simple terms we can call the process so recently experienced in the American way, the founding of a new, sacred, law. And at the heart of all of its arguments with regard to why it exists and its destiny, is its sacred law. Behind the Sacred Law is the sacred lore that generated it, and venerated in the sacred lore are the founders who established it. And this Sacred Law is the thing that at the moment establishes the legitimacy of American actions and influence in the world today.

In like manner can we compare the ancient Aryans that blossomed in India ~1,500 - 1,200 B .C. They brought with them their old Sacred Law and adapted it to their new environment, an environment that initially was quite hostile to them, since all around them were "brown-skinned" unbelievers. The new Sacred Law is called the *Rig Veda* [normally spelled Rg Veda, with an interpolated vowel between the r and g — a custom of the Etruscan writings as well]. What separated them from those who were their enemies was initially the belief and respect for this Sacred Law. Other works followed behind the *Rig Veda*: the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. All were invoked and transmitted from one generation to another through bards who would memorize the sacred texts and retell them, as may be required by their sacred tradition and law. The bards of the *Vedas* were no different than Homer or the Greek bards who passed on the Iliad and the Odyssey: the story of the great war between the Greeks and the Trojans and what happened to them. The Vedic bards ran ahead of kings armies to record the events that would transpire, so to pass them down. The *Mahabharata* is, in fact, such a history and, like the *Iliad*, is about the great Bharata War. Bharata means "brother" in Sanskrit and maha, is "great," and maharsi means "great sage." The people that conducted the ceremonies of the *Rig Veda*, which we shall now discuss, were called, "rsi."

The Rig Veda is a collection of hymns to be recited as the rsi may discern during the three rites of each day and special festivals. The three rites were held at dawn, high-noon and sunset. The hymns refer to their body as the "law" and those who do not obey the law are condemned by the gods.

Condemned by the rsi was the niggardly man who did not give or gave well below his means to the

priests or bards conducting the sacrifice. Connected with them was the profession and caste of the Brahmins whose only purpose in life was to remember the sacred hymns and lore and school others in it. They were representatives of the god, Brahma, "the creator of the Universe, Lord of the highest heaven which is indestructible."<sup>11</sup>

Key to every sacred ceremony conducted to celebrate the Sacred Law and its gods and lore is the rite of offering sacrifice in the context of a Banquet for the god(s). Among the Indo-European peoples specifically — but it may apply as a general rule to all cultures over the ages — gods were represented by images. The images can be cast in stone, wood, gold, silver or iron; and in all cases the images are cast through a name. We have seen Herodotus speak of a people who did not have any gods, as the people did not have any names for their gods. They practiced a primitive religion, from Herodotus' point of view. The Jews and later Christians that developed out of Judaism were likewise called "godless" by the Romans and persecuted for being "godless." Many Moslems today persecute others using the same kind of logic, that if someone does not believe in "Allah," for instance, one is an infidel, godless. "Allah" is the name for God in the *Koran* that has the meaning of surprise, such as Latin "ai" meaning "hail, behold," and in Sanskrit this word is "jaya" and used frequently in the *Rig Veda*. In the Old Testament scriptures God has many names, such as YHVH, Jehovah, meaning "I am that I am." So much for the names of God or gods and the continuing confusion over the names of God<sup>12</sup>. A closing line in the *Rig Veda* ought to be kept in mind as we inquire into the Aryans who composed the *Rig Veda*, to compare them to the Indo-European ethos, to understand a bit more about the Etruscans and their contribution to the ethos. The closing line is a warning: ...Time is the root and the seed, it gives and it takes away. I bow to God, who lives in this world within us; whoever calls Him by any name, by that name does He come."<sup>13</sup> Another charming line, among many, in the *Rig Veda* is, "When there is a stain, and nothing will remove it — Time will take it away."<sup>14</sup>

The time of the *Rig Veda* is claimed to be about 1,500 B.C. but Hindu scholars have advocated that India was the source of all Indo-European culture: that the Indo-Europeans spread from India eastward to China and westward into Europe. We suspect the time of the *Rig Veda* is Iron Age, probably ~1,200 B.C. but not earlier, although the use of iron as a precious metal dates back as early as 3,000 B.C. By 1,200 B.C. it was recognized as being superior to bronze, and by 800 B.C. in common use. <sup>4</sup> We compare references in the Iliad, Odyssey and Rig Veda in our [Bronze-Age-Collapse.html](#). References to the use of iron in the Rig Veda are more of a utilitarian nature than those in the Iliad (which has about eleven references to iron, most of which involve arrows and spears given as gifts). In contrast to the Iliad the Odyssey begins with Athena visiting the house of Odysseus, appearing as a ship captain transporting a load of iron, suggesting that by the time of the Odyssey iron was traded in abundance. On these merits it appears that the Iliad is the older of the three documents.

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<sup>11</sup> All quotes are from the *Mahabharata*, retold by William Buck, University of California Press, 1973.

<sup>12</sup> "The Allah Controversy" ([http://www.maravot.com/Maravot\\_News-Allah.controversy.html](http://www.maravot.com/Maravot_News-Allah.controversy.html)) illustrates such confusion. Many readers of the Koran view Allah as a god separate from the god of the Bible, a belief which is entirely false. The Koran bases its "scripture" on the Bible, its god and its angels, particularly Gabriel, the primary source of the recital (Koran means "recital" given to Mohammed. Furthermore the Koran describes Jesus as the Messiah (The Imrans 3:45)

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, Part III, Chapter 20, p. 411.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, frontispiece to Part III, Chapter 19.

## The setting of the Rig Veda

Where the ancient site of Harappa is now located, may be the southern boundary of the initial Aryans of the *Rig Veda*. For the Aryans referred to their source of Soma as being from the mountains, and to sustain three ceremonies each day by each of the five tribes of Aryans mentioned in the *Rig Veda*, it presumes that they initially would have been within a few days travel of the mountain source. A source of the main ingredient of Soma is believed to be "Saryanavan's bank." The river basin where the Aryans lived is the Saraswati which is now in the middle of a desert. But then it was lush and the Saraswati River led from the Himalayas, probably where the Indus and Ganges rivers are closest together, to the Indian Ocean. See <http://www.haryana-online.com/Districts/Kurukshetra.htm> which describes the place where the battle of Mahabharat was fought and where Soma may have been gathered, a place described in the *Rig Veda*, Book IX.65.22.

A port city important to the culture, Dwaravati, is mentioned and becomes the "home" of Krishna, a hero and god of the *Mahabharata*. Archeologists have recently excavated that site and what they found confirms a description of the site in the *Mahabharata*. Here is what the *Mahabharata* describes of that mysterious place:

Dwaravati, the eight-sided City of Gates, touched the silver sands of the dancing sea. Under the high white seas all were boat-gardens, and there the water was never salt, but always fresh. The city walls were of adamant, surrounded by a circular moat of sea water lined by trees and bamboo, where ducks and cranes lived and the tide never fell. Her towers were topped by blue sapphire domes that made stars of the sun by day and drew the rays of constellations by night. Her gates bore red copper stars set in bronze panels, or round brass suns set on gold, or silver moons and planets on polished steel, or spacious pearls engraved with the forgotten stories of vanished men.

Near Dwaravati was Raivataka Hill. There, in the evening, Krishna and Subhadra and the broad-shouldered Satyaki arrived from the east and saw the hill decorated for his yearly festival. Flowers and colored rice were strewn about; flags and bells trembled in the ocean wind; colored elephants kept time to the lutes and drums; lighted lamps were hung from poles and trees, making the caves and fountains and valleys bright as day. Everywhere the birds were singing and eating the rice.

...Near Indraprastha [up north] Arjuna found his way blocked by a man wearing a ratty black deerskin and a wide, flat necklace of pitted brass. He was tall and his hair was yellow and free. Agni said quietly, 'I have already taken your chariot Give me Gandiva bow and all the thousand arrows.' When the Fire Lord touched the weapons they fell into ashes

*Arjuna sent a letter to Yudhishtira, saying:  
Khandava forest has grown up again, and Maya's magic  
palace lies broken in the tall grass that reaches over my  
head. Yudhishtira, for you it is also time.*

Joined with Arjuna, Yudhishtira with his brothers and Draupadi, all wearing bark, walked into the north.

In Dwaravati, one day when the wind sounded like the ocean, and the waves of the sea like the wind, the city was drowned under the salt waters. All perished but Krishna and Balarama. 5

Since we have thus introduced you to Agni, let us begin with introducing the ceremony involving the dawn and Soma with the first hymn to Agni. Agni was found to be created via two ways: from lightning, fire from heaven as it were, and man-made, by rubbing two sticks together. The sticks themselves were given names and treated as gods. The entire ceremony of offering Soma to the gods, inviting them to a banquet at dawn, depended upon Agni bringing his fire to the ceremony, since in reality the people believed that of all the gods Agni is the only one who is self-created and, thus, must be the creator of the other gods and man. He also can destroy, but more appropriately he is the messenger of the gods. You invite Agni to your banquet first, and then, after pouring an oblation of Soma to him, invite him to bring the other gods. At the same time, just as Achillês prayed to the gods through the messenger goddess Iris, that the wind would go away, so that his sacrificial fire would continue, the priests (rsis) of the *Rig Veda* were ready to appeal to Vayu, the god of the wind, to assure an auspicious sacrifice (banquet). The first two hymns quoted here are ascribed to the Rsi or seer Madhucchandas Visvamitra. Agni is the most prominent god prayed to in the *Rig Veda*, the next being the god Indra.<sup>15</sup> As we proceed through the hymns, we shall also learn how to make Soma.

### **Rig Veda** **Hymn I Agni**

1. I laud Agni, the chosen Priest, God,  
minister of sacrifice,  
The hotar, lavishest of wealth.
2. Worthy is Agni to be praised by living as  
by ancient seers.  
He shall bring hitherward the Gods
3. Through Agni man obtaineth wealth, yea,  
plenty waxing day by day.  
Most rich in heroes, glorious
4. Agni, the perfect sacrifice, which thou  
encompasses about  
Verily goeth to the Gods.
- (5) May Agni, sapient-minded Priest, truthful,  
most gloriously great,  
The God, come hither with the Gods.
- (6) Whatever blessing, Agni, thou wilt grant  
unto thy worshipper,  
That, Angiras, is indeed thy truth <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sacred Writings, *The Rig Veda*, Translated by Ralph T. H. Griffith, Quality Paperback Book Club, NY, 1992, copyright Motilal Banarsidass Publishers PVT. LTD. All quotes from the *Rig Veda* are from this volume and are quoted by permission.

<sup>16</sup> The Angirases appear to have been regarded as a race of higher beings between Gods and men, the typical first sacrificers, whose ritual is the pattern which later priests must follow [Griffith's note, p. 1]. In like manner the *Tavola Eugubine* (Scripts N, Q, R, G) refer to Atigiras in a similar context.

(7) To thee, dispeller of the night, O Agni,  
day by day with prayer  
Bringing thee reverence, we come;  
(8) Ruler of sacrifices, guard of Law eternal,  
radiant One,  
Increasing in thine own abode.  
(9) Be to us easy of approach, even as a father  
to his son:  
Agni, be with us for our weal.

### **Hymn II Vayu**

1. Beautiful Vayu, come, for thee these Soma  
drops have been prepared:  
Drink of them, hearken to our call.  
2. Knowing the days, with Soma juice poured  
forth, the singers glorify  
Thee, Vayu, with their hymns of praise.  
3. Vayu, thy penetrating stream goes forth  
unto the worshipper.  
Far-spreading for the Soma draught.  
4. These, Indra-Vayu, have been shed;  
come for our offered dainties sake:  
The drops are yearning for you both.  
5. Well do ye mark libations, ye Vayu  
and Indra, rich in spoil!  
So come ye swiftly hitherward.  
(6) Vayu and Indra, come to what the Soma-  
presser hath prepared:  
Soon, Heroes, thus I make my prayer.  
(7) Mitra, of holy strength, I call, and foe-  
destroying Varuna,  
Who make the oil-fed rite complete.  
(8) Mitra and Varuna, through Law, lovers  
and cherishers of Law,  
Have ye obtained your mighty power.  
(9) Our Sages, Mitra-Varuna, of wide dominion,  
strong by birth,  
Vouchafe us strength that worketh well.

Imagine a circle of men, in the center of which is a fire-altar, and nearby a post to which the sacrificial victim is tied. The outside of the circle is marked by a trench and probably stakes, since stakes are mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. Imagine them all singing, or chanting these first two hymns, during which time the priests are pouring oblations of butter and then Soma on the fire. They may at that moment also have assistants pouring Soma into beakers held by those present, chief among them being, of

course, the chief or king of the congregation, next to whom would be the person who was there with the wealthiest sacrifices. He who brought the most for the sacrifice was the most blessed (a practice, alas, of both ancient and modern religions). It is interesting that Jesus the Christ complained about this practice among the Jews and noted, much as the priests of the *Rig Veda* did as well, that a rich man does not get to heaven through his riches.

The most important god, another creator god in the *Rig Veda*, next to Agni, was Indra. He could change shape, like the Greek and Celtic gods, and was capable of remarkable feats. We can compare him to Cúchulainn, the Celtic high hero. In the Táin the youth donned his armor preparing for battle (I hope you are delighted in his tale, as I was; imagine men, women and children sitting around the hearth hearing this! And every bard had another tale to tell, as well!):

**Táin** — Then the high hero Cúchulainn, Sualdam's son, builder of the Badb's fold with walls of human bodies, seized his warrior's battle-harness. This was the warlike battle-harness he wore: twenty-seven tunics of waxed skin, plated and pressed together, and fastened with strings and cords and straps against his clear skin, so that his senses or his brain wouldn't burst their bonds at the onset of his fury. Over them he put on his heroic deep battle-belt of stiff, tough, tanned leather from the choicest parts of the hides of seven yearlings, covering him from his narrow waist to the thickness of his armpit; this he wore to repel spears or spikes, javelins, lances or arrows — they fell from it as though dashed at stone or horn or hard rock. Then he drew his silk-smooth apron, with its light-gold speckled border, up to the softness of his belly. Over this silky skin-like apron he put on a dark apron of well-softened black leather from the choicest parts of the hides of four yearlings, with a battle-belt of cowhide to hold it. Then the kingly champion gripped his warlike battle-weapons. These were the warlike weapons he chose: eight short swords with his flashing, ivory-hilted sword; eight small spears with his five-pronged spear, and a quiver also; eight light javelins with his ivory javelin; eight small darts with his feat-playing dart, the del chliss; eight feat-playing shields with his dark-red curved shield that could hold a prize boar in its hollow, its whole rim so razor sharp it could sever a single hair against he stream. When Cúchulainn did the feat of the shield-rim, he could shear with his shield as sharply as spear or sword.

He placed on his head his warlike, crested battle-helmet, from whose every nook and cranny his longdrawn scream re-echoed like the screams of a hundred warriors and heroes. His concealing cloak was spread about him, made of cloth from Tir Tairngire, the Land of Promise. It was given to him by his magical foster-father.<sup>17</sup>

The first warp-spasm seized Cúchulainn, and made him into a monstrous thing, hideous and shapeless, unheard of. His shanks and his joints, every knuckle and angle and organ from head to foot, shook like a tree in the flood or a reed in the stream. His body made a furious twist inside his skin, so that his feet and shins and knees switched to the rear and his heels and claws switched to the front. The balled sinews of his calves switched to the front of his shins, each big knot the size of a warrior's bunched fist. On his head the temple-sinews stretched to the nape of his neck, each mighty, immense, measureless knob as big as the head of a month-old-child. His

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<sup>17</sup> A practice of the Celts was the placement of noble children under the care of foster-parents, who would teach them all they needed to know in lore, fighting, and magic. Later in the Arthurian Romances, written beginning in the late 12th century, we find the heroes of the Holy Grail, such as Sir Galahad and (the last of them) Sir Parzival, were raised by foster-parents or fatherless. For instance, Galahad, the son of Sir Lancelot, was raised by his mother, the Queen of Ireland, as his father went off in his Quest.

face and features became a red bowl: he sucked one eye so deep into his head that a wild crane couldn't probe it onto his cheek out of the depths of his skull; the other eye fell out along his cheek. His mouth weirdly distorted: his cheek peeled back from his jaws until the gullet appeared, his lungs and liver flapped in his mouth and throat, his lower jaw struck the upper a lion-killing blow, and fiery flakes large as a ram's fleece reached his mouth from his throat. His heart boomed loud in his breast like the baying of a watch-dog at its feed or the sound of a lion among bears. Malignant mists and spurts of fire — the torches of the Badb — flickered red in the vaporous clouds that rose to kill in that first attack, his first full battle with the provinces of Ireland. Then he circled the outer lines of the four great provinces of Ireland in his chariot and he attacked them in hatred. He had the chariot driven so heavily that its iron wheels sank into the earth. So deeply the chariot-wheels sank in the earth that clods and boulders were torn up, with rocks and flagstones and the gravel of the ground, in a dyke as high as the iron wheels, enough for a fortress-wall. He threw up this circle of the Badb round about the four great provinces of Ireland to stop them fleeing and scattering from him, and corner them where he could wreak vengeance for the boy-troop. He went into the middle of them and beyond, and mowed down great ramparts of his enemies' corpses, circling completely around the armies three times, attacking them in hatred. They fell sole to sole and neck to headless neck, so dense was that destruction. He circled them three times more in the same way, and left a bed of them six deep in a great circuit, the soles of three to the necks of three in a ring around the camp. This slaughter on the Táin was given the name Seisrech Bresligi, the Sixfold Slaughter. It is one of the three uncountable slaughters on the Táin: <sup>18</sup>

The Aryans, like other Indo-Europeans, had similar tales, fragments added by the bards to an ever-growing body of literature or mythology. The battle between Karna and Arjuna in the Mahabharata is one we can relate to the Táin. Arjuna, the hero of the Bhagavad Gita, a section of the Mahabharata, is here given a magic bow and Karna is equipped with the magic arrow of Indra. Karna is the son of the sun-god, Surya; he and Arjuna are brothers, born of the same mother, Kunti. Arjuna is the son of the god Indra. Here we see demigods, as in the *Iliad* fighting as substitutes of their fathers. It is Indra that wins and is the dominant god — besides Agni, who has special attributes as a messenger of the gods — in the *Rig Veda*. In later times the gods Shiva and Vishnu become more dominant. In mortal combat the loser loses because his god is not as strong as his opponent's god. This thesis carries on to modern times where nations join battle in the belief that their god will arm and equip them to overthrow their "evil" opponent. In the battle between the two brothers, Karna and Arjuna, neither is evil. It is destiny that holds sway in this story. Karna loses because he was destined to lose, since Indra, the god of thunder (or weather), is in the times of the *Rig Veda* the dominant god. Mitra, another god associated with the sun becomes the dominant god of the Persians under the name, Mithra. His symbol is the bull. He is also listed in the gods of the Mitanni.

When the immortal Dawn had pervaded the wide spaces, the depths, and the high places with her brilliance on the fourth morning, I saw the sky over Kurukshetra so crowded with the gods who had come to watch us that their heavenly chariots could hardly squeeze by one

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<sup>18</sup> *The Tain*, translated from the Irish Epic *Tain Bo Cuailnge* by Thomas Kinsella, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 150-155.

another.<sup>19</sup>

With his hands marked with thunder-wheels Karna strung the bow Vijaya that only he could bend. He strung flower garlands of dead black iron over his chariot and made King Salya his charioteer, to balance Krishna, and filled a second car with long arrows winged with vulture feathers, to balance Arjuna's unfailing quivers.

Karna's arms were red with sandal paste; blue and gold champa flowers hung round his shoulders. He mounted his chariot carrying Indra's winged dart that lay alone in sandal dust in its long golden box, the fatal dart Karna had worshipped for a year with lights and beads and food and flowers and incense, and had long kept it for Arjuna's death. Its wings were bright as sunlight, to hold it was sweet as childhood remembered; to face it was bitter as Time.

We looked at him as at a Wishing Tree. Karna terrified even me, but I could scarcely keep from calling out to him: 'Do not Go!' as we followed him onto the field in silence, without music, walking round the dead that lay on the Earth like bits of fire, still seeming to be alive. There Karna stopped, with sixty million arrows of iron and steel and wood and silver, bearing arrowheads pointed or barbed or cleft, or shaped like a calf's tooth, or a boar's ear, or a crescent, or the head of a snake or a frog.

Karna bent over and said to Salya, 'Who will win and who will embrace the Earth he has died for, desiring her no longer? Even the storm-wind cannot move the mountains; even the sea-waves die on the shore. Go a little farther and wait there for him.'

By his tent, Arjuna put plowers over his armor and drank deeply from a bowl of wine till his eyes shone bright as the arch diadem on his head. He touched a brazen mirror that gave him back his strength redoubled, and fastened on his arms the bracelets of good fortune, the flawless jewels and life-giving herbs sealed in golden capsules strung together on silver chains. Then Arjuna in his car, and Krishna was driving the silver-white horses in their pearl harness over to Karna, while the rest of the Pandava army followed a little behind. At a sign from Drishtadyumna they stopped far from us, and all together we watched, with the forest ascetics who were sitting at the edge of the wood and the plain, and with the gods above.

Karna loudly slapped his armpit and Arjuna answered him. The sky became overcast, hiding Arjuna in mist and fog; lightning clouds higher than mountains towered above; thunder rolled across heaven, and the rain and dew of Lord Indra fell gently down. Indra's rainbow hung over Arjuna, and the dark heavy clouds seemed to laugh as rows of white cranes flew through them. Arjuna strung his bow and whispered to Krishna, 'Will you and I walk together anymore?' And Krishna answered, 'Ah, be still!'<sup>20</sup>

Then Surya angrily burnt away the clouds and bathed Karna in sunlight that shone from his armor and earrings as dancing sparks of colored fire and burning streaks of liquid gold. Arjuna called out, 'If I am a worthy guest, grant me the hospitality of battle.'

'I am honored,' cried Karna, 'I could never turn you away!' Arjuna's horses were still walking slowly, when suddenly Karna's chariot raced at him, crashing over the plain, jarring the Earth under its wheels, and Karna gave that desirable guest a million arrows striking all at once to

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<sup>19</sup> The gods watch the battle with great interest, just as the gods of Mount Olympos, headed by Zeus, watched the battle of Troy.

<sup>20</sup> Krishna is also a god and clan chief of the Yadavas. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna tells Arjuna that no matter what he does the end result has been predestined, so he must go to battle. At the end of the *Mahabharata* Krishna tells Arjuna that the two of them had had many former lives, too many to relate.

pierce his armor, like the charity of a perfect host who offers all his home to the wayfarer. Death himself would have felt pain from those arrows.

Arjuna danced on his car like Shiva dancing covered with blood in the burning ghats at night. He clapped his hands and there was darkness, but we could still see his bowstring flash as he drew it back to his ear. I thought, 'Now arrows are the dice, and Gandiva bow the throwing box. Who else will forgive what Arjuna will? And whose anger is more unbearable?'

Down from the sky boulders flew at Karna, who crushed and shattered them with his arrows and ground them to sand that fell sparking and burning through the night sky. He surrounded Arjuna with crackling flames, and from that weapon the robes of the Pandava warriors caught fire, though they stood far away, and the Earth was scorched black. They were ready to run when Arjuna quickly spoke some mantra and the fire was gone, and we were in cold water up to our shoulders.

From Karna's bow a hot desert wind swept the plain to dry the water. The sun returned; the wind was gone swirling away; there was no sign from the fire, no fallen sand, and we stood again as before the beginning.

Arjuna's white arrows, their wings of peacock feathers blazing, pierced Karna like new-sluffed serpents with downbent heads entering the earth. With an arrow sticking in his forehead, Karna cut Gandiva's bowstring with a snap that made my ears ring. Then for awhile those two archers filled the sky with death in perfect balance, with arrows long and thick and short, while the gods sometimes said: 'Excellent, Karna!' — and sometimes: 'Excellent, Arjuna!' Tired in the afternoon, they stopped to rest beneath the shadow of their arrows locked together in the sky, looking at one another while the Apsarasas of heaven fanned them with young palmyra leaves and sprinkled cool sprays of sandalwater over their bodies.

And after, Arjuna began the battle again. Before Karna could reply, Time invisibly told him: 'The Earth is devouring your wheel.' Karna's chariot tipped over to the left, and the wheel on that side was locked fast. When Karna jumped down and pulled at the axle hub with his feet on the ground, Earth that had swallowed his wheel rose four fingers' breadth, with her seven islands and her hills and waters and forests, but the wheel would not come free.

Then Karna saw Arjuna take aim at him, and wept with anger and said, 'I am afoot and unarmed. Arjuna, wait for me now; be not a coward.'

Yet Arjuna would not wait, so that Karna thought, 'Now my life is in peril,' and abandoning his war against the Earth he leapt onto his chariot and opened the long box.

Karna shook the dust from Naikartana dart; rumbling thunder shook again in the clear, empty sky; and all creatures that were able fled away in fear. I ran, but still I saw the keen and polished dart with golden bells in Karna's hand, inspired with anger, able to destroy whatever it met. And before Arjuna could think, Karna threw the dart and cried: 'Arjuna, you are slain!'

That shock brought the lattice of arrows crashing down. Indra's dart threw off flames from its wings; fire circled its head; and always it gained speed, blasting the air from its way, aimed true at Arjuna's breast.

Krishna pressed his foot down so that Arjuna's car sank into the Earth and the horses fell down. The awful dart struck to bits the diadem of lightnings atop Arjuna's head and flew flaming into a starry constellation in the sky of heaven. Arjuna's crown, a guardian and a fragrance to its wearer, lay broken on the Earth.

Wet with blood, Arjuna's long hair fell over his face and down his back. Flames show out from

every pore of his body. 'Oh, may it kill him!' wept Arjuna, and shot from Gandiva an arrow irresistible as a Rakshasa at night — an arrow with a flat crescent head, razor-sharp and broad as two-hands held out hollowed.

As Karna fell beheaded, so fell our fame and happiness and pride and hope and also our hearts. Karna's head was as unwilling to abandon his body as a treasure owner all his wealth, but Arjuna stood victorious. Karna never expected Indra's dart to fail, and so he took no guard to himself.

The wheel was free, and Salya drove the empty car away. It was evening, the deep metal drums of heaven roared untouched in the air, and Lord Surya, forever kind to his son, with his last ray touched Karna's body and sank crimson with grief behind Sunset Hill. The gods left the sky and victory left our side forever.

Duryodhana wept, 'Oh, karna...', and Arjuna bound his head with a white cloth. Yudhishtira drove over to Karna and wondered, 'Who was he?'

Your army was a death-field. We were pale and ready to run again; our mouths were dry and emptiness was before our restless eyes. Not one man still wished to fight for you. The enemy made no move, but steadily looked at us in silence as the sunset died, and the wind sighed in my ears: 'Alas.'

Both armies were gathered round Karna by lamplight. He was still beautiful to us, still frightening to them, not very changed. For a moment the rivers stood still and every man felt pain in his heart. Duryodhana came, and then rode slowly away, often glancing backwards at Arjuna's car, and at Kurukshetra covered with iron tiger-claws held by severed hands, covered with hammers and bearded darts, with yokes and fans and chains, with broken spears and wheels, with swords .. and blood-dyed arrows and bells and dead flowers and fallen heads with bright crystal earrings whose open mouths were filled with blood.

His head bent, Duryodhana told us, 'Who can win always? The dart was baffled like the hope of an unfortunate man. But now rest for the night.'

Yudhishtira told Arjuna, 'I cannot believe that the strongest warrior in all the world is dead. Thirteen years I have not slept without thinking of Karna.'

The gentle night wind smelled of the Earth and her green plants; the stillness of evening became the silence of night; and under the stars Karna's body stiffened and grew cold.<sup>21</sup>

Following the battle between the two heroes the armies joined in fierce determination, leaving the field strewn with bodies and body parts. The field, called Kuru's Plain, was foreknown and the bard reminds us:

Duryodhana said, ..'I am fallen and your words will not raise me. Why did you lead us here?'

'To Kuru's Plain?'

'Yes.'

'When hundreds of years ago Kuru plowed this field without leading in any watercourse or sowing one seed, curiosity led Indra to approach. He asked why Kuru walked through dust when he could as well spend his days in the cool honeysuckle houses of the palace garden in Hastinapura.'

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<sup>21</sup> Krishna is also a god and clan chief of the Yadavas. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna tells Arjuna that no matter what he does the end result has been predestined, so he must go to battle. At the end of the *Mahabharata* Krishna tells Arjuna that the two of them had had many former lives, too many to relate.

'Not as well,' answered Kuru. 'This is a dust bowl,' said Indra. 'No,' said Kuru, 'It is a future battlefield that will lead to heaven.'

'It is a wilderness,' said Indra, 'Your Majesty's time is far too valuable for this.' But Kuru kept right on plowing until Indra returned and said, 'Murder is evil and war is a sin, or where is the field for the assassins of kings?'

'Lord,' answered Kuru, 'I will stop every sacrifice and fire; I will lead the Kurus into the forest where there are no books.'<sup>22</sup>

The main book to which Kuru referred, of course, is the book of prayers, the *Rig Veda*. And the *Rig Veda* was the connection to the gods, to heaven and a long life. In the *Rig Veda* the prayers are for wealth, health, children, victory over the enemy, and long life — the usual stuff making up prayers even these days. And it is perhaps appropriate to note that even the final battle mentioned in the Old Testament and repeated in the Koran results in the same realization: a scorched earth, a dust bowl. Thus is the appetite of the gods.

### **Rig Veda**

#### **Book I, Hymn V *Indra***

1. O come ye hither, sit ye down: to Indra  
sing ye forth, your song,  
Companions, bringing hymns of praise
2. To him the richest of the rich, the Lord of  
treasures excellent,  
Indra, with Soma juice outpoured.
3. May he stand by us in our need and in  
abundance for our wealth:  
May he come nigh us with his strength.
4. Whose pair of tawny horses yoked in  
battles foremen challenge not:  
To him, to Indra sing your song.
5. Nigh to the Soma-drinker come, for his  
enjoyment, these pure drops,  
The Somas mingled with the curd.<sup>23</sup>
6. Thou, grown at once to perfect strength,  
wast born to drink the Soma juice  
Strong Indra, for preeminence.
7. O Indra, lover of the song, may these quick  
Somases enter thee:  
May they bring bliss to thee the Sage.
8. Our chants of praise have strengthened thee,  
O Satakratu, and our lauds:  
So strengthen thee the songs we sing.
9. Indra, whose succour never fails, accept

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<sup>22</sup> *Mahabharata*, Part II, Chapter 15, p. 314

<sup>23</sup> Here we have mention of the ingredient, Curds, to Soma. Appendix A contains a recipe for making Soma.

these viands thousandfold,  
Wherein all manly powers abide.  
10. O Indra, thou who lovest song, let no man  
hurt our bodies, keep  
Slaughter far from us, for thou canst.

#### **Book I, Hymn VI Indra**

7. Still higher, at each strain of mine,  
thunder-armed Indra's praises rise:  
I find no laud worthy of him.  
8. Even as the bull drives on the herds, he  
drives the people with his might,  
The Ruler irresistible.  
9. Indra who rules with single sway men,  
riches, and the fivefold race  
Of those who dwell upon the earth.  
10. For your sake from each side we call Indra  
away from other men:  
Ours, and none others,' may he be.

#### **Book I, Hymn IX Indra**

3. O Lord of all men, fair of cheek, rejoice  
thee in the gladdening lauds,  
Present at these drink-offerings. <sup>24</sup>

#### **Book 1, Hymn X Indra**

1. The chanters hymn thee, they who say  
the word of praise magnify thee.  
The priests have raised thee up on high,  
O Satakratu, like a pole.  
2. As up he climbed from ridge to ridge and  
looked upon the toilsome task,

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<sup>24</sup> Many references to Indra and other gods in the *Rig Veda* make it clear that the people of the *Rig Veda* and their gods were fair-skinned. Their enemies were brown-skinned, who occupy the land which they are attempting to conquer. This information is relative to who was where in the beginning, with regard to Indo-European roots. Like the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey* referring to the Pelasgians — the indigenous population whom the Achaeans (Greeks) ousted from Greece — the Aryans of the Vedas recount the same situation, and the names of some of the brown-skinned indigenous peoples are listed in the *Rig Veda*, as we shall discover. The evidence on the origin of the people of the *Rig Veda* points to a place outside of India that is mountainous and given to pastoral use. The eastern Russian steppes would appear to be their source. What is clear in the *Rig Veda* is that the bards consider the hymns that they sing to be already ancient. However, it is just as clear that the *Rig Veda* does not know of any other land, other than the Saraswati River basin, as the source of the five tribes of Aryans.

Indra observes this wish of his, and the  
Ram hastens with his troop <sup>25</sup>

3. Harness thy pair of strong bay steeds,  
long-maned, whose bodies fill the girths  
And, Indra, Soma-drinker, come to listen  
to our songs of praise.

#### **Book 1, Hymn XI *Indra***

3. The gifts of Indra from of old, his saving  
succors never fail,

When to the praise-singers he gives the  
boon of substance rich in kine.

4. Crusher of forts, the young, the wise, of  
strength unmeasured, was he born  
Sustainer of each sacred rite, Indra, the  
Thunderer, much-extolled.

5. Lord of thunder, thou didst burst the  
cave of Vala rich in cows.

The Gods came pressing to thy side, and  
free from terror aided thee.

#### **Book 1, Hymn XII *Agni***

1. We choose Agni the messenger, the herald,  
master of all wealth,

Well skilled in this our sacrifice.

2. With callings ever they invoke Agni, Agni,  
Lord of the House,

Oblation-bearer, much beloved.

3. Bring the Gods hither, Agni, born for him  
who strews the sacred grass:

Thou art our herald, meet for praise.

4. Wake up the willing Gods, since thou,  
Agni, performest embassy:

Sit on the sacred grass with Gods.

9. Whoso with sacred gift would fain call Agni  
to the feast of Gods,

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<sup>25</sup> The bull is the sign of the sun-god; the ram is the sign of the Thunder-god. Why is the ram such a sign? Rams butting heads in contest atop a ridge sound like thunder. It is a loud, clapping noise. This may in part be the answer, in any event. If this is true, as an Indo-European theological precept, then the god Cernunnos who is portrayed holding a serpent with a ram's head may be an Indra-like character. In fact, because the *Rig Veda* is so old that it holds Indra foremost in its pantheon of 33 gods, it suggests that the Horned God character, Cernunnos among the Celts which resembles the Horned God character of the Indus Seals may very well be a Thunder-god. The god with the antlers is referred to as "the Lord of the Beasts."

O Purifier, favour him.

10. Such, Agni, Purifier, bright, bring hither  
to our sacrifice,  
To our oblation bring the Gods. <sup>26</sup>

### **Book I, Hymn XIII Agni**

4. Agni, on thy most easy car, glorified, hither  
bring the Gods:

Manu appointed thee as Priest <sup>27</sup>

5. Strew, O ye wise, the sacred grass that  
drips with oil, in order due  
Where the Immortal is beheld.

6. Thrown open be the Doors Divine,  
unfailing, that assist the rite,  
For sacrifice this day and now. <sup>28</sup>

### **Book 1 Hymn XIV Visvedevas**

4. For you these juices are poured forth that  
gladden and exhilarate,  
the meath-drops resting in the cup.

9. Away, from the Sun's realm of light,  
the wise invoking Priest shall bring  
All Gods awaking with the dawn.

### **Book 1, Hymn XVI Indra**

2. Here are the grains bedewed with oil:  
hither let the Bay Coursers bring

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<sup>26</sup> Here we are told that we are participating in a feast of Gods. The people and the Gods are given grass, strewn upon the ground upon which to sit.

<sup>27</sup> Manu is the first man, patriarch of the Aryans, like Adam is the first man in the Old Testament scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> "thrown open be the doors;" here and in other places the Doors are mentioned and in view of the Dawn Sacrifice those doors would be aligned to the East, the Dawn. The double-doors suggest a hall which was probably made of wood, in the center of which was an altar. Around the altar sat the guests and grass matting for the gods. This curiously brings to mind the temples on Malta that were designed in alignment with the sun. The altar appears to be located in a niche at the back wall, where the rays of the sunrise would land as they enter through the doors. The impression from the *Rig Veda* is that the fire is the agent and symbol of the sun, that it must be lit first before the sunrise, and the ceremony demanded oblations put directly onto the fire. This would require placement of the fire, as relating to the inside of a building, probably in the center where the smoke would rise, allowing for a pitched roof. If the early Aryans were pastoral and lived initially in Kurgans, circular tents, perhaps the initial structures looked like a Kurgan. Whatever the structures were has been lost, since we know they did not survive time (or are currently under the foundations of modern temples and sacred sites, such as mosques). In Britain and Europe churches were built adjacent to or over pagan temples. A temple of Cernunnos, for instance, was directly under Notre Dame in Paris.

Indra upon his easiest car.  
5. Come thou to this our son of praise,  
to the libation poured for thee:  
Drink of it like a stag athirst.<sup>29</sup>

**Book 1, Hymn XVII *Indra-Varuna***

7. O Indra-Varuna, on you for wealth in  
many a form I call:  
Still keep ye us victorious.

**Book 1, Hymn XIX *Agni, Maruts***

1. To This fair sacrifice to drink the milky  
draught thou art invoked:  
O Agni, with the Maruts come.

**Book 1, Hymn XX *Rbhus***

6. The sacrificial ladle, wrought newly by  
the God Tvastar's hand —  
Four ladles have ye made thereof.  
7. Vouchasafe us wealth, to him who pours  
thrice seven libations, yea, to each.<sup>30</sup>  
Give wealth, pleased with our eulogies.

**Book 1, Hymn XXIII *Vayu and Others***

1. Strong are the Somas; come thou nigh;  
These juices have been mixt with milk:  
Drink, Vayu, the presented draughts.  
5. Those who by Law uphold the Law,  
Lords of the shining light of Law,  
Mitra I call, and Varuna.

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<sup>29</sup> "Drink of it like a stag athirst." If there is a connection between Indra and the Horned God of the Indus Seals, it would be through the stag — this and other references.

<sup>30</sup> Tvastar is the artisan of the gods, like the Greek god Hephaestus, who made the shield for Achillês; Vulcan in Roman mythology. The Greek and Roman artisan is associated with volcanos and their forge is generally held to be under Mount Etna in Sicily. While earthquakes are known in the *Rig Veda*, vulcanism is not a paramount concern. The paramount concern is the drying up of the land. They arrived when the Saraswati River was, according to the *Rig Veda*, a viable source, continually flowing to the sea. Today it is dried up. Indra is known in the *Rig Veda* for having defeated the dragon in the mountains that had blocked the flow of water into the Sarawati River. "Dragon-slayer" is a main characteristic of Indo-European thunder-gods, as illustrated in the case of Zeus, Beowulf, and probably Cernunnos. The Rbhus were disciples of Tvastar, according to Sayana [Griffith's note].

**Book 1, Hymn XXIV Varuna & Others**

13. Bound to three pillars captured Sunahsepa  
thus to the Aditya made his supplication.  
Him may the Sovran Varuna deliver, wise,  
never deceived, loosen the bonds that bind him.

**Book 1, Hymn XXVIII Indra**

1. There where the broad-based stone is  
raised on high to press the juices out,  
O Indra, drink with eager thirst the  
droppings which the mortar sheds.  
7. Best strength-givers, ye stretch wide jaws,  
O Sacrificial Implements  
Like two bay horses champing herbs.  
8. Ye Sovrans of the Forest, both swift, with  
swift pressers press today  
Sweet Soma juice for Indra's drink.  
9. Take up in beakers what remains: the  
Soma on the filter pour,  
And on the ox-hide set the dregs.

**Book 1, Hymn XXIX Indra**

1. O Soma drinker, ever true, utterly hopeless  
though we be,  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous  
horses and of kine,  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.  
5. Destroy this ass, O Indra, who in tones  
discordant brays to thee:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous  
horses and of kine,  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.  
7. Slay each reviler, and destroy him <sup>31</sup>  
who in secret injures us:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous  
horses and of kine,

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<sup>31</sup> Here the bards are complaining about those who revile them, who bray at them like asses, and pray for many horses. Their wealth was measured in cattle and, like the Scythians, gold. The prevalent theory on the language of the Scythians is that it is related to Persian (and thus Sanskrit). Herodotus tells us a couple of words of the Scythians, with the term, pappas, appropriate and familiar. Herodotus was raised in a dominion of the Persian Empire and thus would have been literate in Persian.

In thousands, O most wealthy One.

**Book 1, Hymn XXX1 Agni**

6. Agni, thou savest in the synod when pursued  
even him, farseeing One! Who walks  
in evil ways.

Thou, when the heroes fight for spoil  
which men rush round, slayest in war  
the many by the hands of few.

7. For glory, Agni, day by day, thou liftest  
up the mortal man to highest immortality,<sup>32</sup>  
Even thou who yearning for both races  
givest them great bliss, and to the prince  
grantest abundant food.

13. Agni, thou art a guard close to the pious  
man; kindled art thou, four-eyed! For  
him who is unarmed.

With fond heart thou acceptest even the  
poor man's prayer, when he hath brought  
his gift to gain security.

14. Thou, Agni, gainest for the loudly-praising  
priest the highest wealth, the object of<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Agni is the foremost god in terms of immortality, since he is self-created in the view of the *Rig Veda*. Thus, merged with Agni, carried up to heaven, one becomes immortal. The union begins in the ritual and is finally consummated at death when the body is put upon a pyre. In the *Mahabharata*, after the war the dead are gathered, put on pyres and poured into mother Ganga, the Ganges River. Hence there are no Aryan, Vedic tombs nor would they be expected. Interestingly in southern India was a tradition of raising mounds, since dolmens exist there. Cremation was practiced by the British as well as the Etruscans. We highlight this from the standpoint that in the ceremony involving Agni, being the messenger of the gods, he is also the one who transports the soul to the gods. This is important since it is germane to the Hindu belief in eternal life. The Celts were fanatically attached to the concept, from the standpoint that they held it a greater honor to die in battle and willingly committed entire tribes to suicidal ends. An entire tribe of Helveti, being overwhelmed and surrounded by Julius Caesar, for instance, committed suicide. Caesar, in his Gallic Wars, notes that there were 50,000 men plus their women and children. The entire lot chose death as a better option to being taken captive and enslaved. But to them there was no such thing as death. As we see in the *Iliad*, it was better to die in battle than to die in peace. This is also true in the *Mahabharata*, and we see in the teaching of that story the pathos of losing so many lives over a game of dice. In the *Tain Bo Cuailnge* the bard reminds us of the nobility in Cúchulainn's word, to defend the cattle, though in the youth's naivety keeping his word meant the destruction of thousands of heroes from the four counties of Ireland that thought to make the cattle-raid. In those days, the heroes were given a eulogy and thrown on a funeral pyre, returned to heaven, regardless of which side of the cattle-raid one was on. The same is true in the *Iliad*. There were heroes on both sides, and both Achillês and Hector were entitled to their funeral pyre, the crux of which involved sending them off to be with the gods with a banquet of the gods.

<sup>33</sup> Agni looks in the four cardinal directions and is the protector of the poor. He has to be since he serves both the poor in their hearths as well as the rich. Note also the eulogy to those who loudly-praise him. The ritual must have been noisier than an American Protestant service! Also, the fact that the participants were drinking Soma — in a euphoric drunkenness, as it were — recalls the rites of Dionysus, the "twice-born" (once sewn in the thigh of Zeus,

a man's desire.

Thou art called Father, caring even for  
the weak, and wisest, to the simple one  
thou teachest lore.

16. Pardon, we pray, this sin of ours, O Agni —  
the path which we have trodden, <sup>34</sup>  
widely straying,  
Dear Friend and Father, caring for the pious,  
who speedest nigh and who inspirest mortals.

### **Book 1, Hymn XXXII *Indra***

1. I will declare the manly deeds of Indra,  
the first that he achieved, the Thunder-wielder.  
He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters,  
and cleft the channels of the  
mountain torrents.

2. He slew the Dragon lying on the mountain:  
his heavenly bolt of thunder  
Tvastar fashioned.

Like lowing kine in rapid flow descending  
the waters glided downward to the ocean. <sup>35</sup>

3. Impetuous as a bull, he chose the Soma  
and in three sacred beakers drank the  
juices.

Maghavan grasped the thunder for the  
weapon and smote to death this first-  
born of the dragons.

4. When, Indra, thou hadst slain the dragon's  
firstborn, and overcome the charms of  
the enchanters,

Then, giving life to Sun and Dawn and  
Heaven, thou foundest not one foe to  
stand against thee.

9. Then humbled was the strength of Vrtra's

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then reborn) god who brought the vine and is represented by the goat and accompanied by maenads, satyrs and seileni. Seileni and satyrs frequently appear on antefixes of Etruscan buildings. Among many of his travels and adventures Dionysus took his rite to India. His origin is believed to be Thracian or Phrygian. One of his more well-known feats was granting King Midas of Lydia the gift of turning everything he touched to gold. It was in Egypt, caught in the battle between the gods and the Giants, that Dionysus and the other gods, fleeing the monster Typhōeus, disguised themselves as animals, Dionysus, himself, taking on the appearance of a goat.

<sup>34</sup> In praying for the forgiveness of sins, the greatest sin is to stray from the Law — as is true of both ancient and modern faiths.

<sup>35</sup> Indra is the Dragon-slayer who brings forth rain, also testifying to the effect that the sacred Saraswati river then flowed to the ocean.

mother: Indra hath cast his deadly  
bolt against her.  
The mother [Danu] was above, the son was under,  
and like a cow beside her calf lay Danu.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The slaying of the dragon precisely parallels the slaying of the dragon Grendel by Beowulf; after slaying Grendel Beowulf had to slay his mother! Grendel lived at the bottom of a lake and would come up and enter the Danish King Hrothgar's palace and devour anyone it found sleeping there; his fire-breathing mother lived deep in a shaft below a cliff:

“...But of Grendel: you need to  
Know more to know everything; I ought to  
go on. It was early in the evening, Heaven's  
Jewel had slid to its rest, and the jealous  
Monster, planning murder, came seeking us  
Out, stalking us as we guarded Hrothgar's  
Hall. Hondsnew, sleeping in his armor,  
Was the first Geat he reached: Grendel  
Seized him, tore him apart, swallowed him  
Down, feet and all, as fate  
Had decreed — a glorious young soldier, killed  
In his prime. Yet Grendel had only begun  
His bloody work, meant to leave us  
With his belly and his pouch both full, and Herot  
Half-empty. Then he tested his strength against mine,  
Hand to hand. His pouch hung  
At his side, a huge bag sewn  
From a dragon's skin, worked with a devil's  
Skill; it was closed by a marvelous clasp.  
The monster intended to take me, put me  
Inside, save me for another meal.  
He was bold and strong, but once I stood  
On my feet his strength was useless,  
And it failed him (*Beowulf*, chapter 29, 2077-2092)  
...Then Beowulf rose, still brave, still strong,  
And with his shield at his side, and a mail shirt  
on his breast,  
Strode calmly, confidently, toward the tower, under  
The rocky cliffs: no coward could have walked there!  
And then he who'd endured dozens of desperate  
Battles, who'd stood boldly while swords and shields  
Clashed, the best of kings, saw  
Huge stone arches and felt the heat  
Of the dragon's breath, flooding down  
Through the hidden entrance, too hot for anyone  
To stand, a streaming current of fire  
And smoke that blocked all passage. And the Geats'  
Lord and leader, angry, lowered  
His sword and roared out a battle cry,  
A call so loud and clear that it reached through  
The hoary rock, hung in the dragon's  
Ear. The beast rose, angry,

15. Indra is King of all that moves and moves not,  
of creatures tame and horned,  
the Thunder-wielder.  
Over all living men he rules, as Sovran,  
containing all as spokes within the felly.<sup>37</sup>

**Book 1, Hymm XXXIII Indra**

4. Thou slewest with thy bolt the wealthy  
Dasyu alone, yet going with thy helpers,  
Indra!  
Far from the floor of heaven in all directions,  
the ancient riteless ones fled to destruction.

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Knowing a man had come — and then nothing  
But war could have followed. Its breath came first,  
A steaming cloud pouring from the stone,  
Then the earth itself shook. Beowulf  
Swung his shield into place, held it  
In front of him, facing the entrance. The dragon  
Coiled and uncoiled, its heart urging it  
In to battle. Beowulf's ancient sword  
Was waiting, unsheathed, his sharp and gleaming  
Blade. The beast came closer; both of them  
Were ready, each set on slaughter. The Geats'  
Great prince stood firm, unmoving, prepared  
Behind his high shield, waiting in his shining  
Armor. The monster came quickly toward him,  
Pouring out fire and smoke, hurrying  
To its fate. Flames beat at the iron  
Shield, and for a time it held, protected  
Beowulf as he'd planned; then it began to melt,  
And for the first time in his life that famous prince  
Fought with fate against him, with glory  
Denied him. He knew it, but he raised his sword  
And struck at the dragon's scaly hide.  
The ancient blade broke, bit into  
The monster's skin, drew blood, but cracked  
And failed him before it went deep enough, helped  
him  
Less than he needed. The dragon leaped  
With pain, thrashed and beat at him, spouting  
Murderous flames, spreading them everywhere.  
And the Geats' ring-giver did not boast of glorious  
Victories in other wars: his weapon  
Had failed him, deserted him, now when he needed it  
Most, that excellent sword. Edgeth's  
Famous son stared at death... (*Beowulf*, Chapter 35, 2538-2587)

<sup>37</sup> A symbol of Indra is a wheel, as is the case with Cernunnos.

5. Fighting with pious worshippers, the riteless turned and fled, Indra! With averted faces.  
When thou, fierce Lord of the Bay Steeds,  
the Stayer, blewest from earth and  
heaven and sky the godless.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The Dasyu are sometimes a class of demons, enemies of gods and men, and the word may mean savage, a barbarian [Griffith's note]. When Beowulf slayed the dragon he and his Geats (his tribe) reaped vast treasures stored within the deep chambers of the dragon. Here the Dasyu may refer to the indigenous peoples against whom the Aryans were fighting who, following this thesis, were wealthy and riteless. It is apparent that the Indus Valley seals show rites involving in particular a god like Indra or Shiva, and in one seal, Banquet.html, there is a horned god sitting midst a plant with about four branches on either side. Before him is another character with horns, kneeling as if before an altar. Below are seven associates, all having bangles on their arms. Each branch where the Horned God sits has a flower head that resembles a poppy bud (capsule). The plant in the Indus seal certainly does not look like Cannabis. Poppy impressions (looking like hash marks in a circular line with a pit in the circle) have been found on pendants and clay models in Greece, including Crete. Archeologists have taken dried poppy capsules and impressed them in clay and obtained the same impression found in ancient Greek seals. Guido Majno describes the ancient Greek artifacts as follows: "A woman's pendants in the shape of poppy capsules were found in Sparta. The precise shape recurs in objects found all over Greece: pottery, jewels, even clay models that may have been offerings to the gods in Crete ..they were greeted by the raised arms of an ancient Minoan goddess. She had strange eyes, perhaps closed. Before her were the remains of a heap of coals and some pottery; she wore three hairpins shaped as beautiful, well-slit poppy capsules (figure 4.6)," *The Healing Hand*, a guide to ancient healing practices, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1975, p.144. The field Poppy is found in southeastern Europe, Turkey and western Asia and is grown in rotation with barley and wheat. There are many uses of the plant, as pain relievers, expectorants, etc. According to <http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/p/popwhi64.html#des> this is how the Poppy is cultivated and used in India today: The shape of the plant in the Indus seal, in the midst of which the god is sitting, may be a Poppy, but the extraction process and medicinal action does not coincide very well to the *Rig Veda's* manufacture and use of Soma. The process of collecting Opium also involves bleeding of the sap exuded and dried from the capsule from two or three incisions. Based upon the criteria of [www.botanical.com](http://www.botanical.com) it is not likely that grinding, or pressing, the stalks of a Poppy plant would yield the rapturous effects claimed in the *Rig Veda*.

Medicinal Action and Uses — Hypnotic, sedative, astringent, expectorant, diaphoretic, antispasmodic....Opium is extracted from the poppy heads before they have ripened, and from Poppies grown in the East, those grown in Europe yielding but little of the drug. When the petals have fallen from the flowers, incisions are made in the wall of the unripe capsules, care being taken not to penetrate to the interior. The exuded juice, partially dried, is collected by scraping - the scrapings being formed eventually into cakes, which are wrapped in poppy leaves or paper and further dried in the sun, the white milky juice darkening during the drying....

...The capsules are left on the stems after the petals have fallen, until they cease to enlarge. The stems should then be bent in the middle and the capsules left on the plant until they are firm, which will be about September.

...In India, when the flowers are in bloom, the first step is the removal of the petals, which are used in packing the prepared drug. After a few days, the imperfectly ripened capsules are scarified from above downwards by two or three knives tied together and called 'mushturs.' These make a superficial incision, or series of incisions, into the capsule, whereupon a milky juice exudes, which is allowed to harden and is then removed and collected in earthen pots. The time of day chosen for slicing the capsules is about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the heat of the sun causes the speedy formation of a film over the exuded juice; great attention is also paid to the weather, as all these causes modify the quantity, quality, or speediness of exudation of the opium.

The capsules are submitted to two or three slicing processes at intervals of a few days, and the drug is ultimately conveyed to the government factory where it is kneaded into a homogeneous mass by native

**Book 1, Hymn XC Soma**

5. Thou, Soma, art the Lord of heroes, King,  
yea, Vrtra-slayer thou:  
Thou art auspicious energy

**Book 1, C Indra**

18. He, much invoked, hath slain Dasyu and  
Simyus, after his wont, and laid them  
low with arrows.  
The mighty Thunderer with his fair-complexioned  
friends won the land, the  
sunlight, and the waters.

**Book 1, CI Indra**

1. Sing, with oblation, praise to him who  
maketh glad, who with Rjisvan drove  
the dusky brood away.

**Book 1, CII Indra**

10. Thou hast prevailed, and hast not kept  
the booty back in trifling battles or  
in those of great account.

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workmen.

The capsules contain the principal constituents of opium, the most important of which is the alkaloid Morphine, which exists in combination with meconic and sulfuric acids. The seeds are free from morphine; their principle constituent is the pale yellow fixed oil, used as a drying oil by artists, as well as for culinary and various technical purposes.

The action of poppy capsules is the same as that of opium, anodyne and narcotic, but much weaker.

The crushed capsules are used as a poultice, together with chamomile.

A syrup is prepared from the capsules, prescribed as an ingredient in cough medicine. Syrup of Poppy is often employed to allay cough and likewise as an opiate for children; in the latter case it should be used with great caution.

Decoction of Poppy, made from the bruised capsules and distilled water, is not given internally, but is employed as an external application to allay pain and soothe.

The broken capsules are sold at a cheaper rate, for making fomentations.

The grey seeds are sold for birds' food, under the name of 'maw' seed, and are derived from the dark-red flowered form of Papaver Somniferum; the var. album having white seeds.

The Harappa civilization existed ~1,800 B.C., prior to the Aryan incursion, and the Dasyu may refer to those peoples' progeny. They obviously had rites and their rites resemble the worship of Indra. But comparing their god to Indra may be like Moslems, Christians and Jews comparing Allah to JHVH, most of whom — being unlearned in each other's faith — would agree that there is no similarity between the two.

**Book 1, CIII *Indra***

3. Armed with his bolt and trusting in his prowess he wandered shattering the forts of Dasas.

Cast thy dart, knowing, thunderer, at the Dasyu: increase the Arya's might and glory, Indra.

6. To him the truly strong, whose deeds are many, to him the strong Bull let us pour the Soma.

The Hero, watching, like a thief in ambush, goes parting the possessions of the godless.

**Book 1, Hymn CXXI *Indra***

6. There is born. May the Swift give us rapture, and like the Sun shine forth from yonder dawning, Indu, even us who drank, whose toils are offerings, poured from the spoon, with praise, upon the altar.

7. When the wood-pile, made of good logs, is ready, at the Sun's worship to bind fast the Bullock, Then when thou shinest forth through days of action for the Car-borne, the Swift, the Cattle-seeker.

8. Eight steeds thou broughtest down from mighty heaven, when fighting for the well that giveth splendour, That men might press with stones the gladdening yellow, strengthened with milk, fermenting, to exalt thee.

9. Thou hurledst forth from heaven the iron missile, brought by the Skillful, from the sling of leather,

**Book 1, Hymn CXXIII *Dawn***

2. She before all the living world hath wakened, the Lofty One who wins and gathers

treasure.

Revived and ever young on high she glances,  
Dawn hath come first unto our  
morning worship.

6. Let our glad hymns and holy thoughts rise  
upward, for the flames brightly burning  
have ascended.

13...Shine thou on us today, Dawn, swift to  
listen. With us be riches and with chiefs  
who worship.

### **Book 1, Hymn CXXIV Dawn**

5. There in the east half of the watery region  
the Mother of the Cows hath shown her  
ensign...

10. Rouse up, O Wealthy One, the liberal  
givers; let niggard traffickers sleep on  
unwakened..

### **Book 1, Hymn CXXV Svanaya**

3. Longing, I came this morning to the pious,  
the son of sacrifice, with car wealth-laden.  
Give him to drink juice of the stalk that  
gladdens; prosper with pleasant hymns  
the Lord of Heroes.

6. ...The givers of rich meeds are made  
immortal; the givers of rich fees pro-  
long their lifetime.

7. Let not the liberal sink to sin and sorrow,  
never decay the pious chiefs who worship!  
Let every man besides be their protection,  
and let affliction fall upon the niggard.

### **Book 1, Hymn Agni**

1. ...He, when the flame hath sprung forth  
from the holy oil, the offered fatness,  
longeth for it with his glow.

4. To him, as one who knows, even things  
solid yield: unrough fire-sticks heated  
hot he gives his gifts to aid. Men  
offer Agni gifts for aid..

6. He, roaring very loudly like the Maruts'

host, in fertile cultivated fields adorable,  
in desert spots adorable.<sup>39</sup>

**Book 1, Hymn CXXVIII Agni**

6. Vast, universal, good he was made messenger;  
the speeder with his right hand  
hath not loosed his hold, through love  
of fame not loosed his hold.  
He bears oblations to the Gods for who-  
soever supplicates.  
Agni bestows a blessing on each pious  
man, and opens wide the doors for him.

**Book 1, Hymn CXXIX Indra**

5...Guide us, thou Hero, as of old, so art  
thou counted blameless still.  
Thou drivest, as a Priest, all sins of man  
away, as Priest, in person, seeking us.  
8. ...The weapon which devouring fiends cast  
at us shall destroy themselves.<sup>40</sup>  
10. ...O strongest saviour, helper thou,  
Immortal! of each warrior's car.  
Hurt thou another and not us, O Thunder-  
armed, one who would hurt, O Thunder-armed!<sup>35</sup>

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXI Indra**

1....For Indra all libations must be set apart,  
all man's libations set apart.  
4. This thine heroic power men of old time  
have known, wherewith thou breakest  
down, Indra, autumnal forts, breakest  
them down with conquering might.  
Thou hast chastised, O Indra, Lord of  
Strength, the man who worships not.  
And made thine own this great earth and

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<sup>39</sup> "in desert spots adorable," shows the Saraswati basin like a riverine oasis, surrounded by desert, like the Nile river. The Saraswati, is now dry.

<sup>40</sup> "the weapons of the priests shall destroy themselves," is a precept and foundation of the Old Testament: "the wicked shall be caught in the very snares they set for others." Indra is also called, Savatar, and is the Savior of the world. "Hurt thou another and not us," calls to mind the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, the prayer Christ taught, "lead us not into temptation."

these water-floods; with joyous heart  
these waterfloods.

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXII *Indra***

3. This food glows for thee as of old at  
sacrifice, wherein they made thee  
chooser of the place, for thou chooseth  
the place of sacrifice. <sup>41</sup>

4. ...To him who pours the juice give up the  
lawless man, the lawless who is wroth  
with us.

5. When with wise plan the Hero leads the  
people forth, they conquer in the ordered  
battle seeking fame.

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXIII *Indra***

2. O thou who castest forth the stone,  
crushing the sorceresses' heads..

5. O Indra, crush and bray to bits the  
fearful fiery-weaponed fiend:  
Strike every demon to the ground. <sup>42</sup>

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXIV *Vayu***

6. Thou, Vayu, who hast none before thee,  
first of all hast right to drink these  
offerings of Soma juice, hast right to

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<sup>41</sup> "thou chooseth the place of sacrifice," seems to suggest that the seer or rsi owes the place of sacrifice to a vision or sign given by Indra, through reading lightning bolts, the place where they occur, for instance. This calls to mind the Etruscan seers called, "fulguriator," seen in Script AP, Inscription from Pesaro, [http://www.maravot.com/Translation\\_Short\\_Scripts.html](http://www.maravot.com/Translation_Short_Scripts.html), of a man named Matius who read lightning bolts, removing the wrath from Veronia.

<sup>42</sup> *The Ramayana*, a story of King Rama, chapter 4, Rama, in exile in the forest, is enticed by Kamavalli (also called Soorpanaka), who is the sister of the king of demons, Ravana. Kamavalli ordinarily was huge, fat and had voracious teeth, constantly dripping with blood from feeding on men in the forest. Seeing Rama she fell instantly in love with him, not knowing that the beautiful woman in his cottage, named Sita, was Rama's wife. She changed herself into a beautiful woman, tried on many occasions to seduce Rama, but Rama's brother Lakshmana saw through the plot and caught Kamavalli as she was stalking Sita with the intention to devour her. Lakshmana pounced upon the demon and cut off her nose, ears and breasts. But this still did not stop her, in her attempts to capture Rama's heart. She complained to her brother that Rama had come with the intention of destroying him and all the demons that plague man, thus causing a battle between Rama and Ravana's horrid tribe. *The Ramayana* is believed to be ~1,500 B.C., dating with the *Rig Veda*. The hymns of the *Rig Veda* refer to events and stories that are explained in other books such as *The Ramayana*.

drink the juice out-poured,  
Yea, poured by all invoking tribes who  
free themselves from taint of sin  
For thee all cows are milked to yield the  
Soma-milk, to yield the butter and the milk.

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXV Vayu, Indra-Vayu**

2. Purified by the stones the Soma flows for  
thee, clothed with its lovely splendours,  
to the reservoir, flows clad in its  
refulgent light.

6. These Soma juices pressed for you in  
waters here, borne by attendant priests,  
are offered up to you: bright, Vayu,  
are they offered up.  
Swift through the strainer have they  
flowed, and here are shed for both of you.  
Soma-drops fain for you, over the wether's  
fleece, Somas over the wether's fleece. <sup>43</sup>

7. O Vayu, pass thou over all the slumberers,  
and where the press-stone rings enter  
ye both that house, yea, Indra, go ye  
both within.

8. Ride hither to the offerings of the pleasant  
juice, the holy Fig-tree which victorious <sup>38</sup>  
priests surround: victorious be they  
still for us.

At once the cows yield milk, the barley  
meal is dressed...

**Book 1, Hymn CXXXVI Mitra-Varuna**

2. For the broad Sun was seen a path more  
widely laid, the path of holy law hath  
been maintained with rays, the eye  
with Bhaga's rays of light <sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The wether's fleece is the filter made of wool [Griffith's note]. The Fig-tree is probably the source of the two sticks from which the fire is made.

<sup>44</sup> "with Bhaga's rays of light": 'the ancient god, Bhaga,' says Mr. Wallis, 'has become in the Rgveda little more than a source from which descriptions of the functions of other gods are obtained, or a standard of comparison by which their greatness is enhanced. His name has survived in the Slavonic languages as a general name for god, a

### **Book 1, Hymn CXLVI Agni**

1. I laud the seven-rayed, the triple-headed,  
Agni, all-perfect in his Parent's bosom,  
Sunk in the lap of all that moves and  
moves not, him who hath filled all  
luminous realms of heaven. <sup>45</sup>(36)

### **Book 1, Hymn CXLIX Agni**

Priest doubly born, he through his love of  
glory hath in his keeping all things worth  
the choosing. <sup>46</sup>

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sense which it also has in the Avesta. To judge from the Rgveda, Bhaga would seem to be a survival from an ancient Sun-worship' [Griffith's note].

<sup>45</sup> Agni as a three-headed god seems to recall an Indus seal identified as Shiva, but the Horned god has three faces. Note that the Greek god Geryon, from whom Hercules stole cattle, had three heads or faces (see the Tomb of Orcus murals, [http://www.maravot.com/Etruscan\\_Murals.html](http://www.maravot.com/Etruscan_Murals.html)). This was Hercules' tenth labor, which involved driving the herd of cattle from Geryon's country (Cadiz, Spain) back to Greece. This was no small feat. We must keep in mind that the greatest wealth in those days was measured in cattle; and in the case of Geryon Hercules was asked to drive off what would have appeared to have been the richest and most powerful of the Carthaginian's cattle, for Cadiz was the first Phoenician colony outside of Carthage. On the way home Hercules stopped off and rested in Rome, where the giant Cacus took the opportunity to steal the stolen cattle, hiding them in his cave. Hercules heard the lowing of one of the cows and got his cattle back, killing Cacus, but one of his bulls escaped and swam to Sicily. In the process of presenting the cattle to Eurystheus in Greece Hercules, according to Herodotus somehow Hercules ended up north of the Black Sea where he met a beautiful woman whose lower body was that of a snake. She managed to get him in bed with her and the result was the birth of three sons, one of whom was Scythes, the father of the Scythians. Hercules left one of his two bows with her and told her that when the three boys reached manhood, the son who could crawl it should become king in her land. Only Scythes could draw the bow. This story recalls the story of Rama, in *The Ramayana*, how he became king; it being reported that whoever could draw the bow Indra left in the kingdom would be the rightful heir of king Dasaratha and entitled to marry his beautiful daughter, Sita.

The three faces of this god in the Indus Valley seal also recalls Janus, the Roman god of ports, who faced two directions: both sides of a door. The Etruscans also worshipped the god of ports. Based upon the antiquity of the Indus Valley seals and the Rig Veda, the first god to come to mind to match a three-faced or three-headed god is Agni, not Shiva.

<sup>46</sup> "doubly born," from the fire-sticks and again at consecration [Griffith's note]. Agni sees in all four directions and he can be compared to Dionysus who was "twice born." There are several versions to his birth. According to the Orphic account, known from late Classical writers, Zeus lay with Persephone in the form of a snake. They produced a child, Zagreus (Dionysus). Hera, Zeus' wife, reacted in her usual jealous spirit persuaded in one case to have the Titans tear the child to bits and eat him. Athena saved his heart, however, who brought it to Zeus who swallowed it. He then fathered the child a second time by seducing Semele, a daughter of Cadmus, king of Thebes. In another version of the story Zeus put the child in a drink which he gave to Semele, and she conceived. The god's second birth at Thebes is the most common version of Dionysus' epithet of "twice-born." In another version — and one that corresponds to the story of Rama in *The Ramayana* — Hera discovers that Semele was pregnant by Zeus and decides to pose as a wetnurse, Beroë. She easily persuades Semele to insist that her divine lover appear to her in his full majesty, as he did to his wife. The rash girl made Zeus promise to grant whatever boon she asked, then demanded what Hera had suggested. (In *The Ramayana* a jealous wife, Kaikeyi, of King Dasaratha persuaded the

### Book 1, Hymn CLXIII *The Horse*

1. What time, first springing into life, thou  
neighedst, proceeding from the sea or  
upper waters,

Limbs of the deer hadst thou, and eagle-  
pinions. O Steed, thy birth is high and  
must be lauded.

2. This Steed which Yama gave hath Trita  
harnessed, and him, the first of all,  
hath Indra mounted.

His bridle the Gandharva grasped. O  
Vasus, from out the Sun ye fashioned  
forth the Courser.

9. Horns made of gold hath he: his feet are  
iron: less fleet than he, though swift as  
thought, is Indra.

The Gods have come that they may taste  
the oblation of him who mounted, first  
of all, the Courser.<sup>47</sup>

12. The strong Steed hath come forward to  
the slaughter, pondering with a mind  
directed God-ward.

The goat who is his kin is led before him:  
the sages and the singers follow after.

13. The Steed is come unto the noblest mansion,  
is come unto his Father and his Mother.  
This day shall he approach the Gods,

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king — who had promised deliverance of his kingdom to Rama, son of his wife, Kausalya — to send Rama into exile, giving the kingdom to her son, Bharatha. She was able to get Dasaratha to go back on his word to Rama by insisting that he provide her with the two boons he had promised her when she had long ago saved his life; and when he succumbed to her approach — one of the boon's insisted on the exile of Rama — he died, and Rama left the kingdom for the forest.) Unable to dissuade Semele, Zeus reluctantly agreed and visited her as a thunderbolt, or else in a chariot amid thunder and lightning. Semele in the blast died of fright. Zeus snatched the unborn child from her womb and the flames of the burning chamber and sewed it into his own thigh. When it was time he opened the stitches and removed the infant.

<sup>47</sup> The horse is the symbol of the Sun as it races on its course through heaven [Griffith's note]. The horse is frequently depicted on the coins of the Celts, generally the reverse side. While the horse has held a high position in all "horsed" cultures, the White Horse of Uffington brings to mind how important the horse was to such cultures. The White Horse of Uffington matches the stylized horse images on British coins. According to legend this horse was maintained every seven years. For British tourist information click on the photo (arial view). Sites dedicated to the White Horse of Uffington are: <http://www.mysteriousbritain.co.uk/majorsites/uffington.html> and <http://www.hows.org.uk/personal/hillfigs/uff/uffing.htm>. In the *Rig Veda* we are told that Indra was the first to mount the Courser. "His Father and Mother": Heaven and Earth [Griffith's note]. In this hymn the horse is brought to sacrifice, preceded by the goat and following him are the sages and singers. This was a special ceremony.

most welcome: then he declares good gifts to him who offers.

**Book 1, Hymn CLXIV *Visvedevas***

1. Of this benignant Priest, with old grey-coloured, the brother midmost of the three is lightning.

The third is he whose back with oil is sprinkled. Here I behold the Chief with seven male children.

2. Seven to the one-wheeled chariot yoke the Courser; bearing seven names the single Courser draws it.

3. The seven who on the seven-wheeled car are mounted have horses, seen in tale, who draw them onward.

Seven Sisters utter songs of praise together, in whom the names of the Seven Cows are treasured.

33. Dyaus is my Father, my begetter: kinship is here. This great earth is my kin and Mother.

Between the wide-spread world-halves is the birth-place: the Father laid the Daughter's germ within it.

34. I ask thee of the earth's extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee. I ask thee of the Stallion's seed prolific, — I ask of highest heaven where Speech abideth.

35. This altar is the earth's extremest limit: this sacrifice of ours is the world's center. The Stallion's seed prolific is the Soma; This Brahman highest heaven where Speech abideth.

36. Seven germs unripened yet are heaven's prolific seed: their functions they maintain by Visnu's ordinance. Endued with wisdom through intelligence and thought, they compass us about present on every side.

37. What thing I truly am I know not clearly: mysterious, fettered in my mind I wander.

When the first-born of holy Law approached  
me, then of this speech I first  
obtain a portion.

39. Upon what syllable of holy praise-song, as  
'twere their highest heaven, the Gods  
repose them,  
Who knows not this, what will he do with  
praise-song? But they who know it  
well sit here assembled.

43. I saw from far away the smoke of fuel  
with spires that rose on high over that  
beneath it.

The Mighty Men have dressed the spotted  
bullock. These were the customs in the  
days aforetime.

46. They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni,  
and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutman.  
To what is One, sages give many a title:  
they call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.<sup>48</sup>

50. By means of sacrifice the Gods accomplished  
their sacrifice: these were the earliest ordinances.  
These Mighty Ones attained the height of  
heaven, there where the Sadhyas, Gods  
of old, are dwelling.

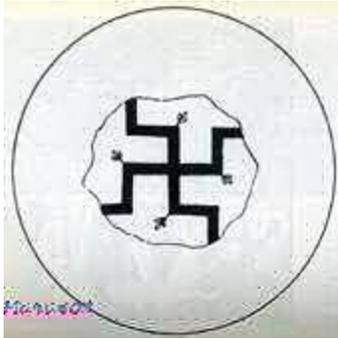
51. Uniform, with the passing days, this water  
mounts and falls again.

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<sup>48</sup> In this hymn the Stallion is Dyaus, or Father Heaven; Garutman is the Celestial Bird, the Sun [Griffith's note]. The Eagle or hawk is used frequently in Indo-European motifs, especially coinage: the American eagle, holding a snake in its claw, the Roman eagle that marched ahead of Roman armies (an emperor unsuccessfully attempted to place the Roman Eagle over the sacred Golden Gate of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem), and the Celtic solar bird. Birds were favorite effigies riding atop ancient Indo-European helmets, including the Thracians. There are two "universal" creation myths: one is that god spun the Tree of Life and as it spun around all the animals within it were scattered around the world. The image of this spinning Tree of Life evolved in Mesopotamia (Iraq and Syria) from about 6,000 B.C. to a geometric design in the form of a swastika at the tips of which were tiny branches or trees. Finally, in this evolution of the swastika, as on Samarra pottery, the tiny branches at the end of each branch of the swastika were deleted, leaving the swastika as we know it. Other versions of this story can also be found around the world where God took a raven by a leg and spun it, from which all the animals of creation were scattered, or also, as seen in Samarra pottery, it was a fish that was spun around.

This hymn is very mystical in tone, where the end of it reminds us how all thought and spirit are animated by the rays of the sun. And sacrificing the horse is the same as honoring him. No matter what you call the God, the bard reminds us that the cycle is always there, the water brought by the sun ascends to heaven and returns in season, Him that giveth also taketh, etc. "The seven" is used variously in the hymns, but at the least, with regard to this one God to which this hymn relates, the seven must be attendants serving in various capacities, representing seven seasons, days, etc. {based on Griffith's note}. The Indus Valley seal that has the Horned God sitting midst a Soma plant has seven attendants below him, apart from the other horned person kneeling to him. "these were the earliest ordinances," tells us that from the bard's point of view the gods he listed and in the context listed are the earliest of their tradition: Agni, the horse, the solar-bird, all pointing to an early solar-dietary tradition.

The tempest-clouds give life to earth, and



fires re-animate the heaven.

52. The Bird Celestial, vast with noble-pinion,  
the lovely germ of plants, the germ of  
waters,  
Him who delighteth us with rain in  
season, Sarasvan I invoke that he may  
help us.

(Image: Smarra dish with swastika and buds on the arms; see note  
below.)

**Book 1, Hymn CLXVI Maruts**

9. O Maruts, in your cars are all things that  
are good: great powers are set as 'twere  
in rivalry therein.

Rings are upon your shoulders when ye  
journey forth: your axle turns together  
both the chariot wheels.

10. Held in your manly arms are many goodly  
things, gold chains are on your chests,  
and glittering ornaments,  
Deer-skins are on the shoulders, on their  
fellies knives: they spread their glory  
out as birds spread out their wings. <sup>49</sup>

**Book 2, Hymn III *Apris***

7. Let the two heavenly Heralds, first, most  
wise, most fair, present oblation duly  
with the sacred verse.

Worshiping God at ordered seasons decking  
them at three high places at the center  
of the earth. <sup>50</sup>

**Book 2, Hymn V *Agni***

3. When swift he follows this behest, bird-  
like he chants the holy prayers.

He holds all knowledge in his grasp even  
as the felly rounds the wheel.

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<sup>49</sup> The Maruts are the clouds who appear with Indra. The chariot with knife-blades coming out of the wheels appears to point to the early Iron Age, the time of the Iliad.

<sup>50</sup> "the three high places" would appear to relate to sun-worship.

**Book 2, Hymn XXXIII Rudra**

8. To him the strong, great, tawny, fair-complexioned  
I utter forth a mighty hymn of praises.  
We serve the brilliant God with adorations,  
we glorify the splendid name of Rudra. <sup>51</sup>

**Book 2, Hymn XXXVIII Savitar**

1. Uprisen is Savitar, this God, to quicken,  
Priest who neglects not this most constant  
duty.  
To the Gods, verily, he gives rich treasure,  
and blesses him who calls them to the  
banquet. <sup>52</sup>

**Book 3, Hymn 1 Agni**

2. East have we turned the rite; may the  
hymn aid it. With wood and worship  
shall they honor Agni.  
From heaven the synods of the wise have  
learnt it: even for the quick and strong  
they seek advancement.  
15. ...Grant, with the Gods, thy grace to him  
who lauds thee, protect us with thy  
rays that guard the homestead.

**Book 3, Hymn II Agni**

7. He hath filled heaven and earth and the  
great realm of light, when at his birth  
the skillful held him in their hold.  
He like a horse is led forth to the sacrifice  
Sage, graciously inclined, that he may  
win us strength.  
8. ...He drives the chariot of the lofty ordinance  
Agni most active, is the great  
High Priest of Gods.

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<sup>51</sup> The fair-completed Rudra is the father of the Maruts. His tawny hair recalls the tawny hair of the heroes of the *Iliad*.

<sup>52</sup> "to quicken," the meaning of Savitar, as a name of the Sun, being the great generator or vivifier [Griffith's note].

### **Book 3, Hymn III Agni**

- 1....For Agni the Immortal serves the Deities,  
and therefore never breaks their ever-lasting laws.
2. He, wondrous envoy, goes between the  
earth and heaven, firm seated as the  
Herald, great High Priest of men...

### **Book 3, Hymn V Agni**

2. ...Loving the varied shows of holy Order at  
the first flush of dawn he shines as envoy
4. Agni is Mitra when enkindled duly, Mitra  
as Priest, Varuna Jatavedas;  
Mitra as active minister, and House-Friend,  
Mitra of flowing rivers and of mountains.

### **Book 3, Hymn VI Agni**

6. Bind to the pole with cords of holy Order  
the long-maned ruddy steeds who  
sprinkle fatness.

### **Book 3, Hymn VIII Sacrificial Post**

1. God-serving men, O Sovran of the Forest,<sup>53</sup>  
with heavenly meath at sacrifice anoint thee.  
Grant wealth to us when thou art standing  
upright as when reposing on this  
Mother's bosom.
2. Set up to eastward of the fire enkindled,  
accepting prayer that wastes not, rich  
in hero.  
Driving far from us poverty and famine,  
lift thyself up to bring us great good  
fortune.
9. Like swan's that flee in lengthened line,  
the Pillars have come to us arrayed in  
brilliant colour.<sup>54</sup>
10. Those stakes upon the earth with rings

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<sup>53</sup> "Sovran of the Forest," the tall tree, vanaspati, out of which is made the sacrificial post to which the victim is tied [Griffith's note].

<sup>54</sup> The Sacrificial Posts are in alignments, from the east toward the fire! Could the British (including Brittany) stone alignments have served this purpose?

that deck them seem to the eye like  
horns of horned creatures;  
Or, as upraised by priests in invocation,  
let them assist us in the rush to battle.  
11. Lord of the Wood, rise with a hundred  
branches: with thousand branches may  
we rise to greatness,  
Thou whom this hatchet, with an edge  
well whetted for great felicity, hath  
brought before us. <sup>55</sup>

**Book 3, Hymn XII *Indra-Agni***

6. Indra and Agni, ye cast down the ninety  
forts which Dasas held <sup>56</sup>

**Book 3, Hymn XIV *Agni***

1. ...Agni, the Son of Strength, whose car is  
lightning, whose hair is flame, hath  
shown on earth his lustre.

**Book 3, Hymn XIX *Agni***

4. Agni, like Bhaga, leads the godly people,  
he who is true to Law and guards  
the seasons.

**Book 3, Hymn XXII *Agni***

4. ...Guileless accept our sacrifice, great viands  
free from all disease.

**Book 3, Hymn XXVIII *Agni***

1. Agni who knowest all, accept our offering  
and the cake of meal,

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<sup>55</sup> "The pillars with rings upon them," may be pillars with meanders that would look like horns (ram horns); the hatchet would have been part of the ritual; as can be seen in Etruscan designs (See Script T, Vetulonia tombstone, [http://www.maravot.com/Translation\\_Short\\_Scripts.html](http://www.maravot.com/Translation_Short_Scripts.html), of Prince Serelus with the fasces). The hatchet or double-axe is important and may recall the double-axe of Minoan times.

<sup>56</sup> "ye cast down the ninety forts which the Dasas held," refers to the destruction of the forts of the brown-skinned, non-Aryan inhabitants of the Saraswati river basin. Griffith notes that ninety-nine is an indefinite number. The number is used frequently with regard to their number of forts. To the ancient Mycenaean Greeks a city and a fort were one and the same; and this is true of the Celts.

at dawn's libation, rich in prayer!  
2. Agni, the sacrificial cake hath been prepared  
and dressed for thee:  
Accept it, O Most Youthful God.  
3. Agni, enjoy the cake of meal and our  
oblation three days old...  
4. Here at the midday sacrifice enjoy thou  
the sacrificial cake, wise Jatavedas!...  
5. O Agni, at the third libation take with  
joy the offered cake of sacrifice, thou  
Son of Strength.

**Book 3, Hymn XXX *Indra***

1. ...They bear unmoved the cursing of the  
people, for all our wisdom comes from  
thee, O Indra.<sup>57</sup>  
3. Fair cheeks hath Indra, Maghavan, the  
Victor, Lord of a great host, Stormer,  
strong in action.  
What once thou didst in might when  
mortals vexed thee, — where now, O Bull,  
are those thy hero exploits?  
15. Barring the way they come. Be firm, O  
Indra; aid friends to sacrifice and him  
who singeth.  
These must be slain by thee, malignant  
mortals, armed with ill arts, our quiver-  
bearing foemen<sup>52</sup>

**Book 3, Hymn XXXII *Indra***

2. Quaff it pure, meal-blent, mixt with milk,  
O Indra; we have poured forth the  
Soma for thy rapture.

**Book 3, Hymn XXXIV *Indra***

9. ...Treasure of gold he won; he smote the  
Dasyus, and gave protection to the  
Aryan color.

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<sup>57</sup> "they bear the cursing of the people," suggests that the bards were experiencing some dissent with regard to the sacrifice to Indra. Was there a faction splitting off from the five Aryan tribes? "they come," those who revile and hinder the worship of Indra [Griffith's note].

**Book 3, Hymn XLVIII *Indra***

4. ...Even from his birth-time Indra conquered  
Tvastar, bore off the Soma and in  
beakers drank it.

**Book 3, Hymn LII *Indra***

14. Among the Kikatas what do thy cattle?  
They pour no milky draught, they heat  
no caldron.

**Book 4, Hymn XXX *Indra***

20. For Divodasa, him who brought oblations,  
Indra overthrew  
A hundred fortresses of stone.<sup>58</sup>

**Book 4, Hymn XLIII *Asvins***

6. Let Sindhu with his wave bedew your  
horses: in fiery glow have the red birds  
come hither...

**Book 4, Hymn LI *Dawn***

2. The richly-colored Dawns have mounted  
eastward, like pillars planted at our sacrifices.

**Book 4, Hymn LII *Dawn***

1. This Lady, giver of delight, after her  
Sister shining forth, Daughter of heaven,  
hath shown herself.
2. Unfailing, Mother of the Kine, in color  
like a bright red mare...

**Book 5, Hymn I *Agni***

Agni is wakened by the people's fuel to  
meet the Dawn who cometh like a milch-

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<sup>58</sup> "a hundred fortresses of stone," does not suggest the Harappa culture, for they were made of brick, as far as I know. This verse dates Book 4, in my opinion.

cow.

Like young trees shooting up on high  
their branches, his flames are rising to  
the vault of heaven.

### **Book 5, Hymn II Agni**

6. Mid mortal men godless have secreted the  
King of all who live, home of the people.  
so may the prayers of Atri give him free-  
dom. Reproached in turn be those who  
now reproach him.<sup>59</sup>

### **Book 5, Hymn IV Agni**

9. ...Praised with our homage even as Atri  
praised thee, O Agni, be the guardian  
of our bodies.  
10...Vouchsafe us high renown, O Jatavedas,  
and may I be immortal by my children.<sup>60</sup>

### **Book 5, Hymn VII Agni**

10. ...Agni, may Atri overcome the Dasyus who  
bestow no gifts, subdue the men who  
give no food.

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<sup>59</sup> "Reproached," may refer to on-going splits among the Aryan tribes on the worship, or to Agni as Professor Ludwig thinks [based upon Griffith's note].

<sup>60</sup> "immortal by my children." This poses interesting questions: Does it mean without children there is no immortality? How do children beget immortality? Since the Aryans of the *Rig Veda*, as well as the Celts and Greeks, put so much emphasis on "fame," it would appear that part of the immortality, at least, involved one's continued name. The ability to change shape or reincarnate, as shown in the case of Hanuman or Rama in *The Ramayana* recalls the story in the Welsh tale, *Mabinogion*, of Pwyll Lord of Dyved who changed places with Arawn King of Annwvyn (annwvyn means "no place,"), the two chiefs — through Arawn's power — changing shape and appearing in each other's form. They ruled each other's domain for a period of one year, during which time Pwyll slept with Arawn's wife.

### **Book 5, Hymn X Agni**

6. ... And let the patrons of our rites subdue  
all regions of the earth. <sup>61</sup>

### **Book 5, Hymn XI Agni**

2. Ensign of sacrifice, the earliest Household-  
Priest, the men have kindled Agni in  
his threefold seat,  
With Indra and the Gods together on the  
grass let the wise Priest sit to complete  
the sacrifice.

### **Book 5, Hymn XII Agni**

2....I use no sorcery with might or falsehood:  
the sacred Law of the Red Steer I follow.  
4. Who, Agni, in alliance with the foeman,  
what splendid helpers won for them  
their riches?  
Agni, who guards the dwelling-place of  
falsehood? Who are protectors of the  
speech of liars?  
5. Agni, those friends of thine have turned  
them from thee: gracious of old, they  
have become ungracious.  
They have deceived themselves by their  
own speeches, uttering wicked words  
against the righteous.  
6. He who pays sacrifice to thee with homage,  
O Agni, keeps the Red Steer's Law  
eternal..

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<sup>61</sup> Here we are witnessing how the early stages (chapters) of the *Rig Veda* referred to unbelievers, how they chided the Aryans of the banquet; now the cause has gotten more serious: to subdue all regions of the earth (a fervor the Christian and Moslem religions adopted as well); not content to practice their own faith in freedom, they decided to make sure everyone follows their faith. Book 6 records the enemies and forts and castles defeated by the Aryans, reflecting a higher level of organizational control over the territory, mentioning the city Hariyupiya (Harappa?) that Indra smote, etc. (Book 6, Hymn XXVII.5)

**Book 5, Hymn XXXIII *Indra***

3. ...Ascend this chariot, tho whose hand  
wields thunder, and draw the rein, O  
Lord of noble horses.

4. Thou, because many lauds are thine, O  
Indra, wast active warring in the fields  
for cattle.

**Book 5, Hymn XLIII.7 *Visvedevas***

7. As on his father's lap the son, the darling  
so on the fire is set the sacred caldron,  
Which holy singers deck, as if extending  
and heating that which holds  
the fatty membrane.

11. From high heaven may Sarasvati the Holy  
visit our sacrifice, and from the mountain.

**Book 6, Hymn XII *Agni***

6. So mighty thou protectest us from slander,  
O Champion, Agni! with all fires enkindled.  
Bring opulence and drive away affliction.

**Book 6, Hymn XIV *Agni***

3. The foeman's wealth in many a place,  
Agni is emulous to help.  
Men fight the fiend, and seek by rites to  
overcome the riteless foe.

**Book 6, Hymn XXV *Indra***

3. Those who array themselves as foes to  
smite us, O Indra, be they kin or be  
they strangers, —  
Strike thou their manly strength that it  
be feeble, and drive in headlong flight  
our foemen backward.

4. With strength of limb the hero slays  
the hero, when bright in arms they range  
them for the combat.  
When two opposing hosts contend in battle

for seed and offspring, waters, kine, or  
corn-lands.

6. He is the Lord of both these armies'  
valour when the commanders call them  
to conflict ...

**Book 6, Hymn LIII *Pusan***

1. Lord of the path, O Pusan, we have  
yoked and bound thee to our hymn,  
Even as a car, to win the prize.

4. Clear paths that we may win the prize,  
scatter our enemies afar.

Strong God, be all our thoughts fulfilled.

6. Thrust with thine awl, O Pusan: seek  
that which the niggard's heart holds  
dear,

And make him subject to our will.

9. Thou bearest, glowing Lord! a goad with  
horny point that guides the cows:  
Thence do we seek the gift of bliss.

**Book 6, Hymn LIV *Pusan***

8. Pusan who listens to our prayers, the  
Strong whose wealth is never lost,  
The Lord of riches, we implore.

10. From out the distance, far and wide, may  
Pusan stretch his right hand forth,  
And drive our lost again to us.

**Book 6, Hymn LV *Pusan***

3. Bright God whose steeds are goats, thou  
art a stream of wealth, a treasure-heap,  
The Friend of every pious man.

**Book 6, Hymn LVI *Pusan***

1. Whoso remembers Pusan as eater of min-  
gled curd and meal

Need think no more upon the God.

2. And he is best of charioteers. Indra, the  
hero's Lord, allied

With him as Friend, destroys the foes.<sup>62</sup>

**Book 6, Hymn LVII *Indra and Pusan***

1. Indra and Pusan will we call for freindship and prosperity  
And for the winning of the spoil.
2. One by the Soma sits to drink juice which the mortar hath expressed:  
The other longs for curd and meal.

**Book 6, Hymn LVIII.2 *Pusan***

2. Goat-borne, the guard of cattle, he whose home is strength, inspirer of the hymns, set over all the world.<sup>63</sup>

**Book 7, Hymn VI *Agni***

3. The foolish faithless, rudely-speaking niggards, without belief or sacrifice or worship, —  
Far far away hath Agni chased those Dasyus, and, in the east, hath turned the godless westward.
5. Him who brake down the walls with deadly weapons, and gave the Mornings to a noble Husband,  
Young Agni, who with conquering strength subduing the tribes of Nahus made them bring their tribute.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Here we are witnessing how the early stages (chapters) of the *Rig Veda* referred to unbelievers, how they chided the Aryans of the banquet; now the cause has gotten more serious: to subdue all regions of the earth ( a fervor the Christian and Moslem religions adopted as well); not content to practice their own faith in freedom, they decided to make sure everyone follows their faith. Book 6 records the enemies and forts and castles defeated by the Aryans, reflecting a higher level of organizational control over the territory, mentioning the city Hariyupiya (Harappa?) that Indra smote, etc. (Book 6, Hymn XXVII.5)

<sup>63</sup> In Greek mythology the god Pan, one of the youthful gods, was the shepherd god and is credited with inventing the pan-pipe. He lived in the mountains where he danced and sang with the nymphs and played his pipes. He had goat legs and horns and played the pipe called the syrinx. He, as well as everyone around, was so delighted in his music he challenged Apollo, who played the lyre, to a contest. Apollo won. A Phrygian version of Pan is in Marsyas. Since singing and dancing were an important part of the Aryan rite, no doubt, Pusan must have have had same relationship to those arts.

<sup>64</sup> This tribe of neighboring people would have been forced into Afghanistan, following the thesis; and thus one should be able to find remnants of the indigenous culture moving westward (fleeing to the mountains, as is generally the case with displaced peoples).

### **Book 7, Hymn VIII Agni**

1. ...Agni hath shone forth when  
the dawn is breaking.  
4. Far famed is this the Bharata's own Agni:  
he shineth like the Sun with lofty  
splendour.  
He who hath vanquished Puru in the  
battle, the heavenly guest hath glowed  
in full refulgence.<sup>65</sup>

### **Book 7, Hymn XVIII Indra**

4. Vasistha hath poured forth is prayers,  
desiring to milk thee like a cow in  
goodly pasture.  
All these, my people call thee Lord of  
cattle: may Indra come unto the  
prayer we offer.  
5. What though the floods spread widely,  
Indra made them shallow and easy for  
Sudas to traverse.  
He, worthy of our praises, caused the  
Simyu, foe of our hymn, to curse the  
river's fury<sup>66</sup>(14)  
11. The King who scattered one-and-twenty  
people of both Vaikarna tribes through  
lust of glory —  
As the skilled priest clips grass within the  
chamber, so hath the Hero Indra  
wrought their downfall.  
13. Indra at once with conquering might  
demolished all their strong places and  
their seven castles.

### **Book 7, Hymn XXXII Indra**

3. Longing for wealth I call on him, the  
Thunderer with the strong right hand,

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<sup>65</sup> This records a battle between two of the five Aryan tribes, the Bharatas being those who won the battle against the Purus.

<sup>66</sup> The Simyu foe can be added to our list of foes: the Dasyus and Nahus. Subsequent passages of this and the next hymns catalogue the conflicts between the Aryans and other peoples.

As a son calleth on his sire.

4. These Soma juices, mixed with curd, have been expressed for Indra.

8....The Giver blesses him who gives.

9....Only the active conquers, dwells in peace, and thrives: not for the niggard are the Gods.

10. No one hath overturned or stayed the car of him who freely gives...

### **Book 7, Hymn XXXIII *Vasistha***

1. These who wear hair-knots on the right, the movers of holy thought, white-robed, have won me over.<sup>67</sup>

### **Book 7, Hymn XLI *Bhaga***

1. Agni at dawn, and Indra we invoke at dawn, and Varuna and Mitra, and the Asvins twain:

Bhaga at dawn, Pusan, and Brahmanaspati, Soma at dawn, Rudra we will invoke at dawn.

2. We will invoke strong, early-conquering Bhaga, the Son of Aditi, the great supporter:...

6...Bhaga who discovers treasure.

### **Book 7, Hymn XLVI *Rudra***

1. To Rudra bring these songs, whose bow is firm and strong, the self-dependent God with swiftly-flying shafts.

2....Come willingly to our doors that gladly welcome thee, and heal all sickness, Rudra, in our families.

3. May thy bright arrow which shot down by thee from heaven, flieth upon the earth, pass us uninjured by.

Thou, very gracious God, hast thousand

---

<sup>67</sup> "hair knots," or single lock of hair left on the head at tonsure, which, according to the Scholiast, it was characteristic of the Vasisthas to wear on the right of the crown of the head [Griffith's note]. This recalls the Greek custom mentioned in the Iliad, where Achillês cuts the lock that he was supposed to have dedicated to the river god back home and puts it in the hand of the dead Patroclus upon the funeral pyre. This also calls to mind the Indus seal with the Horned God midst plants and his seven attendants who have hair-knots [on the right side of their head](#).

medicines: inflict no evil on our sons  
or progeny.

**Book 7, Hymn LXXXIII *Indra-Varuna***

8. O Indra-Varuna, ye gave Sudas your aid  
when the Ten Kings in battle compassed  
him about.

There were the white-robed Trtsus with  
their braided hair, skilled in song wor-  
shipped you with homage and with hymn.  
5....To the Gods' banquet may we go with  
riches. Preserve us evermore, ye Gods,  
with blessings.

**Book 7, Hymn LXXXVIII *Varuna***

3. When Varuna and I embark together  
and urge our boat into the midst of ocean,  
We, when we ride over ridges of the  
waters, will swing within that swing  
and there be happy. <sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> There are several metaphors in the *Rig Veda* that refer to shipping and ships at sea. The seaport of Dwaravati, the home of Krishna, becomes important in the *Mahabharata*. A mystery in the origin of the Aryans of India is perhaps centered in this place, which may be modern Dwarka, where a temple of Krishna is located. While there is no doubt that northwestern India is the center of the action in the *Rig Veda*, and there is no doubt that the bards of the *Rig Veda* sang about traveling to the sea, referring occasionally to ships and using metaphors with "ships" — the bier upon a son's pyre is called a ship, for instance. Equally mysterious — and perhaps related — is the fact that the dolmens of southern India are attributed to the Dravidians and not the Aryans, with the theory being that the dolmens — which date to about 300 B.C. at the earliest — resemble Numidian dolmens, according to certain specialists. Throughout the "Aryan world" we witness a horsed culture which sees it most appropriate to place the contents of their departed under mounds, constructed with or marked by megalithic stones. Non-Aryans may have raised mounds as well, but at least we know that the Aryans — the Greeks, Trojans, Persians, Etruscans, Celts and Germans — were mound builders. Some of them had urn fields and others laid their dead in trench graves. The *Rig Veda* hardly addresses what a "proper burial" should be. We compare this to the fact that in the *Iliad* one must be given a proper burial: placed on a pyre, with feast, games and sacrifices and oblations, beginning at dawn, with the raising of a mound over the remains. The Etruscans marked their culture with elaborate tombs of this kind. And perhaps one of the cleverest tombs ever constructed by the Aryan people was the [tholos tomb of Antiochus](#) (deposed 38 B.C.) which is a mound thrown up on top of a mountain in Turkey. The reality every king faces in constructing and equipping his tomb is the fact that someone may attempt to break into the tomb and rob it of its gold and silver grave goods. Antiochus, son of Mithridates, had small stones heaped up, over his tomb on top of a mountain, thinking that grave-robbers would be discouraged that if every time they scooped away the covering the covering caved in, like digging a hole in a sandy beach. To this day, archeological efforts to find his tomb atop his mountain have failed. Now it may be an insult to 21st century technology if, when archeologists finally get to the tomb, they find grave-robbers already have visited the place. We can see that the nobility of the Aryans went to great lengths to raise a mound, or tholos, over their tomb.

In the Middle East and Egypt tombs could be rock-cut or free-standing buildings, such as the tomb of Mausolus,

### **Book 7, Hymn LXXXIX Varuna**

1. Let me not yet, King Varuna, enter into  
the house of clay: <sup>69</sup>

Have mercy, spare me, Mighty Lord.

### **Book 7, Hymn XCV Sarasvati**

1. This stream Sarasvati with fostering  
current comes forth, our sure defense,  
our fort of iron.

As on a car, the flood flows on, surpassing  
in majesty and might all other waters.

2. Pure in her course from mountains to  
the ocean, alone of streams Sarasvati  
hath listened. <sup>70</sup>

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the tyrant of Caria in southwestern Asia Minor, which was built between about 353 and 351 B.C. It was one of the seven wonders of the world. Another form of burial was the "hypogeum," an underground series of shafts or vault, such as in Malta. During the period of the Rig Veda in the region of the "seven sacred rivers," including the Sarasvati, there is little or no evidence that an Aryan people lived there. The evidence of an Aryan people seems to be in southern India, Kerala. To read an anthropological discussion on its fascinating history go to: <http://www.shelterbelt.com/KJ/khmundarace.html>.

Here the author of the Kerala Story asks whether the Dravidian stock of southern India may have its source in Numidia (southern Egypt). Dolmens have been found in Numidia as well as a large stone alignment. In light of these mysteries we must ask how it is that the Aryans of the Rig Veda recall Aryan rites but have abandoned the practice of raising tumuli for their nobles and threw their ashes into the river instead (or hung them in a tree?). The *Rig Veda* refers to the conquest of stone cities, when the Harappa Civilization built cities of brick. Were these sacred hymns remembering previous conquests on the way from the Black Sea to India? Did these people have anything to do with destroying the Hittite cities in Turkey ~ 1180 B.C.? And why is it that the Indus Valley seals carry a Horned God, like Cernunnos the Celtic god, a god that resembles the description of Shiva, the Hindu Lord of Beasts, but has the form of Indra sitting midst a divine plant. In the *Rig Veda* we have seen Indra, the chief of the gods, as the principal lover of Soma, he, being the chief, for whom Soma is offered. And after the Soma passes through the mouth of the beaker, "Indra's throat," it is offered to others: gods and guests.

The *Rig Veda* makes it clear that the Dasyas, the natives, are riteless and it describes those who do not participate in the sacrifice of Soma and worship of Indra as being "riteless" or "godless." Based on this, upon examination of the Indus Valley seals with the Horned God, it would appear that the Harappa Civilization was the same as that which created the *Rig Veda*. One can dissect the *Rig Veda*, but one thing one cannot do is cut out the parts that include the worship of fire, the offering of the mead, or Soma, to the gods and guests at sunrise, the worship of the thunder-god Indra, and the sacrifice of horses. If one were to trim these things out of the *Rig Veda* one would be left with no hymns to speak of. With this in mind, it is possible that the Harappa Civilization that produced the several hundred seals is Indo-European, and if this is so, its development would not be expected to precede the development of the Hittite Civilization.

<sup>69</sup> "the house of clay," the grave [Griffith's note].

<sup>70</sup> The Sarasvati, one of seven sacred rivers, is the focus of many hymns in the *Rig Veda*. The Indus River (Sindhu) is mentioned as well, and it would thus appear that though the Sarasvati here and in other places is described as flowing from the mountains to the sea, one is tempted to believe that the Indus River is indicated, rather than the

**Book 7, Hymn XCVI *Sarasvati***

1. I sing a lofty song, for she is mightiest,  
most divine of Steams...

**Book 7, Hymn XCIX *Visnu***

1. Men come not nigh thy majesty who  
growest beyond all bound and measure  
with thy body...  
2....The vast high vault of heaven hast thou  
supported and fixed earth's eastern  
pinnacle securely.

**Book 7, Hymn C *Visnu***

1...Never doth the man repent, who, seeking  
profit, bringeth his gift to the far-striding  
Visnu.  
3. Three times strode forth this God in all  
his grandeur over this earth bright with  
a hundred splendours....  
6. ...Hide not this form from us, nor keep it  
secret, since thou didst wear another  
shape in battle.

**Book 7, Hymn CII *Parjanya***

2. Parjanya is the God who forms in kine,  
in marees, in plants of earth  
And womankind, the germ of life.

**Book 7, Hymn CIV *Indra-Soma***

1. Indra and Soma, burn, destroy the demon  
foe, send downward, O ye Bulls, those  
who add gloom to gloom.  
4. ...Yea, forge out of the mountains your  
celestial dart wherewith ye burn to death  
the waxing demon race.  
5. Indra and Soma, cast ye downward out

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dry Sarasvati. I think, however, in the context of "flooding" the Sarasvati may have had greater impact than the Indus. The Ganges River is one of the seven sacred rivers.

of heaven your deadly darts of stone  
burning with fiery flame.

19. Hurl down from heaven thy bolt of stone,  
O Indra: sharpen it, Maghavan, made  
keen by Soma.

....smite down the demons with thy  
rocky weapon.

20...now let him cast his bolt at  
fiendish wizards.

22. Destroy the fiend shaped like an owl or  
owlet, destroy him in the form of dog  
or cuckoo.

Destroy him shaped as eagle or as vulture:  
as with a stone, O Indra, crush the  
demon.

23. Let not the fiend of witchcraft-workers  
reach us: may Dawn drive off the  
couples of Kimidins.

24. Slay the male demon, Indra! slay the  
female, joying and triumphing in arts of  
magic.

Let the fools' gods with bent necks fall  
and perish, and see no more the Sun  
when he arises.<sup>71</sup>

### **Book 8, Hymn I *Indra***

17. Press out the Soma with the stones, and  
in the waters wash it clean.

The men investing it with raiment made  
of milk shall milk it forth from out the  
stems.

### **Book 8, Hymn II *Indra***

2. Washed by the men, pressed out with  
stones, strained through the filter made  
of wool.

'Tis like a courser bathed in stream.

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<sup>71</sup> Any images falling into the list here that are found on the Indus Valley seals would identify whether these people were friends or foes of the Aryans of the *Rig Veda*. The owl is sacred to the Greek goddess Athena, a major player in the *Iliad*. The eagle is a powerful Indo-European symbol, and it is interesting that the bard considers those who worship it as sorcerers. Curiously, in *The Ramayana* Rama's last weapon was a flock of eagles which descended upon and consumed the snakes Ravana threw at Rama.

3. This juice have we made sweet for thee  
like barley, blending it with milk.

8. Three reservoirs exude their drops, filled  
are three beakers to the brim,  
All for one offering to the God.

9. Pure art thou, set in many a place, and  
blended in the midst with milk  
And curd, to cheer the Hero best.

10. Here, Indra, are thy Soma-draughts pressed  
out by us, the strong, the pure:  
They crave admixture of the milk.

11. O Indra, pour in milk, prepare the cake  
and mix the Soma-draught:  
I hear them say that thou art rich.

12. Quaffed juices fight within the breast.  
The drunken praise not by their wine,<sup>72</sup>  
The naked praise not when it rains.

14. Foe of the man who adds no milk, he  
heeds not any chanted hymn  
Or holy psalm that may be sung.

40. Shaped as a Ram, Stone-hurler! Once  
thou camest hither to the son  
Of Kanva, wise Mdhyatithi.

**Book 8, Hymn IV Indra**

4....Soma pressed in the mortar didst thou  
take and drink, and hence hast won  
surpassing might.

8. On his left the Hero hath reclined  
himself: the proffered feast offends him  
not.  
The milk is blended with the honey of  
the bee; quickly come hither, haste,  
and drink.

9. Indra, thy friend is fair of form and rich  
in horses, cars, and kine.  
He evermore hath food accompanied by  
wealth, and radiant joins the company.

10. Come like a thirsty antelope to the drink-  
ing place: drink Soma to thy heart's desire.

14. To the brown juice may his dear vigorous  
Bay Steeds bring Indra, to our holy

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<sup>72</sup> Here the Soma is compared to wine: whereas wine results in drunkenness Soma results in strength, etc.

task.

**Book 8, Hymn VI *Indra***

19. Indra, these spotted cows yield thee their  
butter and the milky draught;  
Aiders, thereby, of sacrifice.  
28. There where the mountains downward  
slope, there by the meeting of the streams  
The Sage was manifest with song.  
29. Thence, marking, from his lofty place  
downward he looks upon the sea..

**Book 8, Hymn VII *Maruts***

4. The Maruts spread the mist abroad and  
make mountains rock and reel...  
25. They deck themselves for glory  
celestial, lightning in their hands,  
And helms of gold upon their heads.  
26. When eagerly ye from far away came to  
the cavern of the Bull  
he bellowed in his fear like Heaven.  
32. ...our Maruts who  
Wield thunder and wear swords of gold.

**Book 8, Hymn IX.19 *Asvins***

19. When yellow stalks give forth the juice, as  
cows from udders pour their milk,  
And voices sound the song of praise, the  
Asvins worshippers show first.

**Book 8, Hymn XLI *Varuna***

3. The nights he hath encompassed, and  
stablished the morns with magic art:  
visible over all is he...  
4. He, visible over all the earth, stablished  
the quarters of the sky:...  
9. ...Firm is the sea of Varuna: over the  
Seven he rules as King.

**Book 8, Hymn XLVI *Indra***

12. ...All races of mankind with ladles lifted up  
invoke the Mighty Indra's aid.  
19....O thou who stirrest thought.  
23. Ten browns that make my wealth increase,  
fleet steeds whose tails are long and fair,  
Turn with swift whirl my chariot wheel;

**Book 8, XLVIII *Soma***

1. Wisely have I enjoyed the savoury viand,  
religious-thoughted, best to find out  
treasure,  
The food to which all Deities and mortals,  
calling it meath, gather themselves  
together.  
3. We have drunk Soma and become  
immortal; we have attained the light,  
the Gods discovered...  
5. These glorious drops that give me freedom  
have I drunk. Closely they knit my  
joins as straps secure a car.  
Let them protect my foot from slipping  
on the way: Yea, let the drops I drink  
preserve me from disease.  
6. Make me shine bright like fire produced by  
friction: give us a clearer sight and  
make us better.  
10...This Soma now deposited within me. For  
this, I pray for longer life to Indra.  
11. Our maladies have lost their strength and  
vanished: they feared, and passed away  
into darkness.  
Soma hath risen in us, exceeding mighty,  
and we are come where men prolong  
existence.

**Book 8, Hymn LIII *Indra***

2. Crush with thy foot, the niggard churls  
who bring no gifts. Mighty art thou:  
There is not one to equal thee.  
3. Thou art the Lord of Soma pressed,

Soma unpresse'd is also thine...

5. Even that hill with rocky heights, with  
hundreds, thousands, held within  
thou for thy worshippers brakest through.

**Book 8, Hymn LVII *Indra***

7. Him, for his ample bounty, him, this  
Indra do I urge to drink,  
Who, as his praise was sung of old, the  
Dancer, is the Lord of men.

**Book 8, Hymn LXI *Agni***

9. Three times the newly-kindled flame pro-  
ceeds around the sacrifice:  
The priests anoint it with the meath.  
10. With reverence they drain the fount that  
circles with its wheel above  
Exhaustless, with the mouth below,  
11. The pressing-stones are set at work: the  
meath is poured into the tank,  
At the out-shedding of the fount.  
12. Ye cows, protect the fond: the two  
Mighty Ones bless the sacrifice.  
The handles twain are wrought of gold.  
13. Pour on the juice the ornament which  
reaches both the heaven and earth:  
Supply the liquid to the Bull.  
17. I took some Soma when the Sun rose up,  
O Mitra, Varuna.  
That is the sick man's medicine.

**Book 8, Hymn LXXI *Indra***

5. This Soma here expressed with stones and  
dressed with milk for thy carouse,  
Indra, is offered up to thee.  
7. The Soma, Indra, which is shed in chalices  
and vats for thee,  
Drink thou, for thou art Lord thereof.  
8. The Soma seen within the vats, as in the  
Flood the Moon is seen,  
Drink thou, for thou art Lord thereof.

**Book 8, Hymn LXXXI *Indra***

3. Indra the Dancer be to us the giver of  
abundant strength:  
May he, the Mighty, bring it near.

**Book 8, Hymn LXXXV *Indra***

3. The mightiest force is Indra's bolt of iron  
when firmly grasped in both the arms  
of Indra...  
4. I count thee as the Holiest of the Holy,  
the casterdown of what hath never been  
shaken...

**Book 8, Hymn LXXXVI *Indra***

3. The riteless, godless man who sleeps, O  
Indra, his unbroken sleep, —  
May he by following his own devices die.  
Hide from him wealth that nourishes.  
12. The Holy sages form a ring, looking and  
singing to the Ram.  
Inciters, full of vigour, not to be deceived,  
are with the chanters, night to hear.

**Book 8, Hymn LXXXIX *Indra-Vak***

10. When, uttering words which no one com-  
prehended, Vak, Queen of Gods, the  
Gladdener, was seated,  
The heaven's four regions drew forth drink  
and vigour: now whither hath her  
noblest portion vanished? <sup>73</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn I *Soma Pavamna***

2. Friend-queller, Friend of all men, he hath  
with the wood attained unto

---

<sup>73</sup> Vak, or Vac, vox: voice, speech personified. Unintelligible speech might be expected from a priest who had a bit too much Soma and may recall the "speaking in tongues" Paul introduced in Christianity. While rapture can be induced through group participation (speaking in tongues, dancing, singing and other odd behavior at odd times) no doubt the drug-effects of Soma was usually experienced.

His place, his iron-fashioned home.

4. Flow onward with thy juice unto the  
banquet of the Mighty Gods:

Flow hither for our strength and fame.

6. By means of this eternal fleece may Surya's  
Daughter purify

Thy Soma that is foaming forth.

**Book 9, Book VII Soma Pavamana**

6. Dear golden-coloured, in the fleece he  
sinks and settles in the wood:...

**Book 9, Book VIII Soma Pavamana**

5. When through the filter thou art poured,  
we clothe thee with a robe of milk

To be a gladdening draught for Gods.

6. When purified within the jars, Soma, bright-  
red and golden-hued,

Hath clothed him with a robe of milk.

**Book 9, Hymn XI, Soma Pavamana**

4. Sing a praise-song to Soma brown of hue,  
of independent might,

The Red who reaches up to heaven.

5. Purify Soma when effused with stones which  
hands move rapidly,

And pour the sweet milk in the meath,

6. With humble homage draw ye nigh; blend  
the libation with the curds:

**Book 9, Hymn XII, Soma Pavamana**

3. In the stream's wave wise Soma dwells,  
distilling rapture, in his seat,

Resting upon a wild-cow's hide.

4. Far-sighted Soma, Sage and Seer, is wor-  
shipped in the central point

Of heaven, the straining-cloth of wool.

5. In close embraces Indu holds Soma when  
poured within the jars.

And on the purifying sieve.

**Book 9, Hymn XVI *Soma Pavamana***

7. Swelling, as 'twere, to heights of heaven,  
the stream of the creative juice  
Falls lightly on the cleansing sieve.

**Book 9, Hymn XVII *Soma Pavamana***

3. With swelling wave the gladdening drink,  
the Soma, flows into the sieve..  
4. It hastens to the pitchers, poured upon  
the sieve it waxes strong.

**Book 9, Hymn XX, *Soma Pavamana***

1. Forth through the straining-cloth the  
Sage flows to the banquet of the Gods,  
Subduing all our enemies.

**Book 9, Hymn XXII *Soma Pavamana***

3. These Soma juices, blent with curds,  
purified, skilled in sacred hymns..  
4. Immortal, cleansed, these drops, since  
first they flowed, have never wearied, fain  
To reach the regions and their paths.  
5. Advancing they have travelled over the  
ridges of the earth and heaven...

**Book 9, Hymn XXII *Soma Pavamana***

1. Swift Soma drops have been effused in  
streams of meath..  
4. The living Somas being cleansed diffuse  
exhilarating drink,  
Turned to the vat which drips with meath...

**Book 9, Hymn XXV *Soma Pavamana***

Green-Hued! as one who giveth strength  
flow on for Gods to drink, a draught  
For Vayu and the Marut host.

**Book 9, Hymn XXVII *Soma Pavamana***

1. This Sage, exalted by our lauds, flows to  
the purifying cloth,  
Scattering foes as he is cleansed.
2. As giving power and winning light, for  
Indra and for Vayu he  
Is poured upon the filtering-cloth.
3. The men conduct him, Soma, Steer,  
Omniscient, and the Head of Heaven,  
Effused into the vats of wood.

**Book 9, Hymn XXX *Soma Pavamana***

4. Hither hath Pavamana flowed, Soma  
flowed hither in a stream,  
To settle in the vats of wood.
5. To waters with the stones they drive thee  
tawny-hued, most rich in sweets,  
O Indu, to be Indra's drink.

**Book 9, Hymn XXXXIII *Soma Pavamana***

2. With stream of sacrifice the brown bright  
drops have flowed with strength in store  
Of kine into the wooden vatas.

**Book 9, Hymn XXXXIV *Soma Pavamana***

3. With stones they press the Soma forth  
the Strong conducted by the strong:  
They milk the liquor out with skill.

**Book 9, Hymn XXXVII *Soma Pavamana***

6. Urged onward by the sage, the God  
speeds forward to the casks of wood,  
Indu to Indra willingly.

**Book 9, Hymn XLVI *Soma Pavamana***

3. Pressed in the mortar, these, the drops of  
juice, the Somas rich in food,  
Give strength to Indra with their work.  
4. Deft-handed men, run hither, seize the  
brilliant juices blent with meal,  
And cook with milk the gladdening draught.

**Book 9, Hymn LVII *Soma Pavamana***

2. He flows beholding on his way all well-  
beloved sacred lore,  
Green-tinted, brandishing his arms.  
3....sits as a falcon in the wood.

**Book 9, Hymn LXII *Soma Pavamana***

5. Fair is the God-loved juice; the plant is  
washed in waters, pressed by men:  
The milch-kine sweeten it with milk.  
7...Finding thine home in vats of wood.  
9. As giving room and freedom, as most  
sweet, pour butter forth and milk...  
19. Pouring all glories hither, he, effused and  
entering the jar,  
Stands like a hero mid the kine.  
21. Pour for the Gods into the sieve our  
Soma very rich in sweets,  
Him whom the Gods most gladly hear.  
28. Like showers of rain that fall from heaven  
thy streams perpetually flow  
To the bright fleece spread under them.

**Book 9, Hymn LXIII *Soma Pavamana***

4. These Somas swift and brown of hue, in  
stream of solemn sacrifice  
Have flowed through twisted obstacles.  
10...pour the drops upon the fleecy cloth.  
13...pouring the juice within the jar.  
15. Over the cleansing sieve have flowed the  
Somas, blent with curdled milk..

**Book 9, Hymn LXIV *Soma Pavamana***

11...flowed to purifying seive..  
13. Flow onward with a stream for food,  
made beautiful by sapient men:  
Indu with sheen approach the milk.  
14. While thou art cleansed, Song-Lover,  
bring comfort and viour to the folk,  
Poured, Tawny One! on milk and curds.  
16. Accelerated by the hymn, the rapid  
drops of Soma juice  
Have flowed, urged onward, to the lake.  
17. ...Yea, to the place of sacrifice.  
19. Loud neighs the Course Etasa, with  
singers, harnessed for the place,  
Guided for travel to the lake.  
26. Yea, Soma, Indu, while thou art purified  
do thou bring to us  
Speech thousandfold tht longs for war.  
27. O Indu, Much-invoked, while thou art  
purifying, as the Friend,  
Of these men enter thou the lake.  
28. Bright are these Somas blent with milk,  
with light that flashes brilliantly.

**Book 9, Hymn LXV *Soma Pavamana***

22. The Soma juices which have been  
expressed afar or near at hand,  
Or there on Saryanavan's bank  
23. Those pressed among Arjikas, pressed

among the active, in men's homes,  
Or pressed among the Races Five...<sup>74</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn LXVI Soma Pavamana**

9. The virgins deck thee over fresh streams to  
drive thee to the sieve when thou,  
A singer, bathest in the wood.  
11. They have been poured upon the fleece  
towards the meath-distilling vat..  
12. Like milch-kine coming home, the drops  
of Soma juice have reached the lake,  
have reached the place of sacrifice.  
13. O Indu, to our great delight the running  
waters flow to us,  
When thou wilt robe thyself in milk.

**Book 9, Hymn LXVII Soma Pavamana**

14. The Falcon dips within the jars: he wraps  
him in his robe and goes  
Loud roaring to the vats of wood.  
15. Soma, thy juice hath been effused and  
poured into the pitcher: like  
a rapid hawk it rushes on.  
32. Whoever reads the essence stored by saints,  
the Pavamani hymns,  
Sarasvati draws forth for him water and  
butter, milk and meath.

**Book 9, Hymn LXVIII Soma Pavamana**

1. The drops of Soma juice like cows who  
yield their milk have flowed forth, rich  
in meath, unto the Shining One,  
And seated on the grass, raising their  
voice, assumed the milk, the covering  
robe wherewith the udders stream.  
4...The stalk is mixed with grain: he comes  
led by the men together with the sisters,  
and preserves the Head.

---

<sup>74</sup> "pressed among the Races Five," the Arjikas are apparently a non-Aryan people in the North-West [Griffith's note]. This suggests that the Aryans may have been obtaining their Soma pressings from others. "Saryanavan's bank" is said to be on the borders of the Kuruksetra country [Griffith's note].

9...Soma, while he is filtered, settles in the jars.  
With milk and waters is he decked when  
pressed with stones: Indu, when purified,  
shall find sweet rest and room.

**Book 9, Hymn LXIX *Soma Pavamana***

2....the drop rising in sweet juice, is  
flowing through the fleece.  
3. He flows about the sheepskin, longing for a bride:...

**Book 9, Hymn LXX *Soma Pavamana***

7. The fearful Bull is bellowing with violent  
might, far-sighted, sharpening his yellow-  
coloured horns.  
Soma assumes his seat in the well-fashioned  
place: the cowhide and the sheepskin  
are his ornament.  
8. Bright, making pure his body free from  
spot and stain, on the sheep's back the  
Golden-coloured hath flowed down.  
Acceptable to Mitra, Vayu, Varuna, he  
is prepared as threefold meath by  
skillful men.<sup>75</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn LXXII *Soma Pavamana***

1. They cleanse the Gold-hued: like a red  
Steed is he yoked, and Soma in the jar  
is mingled with the milk.  
5. O Indra, urged by arms of men and poured  
in streams, Soma flows on for thee after  
his Godlike kind.  
Plans thou fulfilllest, gatherest thoughts for  
sacrifice: in the bowls sits the Gold-  
hued like a roosting bird.  
6. Sages well-skilled in work, intelligent,  
drain out the stalk that roars, the Sage,  
the Everlasting One.

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<sup>75</sup> "three-fold meath," according to Sayana, mixed with the Vasativari water, curds and milk. Probably, poured into three separate vessels, one for each of the three deities mentioned [Griffith's note].

**Book 9, Hymn LXXIII *Soma Pavamana***

3. With sanctifying gear they sit around the  
Song: their ancient Father guards their  
holy work from harm.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXIV *Soma Pavamana***

2. A far-extended pillar that supports the sky,  
the Soma-stalk filled full, moves itself  
every way.

5...he swells with sap for man the  
skin which gods enjoy.

7. Soma assumes white colour when he strives  
to gain: the bounteous Asura knows  
full many a precious boon.

Down the steep slope, through the song, he  
comes to the sacrifice, and he will burst the  
water-holding cask of heaven.

8. Yea, to the shining milk-anointed beaker,  
as to his goal, hath stepped the conquer-  
ing Courser...

9. Soma, thy juice when thou art blended  
with the streams, flows, Pavamana,  
through the long wool of the sheep.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXV *Soma Pavamana***

3. Sending forth flashes he hath bellowed to  
the jars, led by the men into the golden  
reservoir.

4. Pressed by the stones, with hymns and  
graciously inclined, illuminating both  
the Parents, Heaven and Earth,  
He flows in ordered season onward through  
the fleece, a current of sweet juice still  
swelling day by day.

5. Flow onward, Soma, flow to bring pros-  
perity: cleansed by the men, invest  
thee with the milky draught.

What gladdening drinks thou hast, foaming,  
exceeding strong, even with these incite  
Indra to give us wealth.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXVI Soma Pavamana**

5. Like as a bull to herds, thou flowest to the pail, bellowing as a steer upon the water's lap.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXVIII Soma Pavamana**

1...The fleece retains his solid parts as though impure, and bright and cleansed he seeks the special place of Gods.

2. Thou, Soma, art effused for Indra by the men, balmed in the wood as a wave, Sage, Viewer of mankind.

Full many are the paths whereon thou mayest go: a thousand bay steeds hast thou resting in the bowls.

4...the drop most sweet to taste, weal-bringing red of hue.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXVIX Soma Pavamana**

3. Yea, verily, foe of hate shown to himself is he, yea, verily destroyer too of other hate.

As thirst subdueth in the desert, conquer thou, O Soma Pavamana, men of evil thoughts.

4. ...The press-stones chew and crunch thee on the ox's hide: sages have milked thee with their hands into the streams.

5. So do they hurry on thy strong and beauteous juice, O Indu, as the first ingredient of the draught.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXX Soma Pavamana**

2. Thou, powerful Soma, thou to whom the cows have lowed, ascendest bright with sheen, thine iron-fashioned home.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "thine iron-fashioned home," must be the wooden vat, fashioned by axe. This, like other passages, dates the *Rig Veda*. All other articles used in the making of Soma are skins and pottery. The references to iron in the Rig Veda increase in the last two chapters, with "iron claws," "iron teeth," etc.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXI *Soma Pavamana***

1. Onward to Indra's throat move, beautifully adorned, the waves of Soma as he purifies himself,  
When they, brought forward with the lovely curd of kine, effused, have cheered the Hero to bestow his gifts.
2. Hither hath Soma flowed unto the beakers, like a chariot-horse, a stallion swift upon his way.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXII *Soma Pavamana***

- 1...While purified he passes through the filtering fleece to seat him hawk-like on the place that drops with oil.
2. To glory goest thou, Sage with disposing skill, like a groomed steed thou rushest forward to the prize.  
O Soma, be thou gracious, driving off distress: thou goest, clothed in butter, to a robe of state.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXIII *Soma Pavamana***

1. Spread is thy cleansing filter, Brahmanaspati: as Prince, thou enterest its limbs from every side.  
The raw, whose mass hath not been heated gains not this: they only which are dressed, which bear, attain to it.
2. High in the seat of heaven is spread the Scorcher's sieve: its threads are standing separate, glittering with light.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXIV *Soma Pavamana***

4. Winner of thousands, he, this Soma, flows along, raising a vigorous voice that wakens with the dawn.  
Indu with winds drives on the ocean of

the air, he sinks within the jars, he  
rests in Indra's heart.<sup>77</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXV *Soma Pavamana***

5. Roaring within the beaker thou art balmed  
with milk: thou passest through the  
fleecy filter all at once.

Carefully cleansed and decked like a prize-  
winning steed, O Soma, thou hast  
flowed down within Indra's throat. (26)

7. ...The filtering juices hasten to their eulogy,  
the drops that gladden find their way  
to Indra's heart.<sup>78</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXVI *Soma Pavamana***

1. Thy gladdening draughts, O Pavamana,  
..rich in meath, rest in the reservoir.

4. Fleet as swift steeds, thy drops, divine,  
thought-swift, have been, O pavamana,  
poured with milk into the vat.

6. ...When on the sieve the Golden-hued is  
cleansed, he rests within the vats as one  
who seats him in his place.

7. ...He speeds with thousand currents to the  
reservoir, and passes through the filter  
bellowing as a bull.

9. ...Soma flows on obtaining Indra's friendly  
love, and, as they purify him, settles  
in the jars.

11. The vigorous and far-seeing one, the  
Lord of heaven, flows, shouting to the  
beaker, with his thousand streams.  
Coloured like gold he rests in seats where  
Mitra dwells, the Steer made beautiful  
by rivers and by sheep.

18. O Soma, Indu, while they cleanse thee  
pour on us accumulated, plentiful,  
nutritious food,

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<sup>77</sup> "rests in Indra's heart"; if the place is in the jars, then it may be that the jars are heart-shaped (round bottomed). Such jars are seen in the hands of characters bringing offerings in Etruscan murals, reminiscent of the Beaker people.

<sup>78</sup> "within Indra's throat," appears to be the strainer or the top of the beaker; the beakers or jars, would then be "Indra's heart."

Which, ceaseless, thrice a day shall yield  
 us hero power enriched with store of  
 nourishment, and strength, and meath.  
 22. Flow onward, Soma, in thine own celestial  
 forms, flow, Indu, poured within the  
 beaker and the sieve.  
 Sinking into the throat of Indra with a  
 roar, led by the men thou madest Surya  
 mount to heaven.  
 23. Pressed out with stones thou flowest  
 onward to the sieve, O Indu, entering  
 the depths of Indra's throat. <sup>26</sup>  
 47. Thy streams that flow forth rapidly  
 collected run over the fine fleece of the  
 sheep as thou art cleansed.  
 When, Indu, thou art balmed with milk  
 within the bowl, thou sinkest in the  
 jars, O Soma, when expressed.

**Book 9, Hymn LXXXVIII Soma Pavamana**

4...Like Pedu's horse who killed the brood  
 of serpents, thus thou, O Soma, slayest  
 every Dasyu.  
 6. These Somas passing through the  
 fleecy filter, like rain descending from the

clouds of heaven,  
 Have been effused and poured into the  
 beakers, swiftly like rivers running lowly  
 seaward.



**Book 9, Hymn XCI Soma Pavamana**

2. The drop of Soma, pressed by wise  
 Nahusyas, becomes the banquet of the  
 Heavenly People- <sup>79</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn XCII Soma Pavamana**

...The Rsis came to him, seven holy singers,  
 when in the bowls he settled as Invoker. <sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> "pressed by wise Nahusyas," probably a neighboring people [Griffith's note].

<sup>80</sup> "the Rsis, seven holy singers," recalls the seven attendants in the Indus Valley seal showing the Horned god seated midst a plant., and they may be the seven holy rivers, including the Sarasvati.

**Book 9, Hymn XCIII Soma Pavamana**

2. As youth to damsel, so with milk he hastens  
on to the chosen meeting-place, the beaker.

3. Yea, swollen is the udder of the milch-  
cow: thither in streams goes very  
sapient Indu. <sup>81</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn XCV Soma Pavamana**

1. Loud neighs the Tawny Steed when  
started, settling deep in the wooden  
vessel while they cleanse him.

Led by the men he takes the milk for  
raiment: then shall he, through his  
powers, engender praise-songs. <sup>82</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn XCVI Soma Pavamana**

14. Pour, hundred-streamed, winner of thousands,  
mighty at the Gods' banquet,  
pour the rain of heaven.  
While thou with rivers roarest in the  
beaker, and blent with milk prolongest  
our existence.

20. Like a fair youth who decorates his body,  
a courser rushing to the gain of riches,  
A steer to herds, so, flowing to the pitcher,  
he with a roar hath passed into the  
beakers.

22. His streams have been effused in all their  
fullness, and he hath entered, balmed  
with milk, the goblets...

23. Chasing our foes thou comest Pavamana!  
Indu, besung, as lover to his darling.  
As a bird flies and settles in the forest,  
thus Soma settles, purified, in goblets.

---

<sup>81</sup> The jars or beakers may look like cows udders, confirming that they, appearing also as Indra's heart, are round bottomed, as many, if not most, beakers were. For a discussion on beakers, see *The Age of Stonehenge*, by Colin Burgess, Castle Books, Edison New Jersey, 2003; originally published by J. M. Dent, Great Britain, 1980.

<sup>82</sup> The many comparisons to Soma as a Steed reinforce the thought that the [Uffington horse](#) may be a representation of the mead, possibly used in rituals as among the Hindus.

**Book 9, Hymn XCVII *Soma Pavamana***

3. Dear, he is brightened on the fleecy summit, a Prince among us..
4. ...Let him flow, sweetly-flavoured, through the filter, and let our pious one rest in the pitcher.
19. For the God's service, for delight, O Indu, run over the height, run over the fleecy summit.  
With thousand streams, inviolate, sweet-scented, flow on for gain of strength that conquers heroes.<sup>83</sup>
45. ...Cleansed, he hath settled in his wooden dwelling: Indu hath flowed with milk and with waters.
46. Strong, wise, for thee who longest for his coming this Soma here flows to the bowls, O Indra.
47. ...Finding his threefold refuge in the waters, goes singing, as a priest, to the assemblies.
48. Now, chariot-borne, flow unto us, God Soma, as thou art purified flow to the saucers.

**Book 9, Hymn XCVIII *Soma Pavamana***

11. These ancient Somas, at the break of day, have flowed into the sieve...

**Book 9, Hymn C *Soma Pavamana***

4. Thy stream when thou art pressed runs on like some victorious warrior's steed. Hastening onward through the fleece like a swift horse who wins the prize.
5. Flow on, Sage Soma, with thy stream to give us mental power and strength, Effused for Indra, for his drink, for Mitra and for Varuna.

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<sup>83</sup> Soma flowing through the filter is sweet-scented.

**Book 9, Hymn CI Soma Pavamana**

12. These Soma juices, skilled in song, purified, blent with milk and curd,  
When moving and when firmly laid in oil, resemble lovely Suns.  
16. Soma upon the ox's skin through the sheep's wool flows purified.  
Bellowing out, the Tawny Steer goes on to Indra's special place.<sup>84</sup>

**Book 9, Hymn CIII Soma Pavamana**

2. Blended with milk and curds he flows on through the long wool of the sheep...  
3. On through the long wool of the sheep to the meath-dropping vat he flows:  
The Rsis' sevenfold quire hath sung aloud to him.

**Book 9, Hymn CIV Soma Pavamana**

3. Purify him who gives us power, that he, most Blessed One, may be  
A banquet for the Troop, Mitra, and Varuna.

**Book 9, Hymn CVI Soma Pavamana**

11. With songs they send the Mighty forth, sporting in wood, above the fleece:

**Book 9, Hymn CVII Soma Pavamana**

10. Effused by stones, O Soma, and urged through the long wool of the sheep,  
Thou, entering the saucers as a man the fort, gold-hued hast settled in the wood.  
18. Purified in the bowl...the Mighty One hath clad himself with milk and settled in the vats.  
22. Making thee pure and bright in the sheep's long wool, thou hast bellowed, steer-like, in the wood.

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<sup>84</sup> "upon the ox's skin," in the context used suggests that Soma, through the pressing and the filtering operations, being upon the ox's skin, would be a Tawny Steer.

**Book 9, Hymn CIX *Soma Pavamana***

12. They deck the Gold-hued Infant, newly-born, even Soma, Indu, in the sieve for Gods.

15. All Deities are wont to drink of him, pressed by the men and blent with mik and curds.

16. He hath flowed forth with thousand streams effused, flowed through the filter and the sheep's long wool.

**Book 9, Hymn CX *Soma Pavamana***

10. In the sheep's wool hath Soma Pavamana flowed, while they cleanse him, like a playful infant..

**Book 9, Hymn CXII *Soma Pavamana***

7. O Pavamana, place me in that deathless, undecaying world

Wherein the light of heaven is set, and everlasting lustre shines. Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

8. Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the King, Vivasvan's Son, Where is the secret shrine of heaven, where are those waters young and fresh, Flow, Indu, flow for Indra's sake.

**Book 10, Hymn XXII *Indra***

8. Around us is the Dasyu, riteless, void of sense, inhuman, keeping alien laws.

**Book 10, Hymn XXIII *Indra***

1. Indra, whose right hand wields the bolt, we worship, driver of Bay Steeds seeking sundered courses.

Shaking his beard with might he hath arisen, casting his weapons forth and dealing bounties.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Indra, the chief of the gods, is bearded like Zeus, but youthful with a yellow beard.

4. With him too is this rain of his that  
comes like herds: Indra throws drops  
of moisture on his yellow beard.

**Book 10, Hymn XXV *Soma***

11. This to the sage who offers gifts brings  
power that comes from wealth in kine.  
This, better than the seven, hath — at your<sup>86</sup>  
glad carouse — furthered the blind, the  
cripple. Thou art waxing great.

**Book 10, Hymn XXVII *Indra***

1. This, singer, is my firm determination,  
to aid the worshipper who pours the Soma...  
2. The will I, when I lead my friends to  
battle against the radiant persons of the  
godless,  
Prepare for thee at home a vigorous  
bullock, and pour for thee the fifteen-  
told strong juices<sup>87</sup>  
5. None hinder me in mine heroic exploits,  
no, not the mountains when I will and  
purpose.  
Even the deaf will tremble at my roaring,  
and every day will dust be agitated.  
6. To see the Indraless oblation-drinkers,  
mean offerers, overtaken by destruction!..

**Book 10, Hymn XXIX *Indra***

6. Thine are two measures, Indra, wide-well-  
meted, heaven for thy majesty, earth for  
thy wisdom.  
Here for thy choice are Somas mixed with  
butter: may the sweet meath be pleasant  
for thy drinking.  
7. They have poured out a bowl to him, to

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<sup>86</sup> "Wealth to the seven," refers to the seven priests [based on Griffith's note].

<sup>87</sup> "The fifteen-told strong juices," according to Sayana, the juices of the Soma-plant whose leaves grow during the light half of the month and die away during the dark-half [Griffith's note]. Often anomalies offer new areas of investigation that lead to better insight into a matter (and open new vistas as well). This is an anomaly that leads nowhere at the moment, from my point of view.

Indra, full of sweet juice, for faithful  
in his bounty.

**Book 10, Hymn XXX Waters**

8. Send forth to him the meath-rich wave,  
O Rivers, which is your offspring and  
a well of sweetness,  
Oil-balmed, to be implored at sacrifices.  
Ye wealthy Waters, hear mine invocation.

**Book 10, Hymn XXXI Visvedevas**

Earth, when the first son sprang from  
sire and mother, cast up the Sami, that  
which men were seeking.<sup>88</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn XXXV Visvedevas**

9. This day we pray with innocence in strew-  
ing grass, adjusting pressing-stones, and  
perfecting the hymn...  
10. To our great holy grass I bid the Gods at  
morn to banquet, and will seat them as  
the seven priests, —

**Book 10, Hymn XXXVII Surya**

12. If, by some grievous sin, we have provoked  
the Gods, O Deities, with the tongue or  
thoughtlessness of heart,  
That guilt, O Vasus, lay upon the Evil  
One, on him who ever leads us into  
deep distress.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> 'The cow which was barren is the Sami tree, which brings forth the *Asvattha*, and from the wood of these two trees are made the *arani*, the two pieces of wood which are rubbed together to produce the sacred fire — the upper and harder piece is the *Sami* (the *Acacia Suma*), and the lower and soft is the *Asvattha* (the *Ficus religiosa*).'  
— Wilson [Griffith's note].

<sup>89</sup> It is interesting how convenient demons and devils are used before the gods in most religions. "Possessed by the devil," is a common admonition from the hearts of Christians, Moslems, Jews, Buddhists and Hindus. In the Bible one is either with God or not with him (See <http://www.maravot.com> for my several comments in this regard).

The story of Rama, in his devotion and pledge to rid the world of evil, is a good illustration of what is probably going on in the hearts of men. In the story Rama is dedicated to destroying Ravana, a ten-headed monster who is king of the demonic. His world is not heaven nor the earth, but a third world, where demons and monsters are

### **Book 10, Hymn XXXIX Asvins**

1. ...Asvins, your swiftly-rolling circumambient  
Car which he who worships must invoke  
at eve and dawn.

### **Book 10, Hymn XLIX Indra Vaikuntha**

3. ..As Susna's slayer I brandished the dart  
of death: I gave not up the Aryan  
name to Dasyu foes.

### **Book 10, Hymn LIII Agni Saucika Gods**

9. Tvastar, most deft of workmen, knew each  
magic art, bringing most blessed bowls  
that hold the drink of Gods.

His axe, wrought of good metal, he is  
sharpening now, wherewith the radiant  
Brahmanaspati will cut.

10. Now, O ye Sapient Ones, make ye the  
axes sharp wherewith ye fashion bowls  
to hold the Amrta.

### **Book 10, Hymn LV Indra**

6. Strong is the Red Bird in his strength,  
great Hero, who from of old hath had  
no nest to dwell in.<sup>90</sup>

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dedicated to consuming mankind. It's something like Hades, and if one were to compare the final-resort weapon Ravana threw at Rama in their last and final battle, one will find a striking similarity between that weapon and the Etruscan [Tuchulcha](#). Rama was Vishnu incarnate and not vulnerable to all weapons. Having thrown his weapon, the Trident, and seeing it fall short of Rama, Ravana was convinced that he must be battling with a god, but he resolved, "...whoever it may be, I will not stop my fight until I defeat and crush him or at least take him prisoner. With this resolve, Ravana next sent a weapon which issued forth monstrous serpents vomiting fire and venom, with enormous fangs and red eyes. They came darting in from all directions.

"Rama now selected an asthra called 'Garuda' (which meant 'eagle'). Very soon thousands of eagles were aloft, and they picked off the serpents with their claws and beaks and destroyed them. Seeing this also fail, Ravana's anger was roused to a mad pitch and he blindly emptied a quiverful of arrows in Rama's direction. Rama's arrows met them half way and turned them round so that they went back and their sharp points embedded themselves in Ravana's own chest." [*The Ramayana*, translated by R. K. Narayan, Penguin Books, 1977, pp. 157, 158]

<sup>90</sup> "Who has no nest to dwell in," refers to Indra as the sun [based on Griffith's note]. This is a precept used by Christ. Old myths tell of Jesus Christ having travelled in India. There are many precepts in the *Rig Veda* that are fundamental to the Bible (raising the weak over the strong, etc.), that God is a defender of the poor, the weak and the humble. The *Didichae*, perhaps the oldest document in Christianity, repeats a precept Jesus expounded: "If

**Book 10, Hymn LVI *Visevedas***

6. In two ways have the sons established in  
his place the Asura who finds the light,  
by the third act,<sup>91</sup>  
As fathers, they have set their heritage  
on earth, their offspring, as a thread  
continuously spun out.

**Book 10, Hymn LVIII *Manas or Spirit***

2. Thy spirit, that went far away, that passed  
away to earth and heaven,  
We cause to come to thee again that thou  
mest live and sojourn here.<sup>92</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn LXII *Visedevas, Etc.***

10. Yadu and Turva, too, have given two  
Dasas, well-disposed, to serve,  
Together with great store of kine.<sup>93</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn LXIX *Agni***

6. All treasures hast thou won, of plains and  
mountains, and quelled the Dasas' and  
Aryas' hatred...<sup>88</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn LXX *Apris***

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they (the priests) ask for money, don't go to them!" As can be seen in the *Rig Veda* and is evident in established religions, ancient and modern, the priesthood depends upon the charity of the worshippers. In the Old Testament the burden of the priesthood was recognized and set, not to exceed 10%. The Jewish priests were forbidden to raise any other money or means of support, being totally dependent upon the 10% God allowed. When Jesus went into the temple and threw over the tables of the money-changers he reminded the priests who were money-changers of this Law of Moses. I don't condemn priests or pastors as a rule, but would pass on the injunction to beware of them that ask for money, for the struggle to receive richer benefactors eventually becomes a political struggle and the noble cause of God in defending the poor, the weak, and the humble thus is compromised.

<sup>91</sup> "the third act," or third sacred duty, that of continuing their family; religious study and sacrifice being the first and second—Sayana {Griffith's note}.

<sup>92</sup> This is a hymn recalling the fleeting spirit of a man at the point of death [based on Griffith's note]. This would appear to be the foundation of the Hindu precept of reincarnation, which is hardly mentioned in the *Rig Veda*.

<sup>93</sup> Turva: equivalent to Turvasa; a prince of the clan called after the eponymous Turva. Dasas: enslaved natives [Griffith's note]. The, Dasas, the brown-skinned natives, appear to have been subjugated (and enslaved) by chapter 10 of the *Rig Veda*.

10. Well-knowing, binding with thy cord, bring  
hither, Lored of the Wood, the Deities'  
assembly. <sup>94</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn LXXV *The Rivers***

5. Favour ye this my laud, O Ganga, Yamuna,  
O Sutudri, Parusni and Sarasvati:  
With Asikni, Vitasta, O Marudvradha, O  
Arjikiya with Susoma hear my call. <sup>95</sup>

**Book 10, Hymn LXXXI *Visvakavman***

4. What was the tree, what wood in sooth  
produced it, from which they fashioned  
out the earth and heaven?  
Ye thoughtful men inquire within your  
spirit whereon he stood when he  
established all things.

**Book 10, Hymn XCIV *Press-stones***

1...When, rich with Soma juice, Stones  
of the mountain, ye, united, swift to  
Indra bring the sound of praise.  
2. They speak out like a hundred, like a  
thousand men: they cry aloud to us  
with their green-tinted mouths.

**Book 10, Hymn CV *Indra***

1. When, Vasu, wilt thou love the laud?  
Now let the channel bring the stream.  
The juice is ready to ferment.

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<sup>94</sup> "Lord of the Wood," the *yupa* or Sacrificial Post [Griffith's note]. The wooden post is a symbol of Odin or Woden, and it comes to mind, based upon the Rig Veda, that the Celtic and Germanic posts may have been used for the sacrifice, as well as gods to whom prayers were sent.

<sup>95</sup> "The poet addresses first the most distant rivers. *Ganga*: the Ganges is mentioned, indirectly, in only one other verse in the *Rig Veda*, and even there the word is said by some to be the name of a woman. See VI.45.31. *Yamund*: the Jumna. *Sutudri*: the Sutelj or Satlaj. *Parusni*: the Ravi. *Sarasvati*: see VI.61.2. *Asikni*: the ancient Acesines: the Vedic name of the Gandrabhaga, the present Cenab. *Vitasta*: probably the Jhelum, the Hydaspes of the Greeks. *Marudvrdha*: meaning, increased by the Maruts: not identified.

*Arjikiya* and *Susoma* are said by Yaska to be the Vipas and the Sindhu; but this is not possible, and it is uncertain what rivers are meant" [Griffith's note].

**Book 10, Hymn CX *Apris***

4. By rule the Sacred Grass is scattered eastward, a robe to clothe this earth when dawns are breaking:...

5. Let the expansive Doors be widely opened, like wives who deck their beauty for their husbands.

Lofty, celestial, all-impelling Portals, admit the Gods and give them easy entrance.

**Book 10, Hymn CXVII *Liberality***

3. Bounteous is he who gives unto the beggar who comes to him in want of food and feeble.

**Book 10, Hymn CXXIX *Creation***

3. Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos,

All that existed then was void and formless: by the great power of Warmth was born that Unit.

4. Thereafter rose Desire in the beginning, Desire, the primal seed and germ of <sup>96</sup> Spirit.

Sages who searched with their heart's thought discovered the existent's kinship in the non-existent.

**Book 10, Hymn CXXXV *Yama***

1. In the Tree clothed with goodly leaves where Yama drinketh with the Gods, The Father, Master of the house, tendeth with love our ancient Sires. <sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> "Desire, " Kama, Eros, or Love [Griffith's note]. The Greek view of creation is similar. Eros existed almost from the beginning of time, being born, together with Ge (Earth) and Tartarus, out of, or at the same time as, Chaos. Eros is also viewed as the son of Aphrodite.

<sup>97</sup> "In the Tree, " where the spirits of the pious dead rest after their labours [Griffith's note]. Yama is the god of the dead. In the Mahabharata we are told how Arjuna chose a corpse and hung it from a limb of a Sami tree: "By the

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road near Matsya city was a cemetery strewn over with charred corpses, and there grew a giant Sami tree, the kind whose twigs and branches are made into firesticks.

Yudhishthira said, 'Our bows and swords must be hidden or we will be known. No one will come near this tree except to burn the dead, and it will not be cut down, for it is the sacred mother of fire.'

Nakula took all their bows and swords and arrows, wrapped them in leather, and carried them up the tree. he hid them where rain could not go, nor anyone see them from below. When he had come down, they saw shepherds approaching driving their sheep to the city, and Arjuna and Bhima chose a corpse and hung it from a limb.

Yudhishthira told the shepherds, "We are hunters from the hills, and that is our mother, who has died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. We are hanging her here by the custom of our ancestors." (*Mahabharata*, retold by William Buck, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1973, pp. 199,200) Hanging a charred corpse from a Tree, may explain the tradition that Odin or Woden guards the dead who hang from trees (or as Britain was being Christianized, the gallows). Some tribes of American Indians placed their dead in trees. My grandmother, who was raised on a ranch in Montana, told me that the ranch bordered an Indian burial ground where the bodies were placed on biers in the trees. Trees are motifs in Etruscan tomb murals, and one can see not only the changing seasons reflected by the trees in spring, summer, fall and winter, but also the sash or [girdle hanging from a limb of a tree](#). It may be that the girdle hanging in a tree recalls this ancient Indo-European rite expressed in the *Rig Veda* and *Mahabharata*. Stone megaliths are located next to trees (or visa versa), and in the *Iliad* the turning post was the base of a tree next to which two stones were placed: "Now I will tell you the mark — you can't miss it. There's a dry stump at the turn of the road standing about a fathom above the soil, oak or fir, which does not rot in the rain. Two white stones are set against it, one on each side, and the land round this is smooth for horses. It may be the mark of some man dead long ago, or set up for a post in former days, and now Achillès has fixed it for the turning-point of his race." (*Iliad*, translated by W. H. D. Rouse, Mentor Book, by arrangement with Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1938, p. 271.) See [Etruscan Murals.html](#) for a commentary on the girdle.

## Book III, Persians and Celts

### The Avesta

The *Avesta*, also called the *Zend-avesta*, is the sacred book of a religion called Zoroastrianism. The religion was founded by a priest, Zoroaster who shaped from earlier foundations involving 33 gods, as in the Rig Veda, a new monotheistic faith based upon a Dualism. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Zoroastrian tradition maintains that its teacher, Zoroaster, flourished 258 years before Alexander the Great conquered Persepolis, the capital of the Achaemenids, a dynasty that ruled Persia from 559 to 330 BC, in 330 BC.

"Following this dating, Zoroaster converted Vishtaspa, most likely a king of Chorasmia (an area south of the Aral Sea in Central Asia), in 588 BC. According to tradition, he was 40 years old when this event occurred, thus indicating that his birthdate was 628 B.C. Zoroaster was born into a modestly situated family of knights, the Spitama, probably at Rhages (now Rayy, a suburb of Tehr?n), a town in Media. The area in which he lived was not yet urban, its economy being based on animal husbandry and pastoral occupations. Nomads, who frequently raided those engaged in such occupations, were viewed by Zoroaster as aggressive violators of order, and he called them followers of the Lie.

"According to the sources, Zoroaster probably was a priest. Having received a vision from Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, who appointed him to preach the truth, Zoroaster apparently was opposed in his teachings by the civil and religious authorities in the area in which he preached. It is not clear whether these authorities were from his native region or from Chorasmia prior to the conversion of Vishtaspa. Confident in the truth revealed to him by Ahura Mazda, Zoroaster apparently did not try to overthrow belief in the older Iranian religion, which was polytheistic; he did, however, place Ahura Mazda at the centre of a kingdom of justice that promised immortality and bliss. Though he attempted to reform ancient Iranian religion on the basis of the existing social and economic values, Zoroaster's teachings at first aroused opposition from those whom he called the followers of the Lie (dregvant ).

"Zoroaster's teachings, as noted above, centred on Ahura Mazda, who is the highest god and alone is worthy of worship. He is, according to the Gathas, the creator of heaven and earth; i.e., of the material and the spiritual world. He is the source of the alternation of light and darkness, the sovereign lawgiver, and the very centre of nature, as well as the originator of the moral order and judge of the entire world. The kind of polytheism found in the Indian Vedas (Hindu scriptures having the same religious background as the Gathas) is totally absent; the Gathas, for example, mention no female deity sharing Ahura Mazda's rule. He is surrounded by six or seven beings, or entities, which the later Avesta calls amesha spentas, 'beneficent immortals.' The names of the amesha spentas frequently recur throughout the Gathas and may be said to characterize Zoroaster's thought and his concept of god. In the words of the Gathas, Ahura Mazda is the father of Spenta Mainyu (Holy Spirit), of Asha Vahishta (Justice, Truth), of Vohu Manah (Righteous Thinking), and of Armaiti (Spenta Armaiti, Devotion). The other three beings (entities) of this group are said to personify qualities attributed to Ahura Mazda: they are Khshathra Vairya (Desirable Dominion), Haurvatat (Wholeness), and Ameretat (Immortality). This does not exclude the possibility that they, too, are creatures of Ahura Mazda. The good qualities represented by these beings are also to be earned and possessed by Ahura Mazda's

followers. This means that the gods and mankind are both bound to observe the same ethical principles. If the amesha spentas show the working of the deity, while at the same time constituting the order binding the adherents of the Wise Lord, then the world of Ahura Mazda and the world of his followers (the ashavan ) come close to each other. The very significant eschatological aspect of Zoroastrianism is well demonstrated by the concept of Khshathra (Dominion), which is repeatedly accompanied by the adjective Desirable; it is a kingdom yet to come.<sup>98</sup>

A treaty concluded about 1380 B.C. between the Hittite emperor and the king of the [Mitanni](#), invokes a list of gods that recalls those addressed in the *Rig Veda*, namely: Mitra and Varuna, Indra and the two Nasatyas.<sup>99</sup> Of these gods, only Mitra (Mithra) is invoked in the *Avesta*, "except that Indra and

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<sup>98</sup> (1) *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

<sup>99</sup> *Nasatyas* is another term for the Asvins. "Derived by Indian Commentators from na = asatya 'not untrue,' is a name of common occurrence applied jointly to the two Asvins. Nasatya is said to be specially the name of one of the Asvins, the other being then called Dastra, 'wonder-worker,' or perhaps 'destroyer' (of the wicked)." [Griffith's note]. Let's take another look at them:

***Rig Veda, Book 1, Hymn III Asvins***

1. Ye Asvins, rich in treasure, Lords of splendor,  
having nimble hands,  
Accept the sacrificial food.
2. Ye Asvins, rich in wondrous deeds, ye  
heroes worthy of our praise,  
Accept our songs with mighty thought.
3. Nasatyas, wonder-workers, yours are these  
libations with clipt grass:  
Come ye whose paths are red with flame.

***Rig Veda Book 1, Hymn CXVI Asvins***

1. I trim like grass my song for the Nasatyas  
and send their lauds forth as the wind  
drives rain-clouds,  
Who in a chariot rapid as an arrow,  
brought to the youthful Vimada a consort.
2. Borne on by rapid steeds of mighty pinion,  
or proudly trusting in the Gods' in-  
citements.  
That stallion ass of yours won, O Nasatyas,  
that thousand in the race, in Yama's  
contest.
3. Yea, Asvins, as a dead man leaves his  
riches, Tugra left Bhujyu in the cloud  
of waters.  
Ye brought him back in animated vessels,  
traversing air, unwetted by the billows.
4. Bhjyu ye bore with winged things, Nasatyas,  
which for three nights, three days  
full swiftly travelled,  
To the sea's farther shore, the strand of  
ocean, in three cars, hundred-footed,

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with six horses.

5. Ye wrought that hero exploit in the ocean  
which giveth no support, or hold or station,  
What time ye carried Bhujyu to his  
dwelling, borne in a ship with hundred  
oars, O Asvins.

6. The white horse which of old ye gave  
Aghasva, Asvins, a gift to be his wealth  
forever,—

Still to be praised is that your glorious  
present, still to be famed is the brave  
horse of Pedu.

7. O heroes, ye gave wisdom to Kaksivan  
who sprang from Pajra's line, who sang  
your praises.

Ye poured forth from the hoof of your  
strong charge a hundred jars of wine  
as from a strainer.

8. Ye warded off with cold the fire's fierce  
burning; food very rich in nourishment  
ye furnished.

Astri, cast downward in the cavern, Asvins,  
Ye brought, with all his people, forth  
to comfort.

9. Ye lifted up the well, O ye Nasatyas, and  
set the base on high to open downward.  
Streams flowed for folk of Gotama who  
thirsted, like rain to bring forth thousand-  
fold abundance.

10. Ye from the old Cyavana, O Nasatyas,  
stripped, as 'twere mail, the skin upon  
his body,

Lengthened his life when all had left him  
helpless, Dasras! and made him lord  
of youthful maidens.

11. Worthy of praise and worth the winning,  
Heroes is that your favouring succor  
O Nasatyas,

What time ye, knowing well his case,  
delivered Vandana from the pit like  
hidden treasure.

12. That Mighty deed of yours, for gain, O  
Heroes, as thunder heraldeth the rain,  
I publish,

When, by the horse's head, Atharvan's  
offspring Dadhyaac made known to you  
the Soma's sweetness.

15. When in the time of night, in Khela's  
battle, a leg was severed like a wild  
bird's pinion,

Straight ye gave Vispala a leg of iron

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that she might move what time the  
conflict opened.

16. His father robbed Rjrasva of his eye-  
sight who for the she-wolf slew a  
hundred wethers.

Ye gave him eyes, Nasatyas, Wonder-  
Workers, Physicians, that he saw with  
sight uninjured.

18. When to his house ye came, to Divodasa,  
hasting to Bharadvaja, O ye Asvins,  
The car that came with you brought  
splendid riches: a porpoise and a bull  
were yoked together.

***Rig Veda, Book 1, Hymn CXVII Asvins***

3. Ye freed sage Atri, whom the Five Tribes  
honoured, from the strait pit, ye Heroes  
with his people...

12. Ye Sons of Heaven, ye Mighty, whither  
went ye, sought ye, for his fair praise  
the home of Kavya.

When, like a pitcher full of gold, O Asvins,  
on the tenth day ye lifted up the  
buried?

13. Ye with the aid of your great powers,  
O Asvins, restored to youth the ancient  
man Cyavana.

The Daughter of the Sun with all her  
glory, O ye Nasatyas, chose your car  
to bear her.

***Rig Veda Book 1, Hymn CXVIII Asvins***

2. Come to us with your chariot triple-seated  
three-wheeled, of triple form, that rolleth  
lightly.

Fill full our cows, give mettle to our  
horses, and make each hero son grow  
strong, O Asvins.

3. With your well-rolling car, descending  
swiftly, hear this the press-stone's song,  
ye Wonder-Workers.

How then have ancient sages said, O  
Asvins, that ye most swiftly come to stay  
affliction?

4. O Asvins, let your falcons bear you  
hither, yoked to your chariot, swift,  
with flying pinions...

***Rig Veda Book 1, Hymn CXIX Asvins***

9...Ye drew unto yourselves the spirit of Dadhyac,  
and then the horse's head uttered

Nanhaithya appear in the *Avesta* as demons." Varuna may have survived under another name. Important changes, then, must have taken place on the Iranian side, not all of which can be attributed to the prophet.

"The Indo-Iranians appear to have distinguished, from among their gods, the daiva (Indo-Iranian and Old Persian equivalent of Avestan daeva and Sanskrit deva, related to the Latin deus), meaning 'heavenly,' and the asura, a special class with occult powers. This situation was reflected in Vedic India; later on, asura came to signify, in Sanskrit, a kind of demon, because of the baleful aspect of the asura's invisible power. In Iran the evolution must have been different: the ahuras were extolled, to the exclusion of the daevas, who were reduced to the rank of demons."

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his words to you.

10. O horse did ye provide for Pedu, excellent,  
white, O ye Asvins, conqueror of  
combatants.

Invincible in war by arrows, seeking heaven  
worthy of fame, like Indra, vanquisher  
of men.

"*With clipt grass*" refers to the sacred Kusa grass (*Poa cynosuroides*), after having the roots cut off, is spread on the Vedi or altar; and upon it the libation of Soma juice, or oblation of clarified butter is poured out. It is also spread over the sacrificial ground or floor to serve as a seat for the Gods and the sacrificers [Griffith's note]. The Asvins seem to have been a puzzle even to the oldest Indian Commentators. Yaska thus refers to them in the Nirukta, XII.1: 'Next in order are the deities whose sphere is the heaven; of these the Asvins are the first to arrive...Who then are those Asvins? 'Heaven and Earth,' say some; 'Day and Night,' say others; 'The Sun and Moon,' say others; 'Two Kings, performers of holy acts,' say the legendary writers.' Professor Roth thus speaks of these Gods: 'The two Asvins, though, like the ancient interpreters of the Veda, we are by no means agreed as to the conception of their character, hold nevertheless, a perfectly distinct position in the entire body of the Vedic deities of light. They are the earliest bringers of light in the morning sky, who in their chariots hasten onward before the dawn, and prepare the way for her.' — J. Muir, *O. S. Texts*, V.234 [Griffith's note on Book 1 Hymn III]. What is apparent is that the Asvins are healers and saviors. They heal the lame, the blind; they rescue from the pit and they bring the dead to life. They are associated with a horse, and more particularly the decapitated head of a horse; and they are the heroes, conquerors of combatants.

## Principal Iranian Deities:

### Mithra

Beside Ahura Mazda, Mithra is the most important deity of the ancient Iranian pantheon and may have even occupied a position of near equality with him. In the Achaemenian inscriptions Mithra, together with Anahita, is the only other deity specifically mentioned. Although the ancient pantheon contained an individual sun god, Hvar Khshaita, in the eastern Iranian traditions reflected in the Avesta, Mithra has a hint of connection with the sun, more specifically with the first rays of dawn as he drives forth in his chariot. In western Iran the identification was complete, and the name Mithra became a common word for 'sun.' In spite of his connection with the sun, Mithra functioned preeminently in the ethical sphere. The word mithra was a common noun that meant 'covenant, contract, treaty' and, as such, Mithra was the god Covenant, the celestial deity who oversaw all solemn agreements that people made among themselves and who severely punished anyone who broke the terms of a covenant, whether it was between individuals or between countries or other sociopolitical entities. In his capacity to find out the covenant breaker, he is described as sleepless, ever-waking, having 1,000 ears, 10,000 eyes, and a wide outlook. He is portrayed as a great warrior brandishing his mace while driving in his chariot to battle, where he intervenes on behalf of those faithful to treaties by throwing the treaty-breakers (mithra-drug) into panic and defeat. As a sovereign deity, Mithra bore the standing epithet varu-gavyuti, meaning 'one who (presides over) wide pasture lands' — i.e., one who keeps under his protection (another of his epithets was payu, 'protector') the territories of those who worship him and abide by their covenants. It should be mentioned that Mithra gave his name to a mystery religion, *Mithraism*, which was popular throughout the Roman Empire, but whose Iranian origins are difficult to trace.

### Anahiti

One of the longest Avestan Yashts is to the powerful goddess whose full name is given as Ardvi Sura Anahita, literally 'the damp, strong, untainted.' In fact, the long name seems to combine two originally separate names and, hence, two deities. First, Ardvi Sura is the Iranian name of the heavenly river goddess who in the Rig Veda is called Sarasvati. In this role, she brings fresh water to the earth, filling streams, rivers, and seas as she flows from Mount Hukarya to the Varu-Karta Sea. Second, Anahiti is a separate goddess of uncertain origin whose cult seems to have been popular originally in northeastern Iran. The name probably meant 'untaintedness, purity (both moral and physical).' It is interesting that the Greek Anaitis preserves the Old Iranian form of the name, while Anahit(a), of the Avestan and Old Persian, shows a more recent linguistic form. Unlike any other Iranian deity, she is described in great detail in the Yashts, especially in respect to her clothing and ornamentation, to such an extent that one assumes a dressed cult image must be the source of the description. This is confirmed by the fact that Artaxerxes II mentions her. Then, too, the Babylonian historian Berosus reports that this king had many images of her made and distributed. Since the Iranians did not traditionally make images, it may be assumed that Anahiti's cult borrowed heavily from Mesopotamian models. The Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar probably provided the clearest model, though the details of Anahiti's dress, her beaver coat, for example—show significant differences. There were other striking similarities: Ishtar was the goddess of

war and patroness of the palace, while the greater part of Anahiti's Yasht is devoted to her martial traits and her patronage of Iranian heroes and legendary rulers (in post-Achaemenian Iran Anahiti was intimately connected with kingship and the shah). In addition, both goddesses were important for fertility.

Dr. Oric Basirov, in a paper posted on the CAIS website (Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies at the School of Oriental & African Studies [SOAS], University of London), provides a more comprehensive examination and discussion of Zoroaster and the religion he founded. Basirov suggests in fact that Zoroaster may have come from the steppes of Kazakhstan (this also sheds more light on the origin and differentiation of the Indo-European languages).

Says Dr. Basirov: ([http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Zarathushtrian/zoroaster\\_time\\_and\\_place.htm](http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/Religions/iranian/Zarathushtrian/zoroaster_time_and_place.htm)):

"Any reliable information about the time and the provenance of the prophet is based principally on his own words which make up parts of the Avesta, and on some data produced by Russian archaeologists. The available evidence, however, would only define an approximate time and space within which Zoroaster is likely to have lived and preached. His holy words, the Gathas, as well as the rest of the Avesta belong to one of the Old Eastern Iranian languages. These languages are thousands of years in antiquity and much older than the oldest known Western Iranian language, the Old Persian, that is to say the language of the Achaemenians. Moreover, these two branches of the Iranian languages are so different in character, as to be mutually incomprehensible [English/German]. Old Eastern Iranian languages were spoken by proto-Iranian peoples who lived in a vast area from the Ural Mountains and modern Afghanistan to the heart of Siberia and western China (western Cimmerians, Sarmatians, Scythians (Saka), Massagetae, and Alans]. We have, therefore, thousands of years as well as thousands of miles within which to search for the time and the homeland of the great Iranian prophet.

It is difficult to date the Gathic Avestan; on the other hand it closely resembles the Rigveda, which is fairly generally accepted to have begun to take shape about 1800 BC

The Gathic texts, moreover, describe a pastoral society which seems to correspond with the evidence produced by Soviet archaeologists from the northeastern parts of Central Asia. Some personal names, such as Hvogva, Vishtaspa, and Zarathushtra denote settled agrarian people owning domesticated cows, horses and camels. We know these animals were long domesticated in Central Asia. The Avesta also talks about chariots and chariot races. The earliest known such vehicle is attested in the steppes around 1600 BC It is also known that chariots encouraged nomadism in that part of the world leading to a reduction in the number of cows and to a corresponding increase in the number of horses.

It is reasonable to assume that the great Indo-Iranian migration to the south was encouraged by the increasing use of chariots, and that prior to this event, the Zoroastrian "Airyana Vaejah" was a settled agricultural community as described in the Avesta. The area of the Central Asia which closely resembles this Iranian Holy Land is located in northeastern part of modern Kazakhstan, a land full of rivers, lakes and pastures. Here, Soviet archaeologists have unearthed a material culture known as Andronovo, which is not that different from the description of the "Airyana Vaejah". It seems that the "Airyas" of the Gathas lived a peaceful agricultural life in this land, where Zoroaster was born and first preached (It is difficult to form a new faith while in move; a great deal of stability is required to form a new religion. The formation of Zoroastrianism must therefore have taken place during a period of at least 100 years of peace).

It is also conceivable that during his lifetime the chariot-riding "pasture-destroyers" and "cattle-raiders" first appeared and dramatically changed the face of the steppes; these two terms are often used in the Avesta. These events probably led to the southward migration of some Iranians, who later became the ancestors of the historical Medes and Achaemenians.

The *Avesta* addresses 33 gods. The most important of them includes the god of Fire and the Persian version of Soma called *Hoama*. We quote the *Avesta* from <http://www.avesta.org> where the *Avesta* can be read in its entirety: The following, taken from <http://www.xs4all.nl/~sufilab/index.html>, summarizes what you are about to see from the *Avesta*:

"The way of worship taught by Zarathustra is to worship God by offering homage to nature. For nature suggests to the soul the endless and unlimited Being hidden behind it all. They keep a constantly burning fire in their place of worship, But they keep it before them when thinking of God, For fire purifies all things and the light within purifies all souls".  
Hazrat Inayat Khan, *The Unity of Religious Ideals*

The homage to nature theme is — as we have seen — a principal theme of the *Rig Veda* and also reflected in the Horned God, Lord of Animals that we have seen in Indra/Shiva, the Celtic god, Cernunnos, and the like Horned God on the Indus Valley seals. Fire is the messenger of the Gods and the great purifier and the only self-created god in the *Rig Veda*. Fire as a source of purification is also a paramount theme of the Bible. But in the final analysis both water and fire share the role of purification in the *Rig Veda*, Indo-European rites, as well as Mesopotamian and Biblical sources. In the Bible, for instance, God tells Noah after the flood that he will no longer punish man by water; and through the prophets he repeatedly points out that his final purge of "wickedness" will be through fire. The last prophet of the Bible, *Malachi*, addresses the consumption of the world by fire, which was addressed in the Book of *Daniel*; and the Book of *Revelation* repeats those foundations. The foundation of the Bible, called the Law of Moses, which contained five books, addresses the nature of self-purification through the "Nazarite," who is a person (male or female) that leaves the community to live in the solitude of the desert completely dependent upon God. During the period of isolation the Nazarite is restricted in what can be eaten and not allowed to cut his or her hair or bathe. Purification of the Nazarite is done by fire and water.

The priests of the *Rig Veda* refer to the "Law." The context is as one sees in the Bible invocations of the "Law." The first purveyor of the law to the Aryans of India was Manu; in like manner Moses was the first purveyor of the law to the Hebrew, Christian and Moslem tradition. But a *new* law-giver is honored in Christianity, who is the Messiah called Jesus the Christ (messiah). The Koran of the Moslem religion likewise honors its *new* law-giver, Mohammed. In like manner is Zoroaster honored, as the new law-giver to the Iranians. Like the Bible the Zoroasterian religion is messianic and monotheistic. Like the Koran, which Mohammed describes as an "umbrella" religion, embracing Christianity Judaism, Zoroaster's faith embraced those that preceded it. Thus we can see not only the Aryan precepts familiar from the *Rig Veda* but also precepts that are controversial to Biblical scholars, since there are indications suggesting that the Zoroastrian religion may have influenced the Bible. One can also make an argument that the worship of Amon in Egypt influenced the development of the Law of Moses (Moses having been part of the Jews in Egypt in the captivity). Finally, the precepts of the *Avesta*, particularly those having to do with purification by water and the role of fire, serves as a prelude to understanding Celtic rites.

## Selected Scriptures of the *Avesta*:<sup>100</sup>

### **YASNA 0 - Introduction**

(In the name of God)

1. Ashem Vohu (1 & 3).

I profess myself a Mazda-worshipper and a Zoroastrian, opposing the Daevas, accepting the Ahuric doctrine. For Hawan....

2. To Fire, the son of Ahura Mazda. To you, O Fire, son of Ahura Mazda. With propitiation, for worship, adoration, propitiation, and praise.

3. 'Yatha Ahu Vairyo', the zaotar should say to me

'Atha ratush ashatchit hacha', the knowing Ashavan should say.

Ashem Vohu ....

4. I praise good thoughts, good words, and good deeds and those that are to be thought, spoken, and done. I do accept all good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. I do renounce all evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds.

5. I proffer to you, O Amesha Spentas, sacrifice and prayer, with thought, with word, with deed, with [my] being, with the very life of my body.

6. I praise Asha.

Ashem Vohu .

10. I announce (and) carry out (this Yasna) for all those who are the thirty three masters of Asha, which, coming the nearest, are around about Hawan, and which (as in their festivals) were instituted by Ahura Mazda, and were promulgated by Zarathushtra, as the masters of Asha Vahishta.

11. I announce (and) carry out (this Yasna) for the two, for Ahura and Mithra, the lofty, and the everlasting, and the Asha-sanctified, and for all the stars which are Spenta Mainyu's creatures, and for the star Tishtrya, the resplendent and glorious, and for the Moon which contains the seed of the Kine, and for the resplendent Sun, the swift-horsed, the eye of Ahura Mazda, and for Mithra the province ruler. And I celebrate and carry out this Yasna for Ahura Mazda (once again, and as to him who rules the month), the radiant, the glorious, and for the Fravashis of the saints.

12. I announce (and) carry out (this Yasna) for you, O Fire, son of Ahura Mazda, together with all the fires, and for the good waters, even for all the waters made by Mazda, and for all the plants which Mazda made.

### **YASNA 2**

12. With this libation and Baresman I desire for this Yasna you, the Asha-sanctified Atar, the Son of Ahura Mazda, the master of Asha, with all Fires. With this libation and Baresman I desire for this Yasna the good, best, Mazda-made, Asha-sanctified Water. I desire for this Yasna all the Mazda-made Asha-sanctified Waters. I desire for this Yasna all the Mazda-made, Asha-sanctified Plants.

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<sup>100</sup> All quotes from the *Avesta* are from <http://www.avesta.org/yasna/y0to8s.htm>, beginning with the Yasna; the site is based on the translation of L. H. Mills (from *Sacred Books of the East*, American Edition, 1898; digital edition copyright © 1995 by Joseph H. Peterson.)

### **YASNA 3**

2. And I desire to approach Haoma and Para-haoma with my praise for the propitiation of the Fravashi of Spitama Zarathushtra, the saint. And I desire to approach the (sacred) wood with my praise, with the perfume, for the propitiation of thee, the Fire, O Ahura Mazda's son!

3. And I desire to approach the Haomas with my praise for the propitiation of the good waters which Mazda created; and I desire to approach the Haoma-water, and the fresh milk with my praise, and the plant Hadhanaepata, offered with sanctity for the propitiation of the waters which are Mazda-made.<sup>9</sup> And I desire to approach Ushahina, Berejya, and Nmanya with the Yasht of Sraosha (Obedience) the sacred, the holy, who smites with the blow of victory, and makes the settlements advance, and with that of Rashnu, the most just, and Arshat who furthers the settlements, and causes them to increase.

10. And I desire to approach the monthly festivals, the lords of the ritual order, and the new moon and the waning moon, and the full moon which scatters night,

11. And the yearly festivals, Maidhyo-zaremaya, Maidhyo-shema, Paitishahya, and Ayathrima the breeder who spends the strength of males, and Maidhyairya, and Hamaspathmaedhaya, and the seasons, lords of the ritual order,

(12) and all those lords who are the three and thirty, who approach the nearest at the time of Havani, who are the Lords of Asha called Vahishta (and whose services were) inculcated by Mazda, and pronounced by Zarathushtra, as the feasts of Righteousness, the Best.

### **YASNA 4**

8. And we present these hereby to the Day-lords of the ritual order, to Havani, to Savanghi, and to Visya, the holy lords of the ritual order, for sacrifice, homage, propitiation, and for praise, and to Mithra of the wide pastures, and the thousand ears, and the myriad eyes, the Yazad of the spoken name,

9. And to Rapithwina, Fradat-fshu, and Zantuma, the holy lords of the ritual order, and to Righteousness the Best, and to Ahura Mazda's Fire,

10. And to Uzayeirina, Fradat-vira, and Dahvyuma, the holy lords of the ritual order, and to that lofty lord Napat-apam, and to the water Mazda-made,

11. And to Aiwisruthrima, the life-furtherer, and to Fradat-vispam-hujyaiti and Zarathushtrotema, the holy lords of the ritual order, and to the Fravashis of the saints, and to the women who bring forth many sons, and to the Prosperous home-life which endures without reverse throughout the year, and to Force, well-shaped and stately, and to the Blow of victory which Mazda gives, and to the Victorious Ascendency which it secures, for their sacrifice, homage, their propitiation, and their praise,

## **YASNA 7**

2. And I offer the Haoma and Haoma-juice with a complete and sacred offering for the propitiation of the Fravashi of Zarathushtra Spitama the saint, and I offer the wood-billets with the perfume for Thy propitiation, the Fire's, O Ahura Mazda's son!

3. And I offer the Haomas with a complete and sacred offering for propitiation [to the good waters] for the good waters Mazda-made. And I offer this Haoma-water with scrupulous exactness and with sanctity, and this fresh milk, and the plant Hadhanaepata uplifted with a complete and sacred offering for the propitiation of the waters which are Mazda-made.

13. And I offer with a complete and sacred offering to Ahura and Mithra, the lofty and imperishable, and holy two, and to the stars which are the creatures of Spenta Mainyu, and to the star Tishtrya, the radiant, the glorious, and to the Moon which contains the seed of cattle in its beams, and to the resplendent Sun of the fleet horses, the eye of Ahura Mazda, and to Mithra, the lord of the provinces. And I offer with a complete and sacred offering to Ahura Mazda, the resplendent, the glorious, (who rules this day), and to the Fravashis of the saints (who name the month).

## **YASNA 9**

1. At the hour of Havani, Haoma came to Zarathushtra, as he served the (sacred) Fire, and sanctified (its flame), while he sang aloud the Gathas. And Zarathushtra asked him: Who art thou, O honorable one! who art of all the incarnate world the most beautiful in Thine own body of those whom I have, seen, (thou) glorious [immortal]?

2. Thereupon gave Haoma answer, the holy one who driveth death afar: I am, O Zarathushtra Haoma, the holy and driving death afar; pray to me, O Spitama, prepare me for the taste. Praise me so that also the other Saoshyants [benefactors] may praise me.

3. Thereupon spake Zarathushtra: Unto Haoma be the praise. What man, O Haoma! First prepared thee for the corporeal world? What award was offered him? What gain did he acquire?

4. Thereupon did Haoma answer me, he the holy one, and driving death afar: Vivanghvant was the first of men who prepared me for the incarnate world. This award was offered him; this gain did he acquire, that to him was born a son who was Yima, called the brilliant, (he of the many flocks, the most glorious of those yet born, the sunlike-one of men), that he made from his authority both herds and people free from dying, both plants and waters free from drought, and men could eat inexhaustible food.

5. In the reign of brave Yima was there neither cold nor heat, there was neither age nor death, nor envy demon-made. Like teenagers<sup>7</sup> walked the two forth, son and father, in their stature and their form, so long as Yima, son of Vivanghvant ruled, he of the many herds!

12. Who was the fourth man who prepared thee, O Haoma! For the corporeal world? What blessedness was given him? What gain did he acquire?

13. Thereupon gave Haoma answer, he the holy, and driving death afar: Pourushaspa was the fourth man who prepared me for the corporeal world. This blessedness was given him, this gain did he acquire, that thou, O Zarathushtra! wast born to him, the just, in Pourushaspa's house, the Daeva's foe, the friend of Mazda's lore,

(14) famed in Airyana Vaejah; and thou, O Zarathushtra! Didst recite the first the Ahuna-vairya, four times intoning it, and with verses kept apart [(Pazand) each time with louder and still louder voice].

15. And thou didst cause, O Zarathushtra! All the demon-gods to vanish in the ground who aforetime flew about this earth in human shape (and power. This hast thou done), thou who hast been the strongest, and the staunchest, the most active, and the swiftest, and (in every deed) the most victorious in the two spirits' world.

16. Thereupon spake Zarathushtra: Praise to Haoma. Good is Haoma, and the well-endowed, exact and righteous in its nature, and good inherently, and healing, beautiful of form, and good in deed, and most successful in its working, golden-hued, with bending sprouts. As it is the best for drinking, so (through its sacred stimulus) is it the most nutritious for the soul.

30. At the aroused and fearful Dragon, green, and belching forth his poison, for the righteous saint that perishes, yellow Haoma, hurl thy mace!

At the (murderous) bludgeon-bearer, committing deeds unheard of, blood-thirsty, (drunk) with fury, yellow Haoma, hurl thy mace!

31. Against the wicked human tyrant, hurling weapons at the head, for the righteous saint that perishes, yellow Haoma, hurl thy mace!

Against the righteousness-disturber, the unholy life-destroyer, thoughts and words of our religion well-delivering, yet in actions never reaching, for the righteous saint that perishes, yellow Haoma, hurl thy mace!

32. Against the body of the harlot, with her magic minds o'erthrowing with (intoxicating) pleasures, to the lusts her person offering, whose mind as vapor wavers as it flies before the wind, for the righteous saint that perishes, yellow Haoma, hurl thy mace!

#### **YASNA 10**

3. I praise the cloud that waters thee, and the rains which make thee grow on the summits of the mountains; and I praise thy lofty mountains where the Haoma branches spread.

4. This wide earth do I praise, expanded far (with paths), the productive, the full bearing, thy mother, holy plant! Yea, I praise the lands where thou dost grow, sweet-scented, swiftly spreading, the good growth of the Lord. O Haoma, thou growest on the mountains, apart on many paths, and there still may'st thou flourish. The springs of Righteousness most verily thou art, (and the fountains of the ritual find their source in thee)!

5. Grow (then) because I pray to thee on all thy stems and branches, in all thy shoots (and tendrils) increase thou through my word!

6. Haoma grows while he is praised, and the man who praises him is therewith more victorious. The lightest pressure of thee, Haoma, thy feeblest praise, the slightest tasting of thy juice, avails to the thousand-smiting of the Daevas.

7. Wasting doth vanish from that house, and-with it foulness, whither in verity they bear thee, and where thy praise in truth is sung, the drink of Haoma, famed, health-bringing (as thou art). [(Pazand) to his village and abode they bear him.]

8. All other toxicants go hand in hand with Rapine of the bloody spear, but Haoma's stirring power goes hand in hand with friendship. [Light is the drunkenness of Haoma (Pazand).] Who as a tender son caresses Haoma, forth to the bodies of such persons Haoma comes to heal.

9. Of all the healing virtues, Haoma, whereby thou art a healer, grant me some. Of all the

victorious powers, whereby thou art a victor, grant me some. A faithful praiser will I be to thee, O Haoma, and a faithful praiser (is) a better (thing) than Righteousness the Best; so hath the Lord, declaring (it), decreed.

10. Swift and wise hath the well-skilled Deity created thee; swift and wise on high Haraiti did He, the well-skilled, plant thee.

11. And taught (by implanted instinct) on every side, the bounteous birds have carried thee to the Peaks-above-the-eagles, to the mount's extremest summit, to the gorges and abysses, to the heights of many pathways, to the snow-peaks ever whitened.

12. There, Haoma, on the ranges dost thou grow of many kinds. Now thou growest of milky whiteness, and now thou growest golden; and forth thine healing liquors flow for the inspiring of the pious. So terrify away from me the (death's) aim of the curser. So terrify and crush his thought who stands as my maligner.

13. Praise be to thee, O Haoma, (for he makes the poor man's thoughts as great as any of the richest whomsoever.) Praise be to Haoma, (for he makes the poor man's thoughts as great as when mind reacheth culmination.) With manifold retainers dost thou, O Haoma, endow the man who drinks thee mixed with milk; yea, more prosperous thou makest him, and more endowed with mind.

14. Do not vanish from me suddenly like milk-drops in the rain; let thine exhilarations go forth ever vigorous and fresh; and let them come to me with strong effect. Before thee, holy Haoma, thou bearer of the ritual truth, and around thee would I cast this body, a body which (as all) may see (is fit for gift and) grown.

## **YASNA 22**

20. And I desire to approach this Haoma with (my) praise, that which is thus lifted up with sanctity, and this milk (fresh as it is, and as if) living and lifted up with sanctity, and *this plant the Hadhanaepata lifted up* with sanctity.

21. And I desire to approach these Zaothras with (my) praise for the beneficial waters, these Zaothras which have the Haoma with them and the milk with them, and the Hadhanaepata, and which are lifted up with sanctity. And I desire to approach the Haoma-water with (my) praise for the beneficial waters, and the two mortars, the stone one and the iron one,

22. and I desire to, approach this branch for the Baresman with my praise, and the memorized recital and fulfillment of the Mazdayasnian law, and the heard recital of the Gathas, and the well-timed and persistent prayer for blessings (uttered) by the holy lords of the ritual order, and this wood and perfume, even thine, O Fire, Ahura Mazda's son, and all good objects Mazda-made

23. for the propitiation of Ahura Mazda, the resplendent, the glorious, and of the Bountiful Immortals, and of Mithra of the wide pastures, and of Raman Hvastra,

24. and of the resplendent sun, immortal, radiant, of the fleet horses, and of Vayu, (of predominant influence and) working on high, set over the other beings in the creation [(Pazand); that is for thee thus (O Vayu) when thine influence is that which appertains to Spenta Mainyu], and for the propitiation of the most just knowledge Mazda-given, and of the holy and good Religion, the Mazdayasnian Faith;

25. for the propitiation of the Mathra Spenta, (the bounteous) and holy, and the effective, instituted against the Daevas, the Zarathushtrian law, and of the long descent of the good

Mazdayasnian Faith [the holding in mind and devotion to the Mathra Spenta, and knowledge of the Mazdayasnian Religion] for the propitiation of the understanding which is innate and Mazda-made, and of that which is heard by the ear;

26. and for thy propitiation, *the Fire's, O Ahura Mazda's son!* [(Pazand); (yea) thine, the Fire's, O Ahura Mazda's son] with all the fires, and for the propitiation of Mount Ushi-darena, the Mazda-made, radiant with sanctity; and of all the holy Yazads, spiritual and earthly, and of the holy Fravashis, the redoubted and overwhelming, those of the ancient lore, and those of the next of kin and of the Yazad of the spoken name!

The *Avesta* confirms what the *Rig Veda* says about the manufacture of Soma, that it is collected in the mountains, it has stalks and branches, it is yellow in color, and it is mixed with milk. Also, the *Avesta* differentiates Hoama (Soma) from other liquors since it makes one "more endowed in mind." Alcohol, of course, has a sedative effect. It may be that ancestors of the Persians traded in the Soma plant with the Aryans of the Indus Valley.

The Mitanni gods being related to the gods of the *Rig Veda* have been a cause of scholastic speculation that the Indo-Europeans migrated from India to Europe, rather than from the steppes above the Black Sea to India. The invocation of the Nasatyas (Asvins in the *Rig Veda*) is particularly interesting since they are mysterious even today. In the *Rig Veda* they are the third aspect to be addressed: following Agni (fire) and Vayu (the god of wind). After the Asvins are propitiated Indra is addressed. Then follow the rest of the gods (Visvedevas). While Indra had a chariot with what appears to be two wheels, the Sun (Surya) drove a one-wheeled chariot; but Dawn drove a two-wheeled chariot. The Asvins drove an unusual chariot that had three wheels, with one wheel in front. It may be that the chariots mentioned in the early stages of the composition of the *Rig Veda* had four wheels, since the initial hymns refer to axels. The earliest use of wheels was no doubt in four-wheeled wagons.

## Zoroastrian worship of Ahura Mazda, fire, Hoama & Mithra:

### ***Avesta, YASNA 16***

3. And we worship the former religions of the world devoted to Righteousness which were instituted at the creation, the holy religions of the Creator Ahura Mazda, the resplendent and glorious. And we worship Vohu Manah (the Good Mind), and Asha Vahishta (who is Righteousness the Best), and Khshathra-vairya, the Kingdom to be desired, and the good and bountiful Armaiti (true piety in the believers), and Haurvatat and Ameretat (our Weal and Immortality).

4. Yea, we worship the Creator Ahura Mazda and the Fire, Ahura Mazda's son, and the good waters which are Mazda-made and holy, and the resplendent sun of the swift horses, and the moon with the seed of cattle (in his beams); and we worship the star Tishtrya, the lustrous and glorious; and we worship the soul of the Kine of blessed endowment,

5. and its Creator Ahura Mazda; and *we worship Mithra of the wide pastures*, and Sraosha (Obedience) the blessed, and Rashnu the most just, and the good, heroic, bountiful Fravashis of the saints, and the Blow-of-victory Ahura-given (as it is). And we worship Raman Hvasra, and the bounteous Wind of blessed gift,

6 and (its) Creator Ahura Mazda, and the good Mazdayasnian Religion, and the good Blessedness and Arshtat. And we worship the heaven and the earth of blessed gift, and the bounteous Mathra, and the stars without beginning (to their course), self-disposing as they are.

7. And we worship the glorious works of Righteousness in which the souls of the dead find satisfaction and delight [(Pazand) which are the Fravashis of the saints], and we worship (Heaven) the best world of the saints, shining, all glorious.

8. And we worship the two, the milk-offering and the libation, the two which cause the waters to flow forth, and the plants to flourish, the two foes who meet the Dragon demon-made; and who are set to meet, to defeat, and to put to flight, that cheat, the Pairika, and to contradict the insulting malice of the Ashemaogha (the persecuting heretic) and that of the unholy tyrant full of death.

9. And we worship all waters and all plants, and all good men and all good women. And we worship all these Yazads, heavenly and earthly, who are beneficent and holy.

### **YASNA 42**

4. And we worship the Good Mind (in the living) and the spirits of the saints. And we sacrifice to the fish of fifty-fins, and to that sacred beast the Unicorn (?) which stands in Vouru-kasha, and we sacrifice to that sea of Vouru-kasha where he stands,

5. and to the Haoma, golden-flowered, growing on the heights; yea, to the Haoma that restores us, and aids this world's advance. We sacrifice to Haoma that driveth death afar,

6. and to the flood-streams of the waters, and to the great flights of the birds, and to the approaches of the Fire-priests, as they approach us from afar, and seek to gain the provinces, and spread the ritual lore. And we sacrifice to the Bountiful Immortals all!

### **YASNA 30**

1. Now I will proclaim to those who will hear the things that the understanding man should remember, for hymns unto Ahura and prayers to Good Thought; also the felicity that is with the heavenly lights, which through Right shall be beheld by him who wisely thinks.
2. Hear with your ears the best things; look upon them with clear-seeing thought, for decision between the two Beliefs, each man for himself before the Great consummation, bethinking you that it be accomplished to our pleasure.
3. Now the two primal Spirits, who reveal themselves in vision as Twins, are the Better and the Bad, in thought and word and action. And between these two the wise ones chose aright, the foolish not so.
4. And when these twain Spirits came together in the beginning, they created Life and Not-Life, and that at the last Worst Existence shall be to the followers of the Lie, but the Best Existence to him that follows Right.
5. Of these twain Spirits he that followed the Lie chose doing the worst things; the holiest Spirit chose Right, he that clothes him with the massy heavens as a garment. So likewise they that are fain to please Ahura Mazda by dutiful actions.
6. Between these twain the Daevas also chose not aright, for infatuation came upon them as they took counsel together, so that they chose the Worst Thought. Then they rushed together to Violence, that they might enfeeble the world of men.
7. And to him (i.e. mankind) came Dominion, and Good Mind, and Right and Piety gave continued life to their bodies and indestructibility, so that by thy retributions through (molten) metal he may gain the prize over the others.
8. So when there cometh their punishment for their sins, then, O Mazda, at Thy command shall Good Thought establish the Dominion in the Consummation, for those who deliver the Lie, O Ahura, into the hands of Right.
9. So may we be those that make this world advance, O Mazda and ye other Ahuras, come hither, vouchsafing (to us) admission into your company and Asha, in order that (our) thought may gather together while reason is still shaky.
10. Then truly on the (world of) Lie shall come the destruction of delight; but they who get themselves good name shall be partakers in the promised reward in the fair abode of Good Thought, of Mazda, and of Right.
11. If, O ye mortals, ye mark those commandments which Mazda hath ordained — of happiness and pain, the long punishment for the follower of the Druj, and blessings for the followers of the Right then hereafter shall it be well.

## The Divine Twins

The precept of the Divine Twins is inherent in the Indo-European, Mesopotamian and Egyptian mythologies. In ancient Akkadian myths we have Enlil and Enki and the twin of Gilgamesh, Enki, in the Gilgamesh Epic; and these record a vegetation theme of rebirth. In Egypt the Divine Twins that record this story are Osiris and Set. Set is the image of the desert, the consuming dragon, that plots to destroy his brother Osiris, who is reborn. In the Bible the struggle is described as between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, and this struggle also results in the celebration of rebirth. The struggle between these two competing spirits, of truth and lying, is seen in the *Rig Veda* and the *Avesta* as well. All things considered, one swears by the Spirit of Truth and defies the Spirit of Lying, and just as this is what is expected of man by the gods of heaven, so is it under their auspices that the expectations of man are honored. Just as one seeks righteousness with the gods (or God), one extends that righteousness to his fellow-man — who honors the truth and righteousness (doing according to the truth). As we saw in the *Rig Veda*, those who are not of the truth are "faithless." They worship the wrong god(s).

Treaties are an extension of the *Divine Banquet*: the Sacrifice and Ritual in homage to the gods. The record of 1,380 B.C., *Treaty of Mitanni*, is remembering the names of Gods who enforce covenants. You swear by them. The relationship that such specific gods had to treaties can be seen in the [Hittite Treaties.html](#), which provides some documents that show how important specific gods were to treaties ~1,400 B.C. and earlier. The Hittite Storm-god, like Indra, reigned supreme in their covenants. Indra, through his thunder-and-lightning-bolts, had the power to enforce an agreement. Along with him were Mithra and Varuna, two together who in the *Rig Veda* are keepers of covenants. The sun, Surya, is their eye.

### ***Rig Veda, Book VII, LX Mitra-Varuna***

2. ...Guardian of all things fixt, of all that moveth, beholding good and evil acts of mortals.
3. He from their home hath yoked the Seven gold Coursers who, dropping oil and fatness, carry Surya.  
Yours, Varuna and Mitra, he surveyeth the worlds and living creatures like a herdsman.

### ***Rig Veda, Book VII, LXVI Mitra-Varuna***

7. Soon as the Sun hath risen, to you, to Mitra-Varuna, I sing,  
And Aryaman who slays the foe.
10. Many are they who strengthen Law,  
Sun-eyed, with Agni for their tongue,  
They who direct the three great gather-

ings with their thoughts, yea, all things  
with surpassing might.

11. They who have established year and month  
and then the day, night, sacrifice and  
holy verse,  
Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, the Kings,  
have won dominion which none else  
may gain.

13. True to Law, born in Law, the strengtheners  
of Law, terrible, haters of the false,  
In their felicity which gives the best  
defence may we men and our princes dwell.

Since we can see a common bond in contracts between Mitra-Varuna, it remains for us, knowing that Varuna is the representative of heaven and with Mitra the Calendar is maintained, it leaves us to pursue the identity of Mitra / Mithra:

Before Zoroaster (6th century BC or earlier), the Iranians had a polytheistic religion, and Mithra was the most important of their gods. First of all, he was the god of contract and mutual obligation. In a cuneiform tablet of the 15th century BC that contains a treaty between the Hittites and the Mitanni, Mithra is invoked as the god of oath. Furthermore, in some Indian Vedic texts the god Mitra (the Indian form of Mithra) appears both as "friend" and as "contract." The word mitra may be translated in either way, because contracts and mutual obligation make friends. In short, Mithra may signify any kind of communication between men and whatever establishes good relations between them. Mithra was called the Mediator. Mithra was also the god of the sun, of the shining light that beholds everything, and, hence, was invoked in oaths. The Greeks and Romans considered Mithra as a sun god. He was probably also the god of kings. He was the god of mutual obligation between the king and his warriors,

and, hence, the god of war. He was also the god of justice, which was guaranteed by the king. Whenever men observed justice and contract, they venerated Mithra.

The most important Mithraic ceremony was the sacrifice of the bull. Opinion is divided as to whether this ceremony was pre-Zoroastrian or not. Zoroaster denounced the sacrifice of the bull, so it seems likely that the ceremony was a part of the old Iranian paganism. This inference is corroborated by an Indian text in which Mitra reluctantly participates in the sacrifice of a god named Soma, who often appears in the shape of a white bull or of the moon. On the Roman monuments, Mithra reluctantly sacrifices the white bull, who is then transformed into the

moon. This detailed parallel seems to prove that the sacrifice must have been pre-Zoroastrian. Contract and sacrifice are connected, since treaties in ancient times were sanctioned by a common meal.

A view of a divine bull is on the base of the Celtic Gundestrup bowl. On his forehead is a sign that



looks like the swastika, a universal sign for good luck, but as the "Indian Sign" found among the American Indians, running in reverse. It looks more like the Ying-Yang sign, however. Above the bull is a god holding a dog on a leash. The bull has kicked a dog and beyond it is a horse. This scene is about a divine battle. It may be a creation scene, showing how the divine bull, the sun, kicked the earth and scattered life. The scene looks like a scattering of life, and the sign on the forehead of the bull rotates counter-clockwise, the same direction in which the animals are rotating on the base of the cauldron. Following this point of view, one might guess that the direction in which the scenes on the side of the bowl would be read would be counter-clockwise.

Nasatyas (Asvins) might be the Divine Twins. In Greek Mythology the Divine Twins are the Dioscuri, sons of Tyndareüs, king of Sparta, and his wife Leda, daughter of Thestius. (9) <sup>101</sup>This is the same divine couple that produced Helen of Troy. This is another version to the common cattle-raid," cousin against cousin" theme of the *Mahabharata* and *The Tain*. The Dioscuri, Castor (Etruscan (Castor) and Pollux (Etruscan Poltucei; Greek Polydeuces), were sons of Zeus. They accompanied the Argonauts in their youth, were part of the Calydonian Bear hunt, and were later involved in a series of abductions, the first involving the daughters of Tyndareüs' brother, Leucippus. (8) Their names were Phoebe and Hiläeira. Later they and their cousins, Lynceus and Idas, went on a joint raid for some Aradian cattle, and in the division of the spoils the two cousins tricked the Dioscuri and made off with the cattle to their town of Messina. Realizing that they had been tricked, the Dioscuri recovered the cattle and started back to Sparta, pursued by Lynceus and Idas. Lynceus had fabulous powers of vision and spied the Dioscuri hiding in the hollow of an oak tree, either for shelter or intending to ambush the pursuers. In the ensuing battle Idas killed Castor with a spear and Polydeuces killed Lynceus near the tomb of their father, Aphareus.

Idas attempted to throw the tombstone at Polydeuces, but Zeus came to his son's rescue and killed Idas with a thunderbolt. Though he was saved, Polydeuces begged Zeus to allow him to share his brother's immortality and in granting the request Zeus provided that the two would alternate their days between Olympus and Hades. Later they became the constellation, Gemini. They became guardians of Mariners and appeared to ships in the form of St. Elmo's fire. Two balls signified the Dioscuri and one ball signified Helen, according to Pliny (*Natural History* 2.101). The Celtic twins appear to be Dylan Eli Ton, a god of the Sea, Son of the Wave. He was the yellow-haired son to Aranrhod and twin to Lleu. (Lug in Irish), meaning, "bright, shining." In *The Mabinogion* in the story of Math, son of Mathonwy, Math sent for his niece, Aranrhod, meaning, "silver wheel," daughter of the goddess Don, whom Gwydyon said he wanted to marry. When Aranrhod came to him Math asked if she was a virgin. "I do not know that I am," the girl replied. Math took out his wand and bent it, saying, "Step over that, and if you are a virgin I will know." Aranrhod stepped over the wand, and with that step she dropped a sturdy boy with thick yellow hair. Gwydyon immediately hid the boy in a chest until Math, who named him Dylan, son of Ton, decided it was time for him to be baptized.

The boy, called, Dylan, son of Ton (Dylan: sea; Ton: wave) took on his nature when he came to the sea

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<sup>101</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, points out that while the Egyptian pantheon resembles the Greek pantheon, the Dioscuri are the exception to the rule and are not worshipped by the Egyptians. Herodotus, *The Histories*, Book 2.L. In fact, the names of nearly all the gods came to Hellas from Egypt. For I am convinced by inquiry that they have come from foreign parts, and I believe that they came chiefly from Egypt. [2] Except the names of Poseidon and the Dioscuri, as I have already said, and Hera, and Hestia, and Themis, and the Graces, and the Nereids, the names of all the gods have always existed in Egypt.

and swam as well as the best fish. No wave ever broke beneath him. The blow that finally killed him was struck by his uncle Govannon (Goibniu), the blacksmith of the Irish gods. One day Gwydyon heard a cry from the foot of his bed and opened the chest that hid Dylan and found another boy in it. The boy grew quickly and by the end of the second year he was a big boy who could go to the court by himself. One day he and the boy were out walking and came across Aranrhod, who inquired about the boy. Gwydyon told her that the boy was hers and that the boy did not have a name. She got angry because he had hid the boy from her, that he was cursed until she names him, and he retorted that she was probably angry because she was not a virgin. Gwydyon and the boy were later in the harbor aboard ship, under a spell which disguised them, making shoes when they received a request to make shoes for Aranrhod. They kept sending the wrong size to her; finally when she came aboard ship to have her feet measured directly by the boy, a wren alighted nearby and he struck it with an arrow between the sinew and the bone of the leg. She laughed, 'God knows, the light-haired one hit it with a skilful hand.' "that he did," said Gwydyon, 'and God's curse upon you. The lad has got a name, and a good enough one: Lleu Skilful Hand he shall be from no on.'

His skills in all things were unexcelled and, above all, there was no one nor any device — except one — that could kill Lleu. We learn about that when it is time for Lleu to marry, and the beautiful lassie Blodeuedd was conjured up for him. But she was a bit racy and started carousing with Goronwy and the two illicit lovers decided to do away with Lleu. Blodeuedd told her lover that she would find out from Lleu exactly how to kill him (since he would tell her anything she asks). And he told her, "But unless God strikes me down, it will not be easy for anyone to kill me." 'Then for God's sake and mine, tell me how you can be killed, for my memory is a better safeguard than yours." she said. 'Gladly. It will not be easy for anyone to strike me, since he would have to spend a year working on the spear, and no work may be done except when people are at Mass on Sundays.' 'Are you certain of that?' 'I am. I cannot be killed indoors or out of doors, on horse or on foot.' 'Then how can you be killed?' I will tell you. Make a bath for me on a river bank, with a good snugly thatched roof over the tub; then bring a buck goat and put it alongside the tub. If I put one foot on the goat's back and the other on the edge of the tub, whoever struck me then would bring about my death.' 'Well, I thank God for that,' she said, 'for this can be easily avoided.'

The day came when Goronwy and Blodeuedd were to complete their evil deed. And after bringing a goat from a flock of animals near the hut built especially for the purpose, Goronwy from the adjacent ridge threw a poisoned spear, just as Blodeuedd had Lleu planting his foot on the back of the goat. When the spear struck him, Lleu changed rose up, as an eagle, gave a horrible scream, and was never seen again. But one day Gwydyon, in pursuit of a sow that kept disappearing on him, found it eating rotten flesh and maggots that were falling from the top of a tree where an eagle was. Whenever the eagle shook rotten flesh fell away and the sow would eat. Gwydyon thought that the eagle was Lleu, so he sang this englyn:

An oak grows between two lakes,  
Dark sky and glen.  
If I speak truly  
This comes from Lleu's feathers.

At that the eagle dropped into the middle of the tree. Gwydyon then sang another englyn:

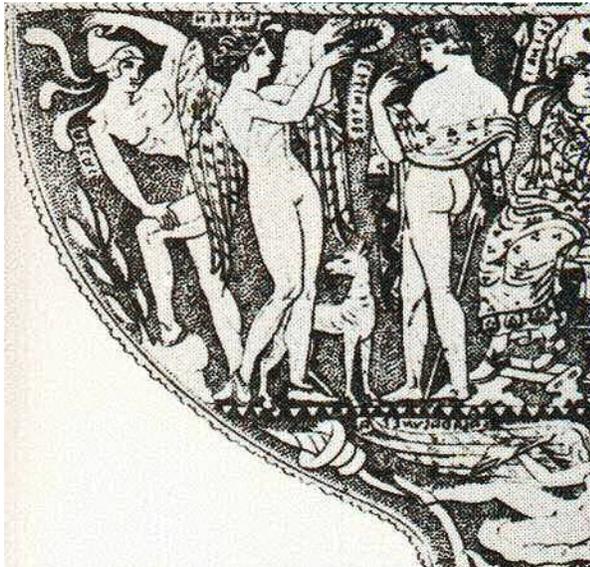
An oak grows on a high plain;  
Rain soaks it no more than does putrefaction.

It has supported twenty crafts.  
In its branches is Lleu Skilful Hand.

At that the eagle dropped down into the lowest branch of the tree, and Gwydyon sang still another englyn:

An oak grows on a slope,  
The refuge of a handsome prince.  
If I speak truly  
Lleu will come to my lap.

At that the eagle dropped down onto Gwydyon's knee, and Gwydyon struck him with his magic wand so that he regained human form. He was skin and bones, but before the year was out he was cured. Then it was time to receive compensation for the ill done to him. He chased down Blodeuwedd (meaning "flower face" from the flower of the oak) and changed her into a bird; some say it was an owl. Goronwy was given the option to suffer the same fate he served Lleu. At first looked for a standin, but no one volunteered. Finally, at the place where Lleu would cast the spear, Goronwy asked if they could



place a standing stone between him and Lleu. Lleu agreed and then cast the spear. It went right through the stone and broke Goronwy's back. The stone still stands on the bank of Avon Gynvael in Ardudwy, with the spear through it, and so it is called Llech Oronwy (stone of Goronwy).

The other twins in Indo-European mythology tend to be brother and sister. Apollo and Artemis (Etruscan Aplo and Artumes). Apollo travelled to Delphi in his youth and there killed a large serpent (or dragon). From that time an oracle emerged from the sacred site. It was this site and the treasures stored for the Pithian oracle that the Celts raided in 279 B.C. Apollo was considered to be one of the major gods of the Celts, along with Cernunnos and Mercury. Artemis is the goddess of the hunt (Roman, Diana). However, we

see another huntress, *Mean*, shown in the [Divine Mirror.html](#), crowning *Elchintre* (Alexander, Alexandros, Paris).

On the other side of him, seated in the throne of Sparta, is *Elinei*, Helen of Troy, who is bargaining with Achmemnon (Agamemnon). See the entire scene on the [Divine Mirror.html](#).

The Trojan War is a story of offences against the gods by mortals and their punishment by the gods. Artemis, who is believed to be an Asian fertility goddess, was by nature quite jealous. One day Agamemnon said out of hand that he could shoot better than Artemis, and this infuriated her, and as a reprisal she demanded that before Agamemnon launches his attack on Troy he must sacrifice his daughter Iphigina. (10) There was more bad news to come, this time from Aphrodite, who happened to be with Athena and Hera, all admiring themselves in a mirror, and Paris happened upon them. They asked him who was the most beautiful of the three, and he answered (the event being called, "The Judgment of Paris") that Aphrodite was the most beautiful. This caused Hera to take the side of the

Greeks against the Trojans in the Trojan War. (In the Etruscan Divine Mirror it is Mean who places the laurel on Alexander's — Etruscan, Elchintre — head.)

In reward for his judgment Aphrodite awarded Paris (Alexander) with the promise that he would wed the most beautiful woman in the world. That turned out to be Helen, and Aphrodite did not tell him in her blessing that when he was invited to the house of Menelaüs, husband of Helen, Queen of Sparta, he would fall in love with her. Menelaüs had to leave to attend his grandfather's funeral in Crete, leaving Paris with his wife and her cousins the Dioscuri. Paris fell in love with Helen and after a few weeks or so abducted her, along with the treasures from the house, and took her to Troy. In any event, the animal next to *Mean's* left leg is hoofed, suggesting a deer; in which case she would be like the Greek Artemis, Roman Diana.

The Celtic Apollo is Belenus ("The shining one."), later known as Beli Mawr, the Continental Sun-god of the Celts. This is found as an epithet used in parts of Gaul, North Italy and Noricum (part of Austria). He is a healer, associated with healing springs and the healing power of the sun. With a cult from northern Italy through Gaul and Britain, he is responsible for the welfare of sheep and cattle. His fire festival may be Beltine ("Fire of Bel"), celebrated May 1. On this day purifying fires were lit between which cattle were driven before they were put out to pasture.

Apollo is worshiped as a Sun-god and equated with the ancient Helios of Asia. It may be that the Celtic Belenus is maintaining that vision of him. He is identified with fire, as was Agni in the *Rig Veda*. Interestingly, Agni is not cited as one of the protective gods in the Treaty of Mitanni who were Indra, Mithras and Varuna. One of the twin Nasatyas may have evolved into Apollo.

## The Mabinogion

The rites in the *Rig Veda* were chanted, with the participants facing east — during the dawn feast — led by Brahmins, who were priests, choral leaders and bards. Through the *Rig Veda* one can piece together an assembly which took place three times a day that included local functionaries, seven principal assistants, a corral of beasts brought for the sacrifice (or feast), and the people arranged around a fire altar in a circle. Eastward of the altar was a post to which the sacrificial victim was tied. The ceremony was held inside a hall which had two doors at least on either side (one for the dawn, the other for the sunset). The fire altar would have to have been located in the center of the hall to accommodate both needs. Near the fire altar was placed at least one large wooden vat containing Soma, and nearby the altar were also the Soma makers who were placed on an ox-hide with their two grinding-stones. Some kind of catchment arrangement had to be made to gather the dripping Soma juice pounded from the Soma plant. Thus, one can conceive that the Soma manufacturing could have been atop a platform down to which flowed the Soma from the grinding-stones. The *Rig Veda* depicts the Soma as a flowing stream, often compared to the rivers. From the bowls that caught the flowing juice the assistants would dip or pour, using ladles, the Soma into the filtering cloth raised over a beaker. At that time milk would be mixed with the juice, and the filtered contents of the beaker would be poured into the wooden vat where they would ferment mixed with curds, honey and barley. From the vat the assistants would serve, using beakers, the Soma to the guests and ladle some of it on the fire, perhaps serving Agni first, then the god Indra. After serving the Soma to the gods invited to the ceremony, among the first after Indra would necessarily have been the goddess of the dawn, then Surya the sun-god, there would have been the serving of the meats, including goats, sheep, cattle and probably for each ceremony a [red] bull. I suspect that on special occasions, such as an equinox, horses would be sacrificed. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* the equinox is:

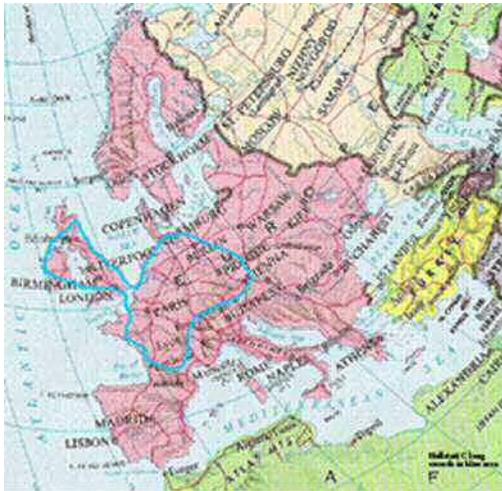
"....either of the two moments in the year when the Sun is exactly above the equator and day and night are of equal length; also, either of the two points in the sky where the ecliptic (the Sun's annual pathway) and the celestial equator intersect. The vernal equinox, marking the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, occurs about March 21, when the Sun moves north across the celestial equator. The autumnal equinox falls about September 23, as the Sun crosses the celestial equator going south. Some astronomical coordinates — e.g., right ascension and celestial longitude—are measured from the vernal equinox. It is sometimes called the first point of Aries because it was at the beginning of that constellation some 2,000 years ago. The term is still used, though precession of the equinoxes has moved the vernal equinox into Pisces."

Near the fire-altar would be the sacrificial altar where the beasts would be slaughtered. That altar would be in a place where the flow of the blood from the sacrifice would be collected. We can compare this view to what appears to have taken place on the island of Malta, and, of course, Celtic megalithic monuments such as Stonehenge. Among the several Maltese temples only one, it appears, to have been directly aligned with the equinox: the temple of Mnajdra. Of interest is the fact that in the Tarxien temple complex are stone carvings that are of goats, sheep, a pig, and bulls. The Mnajdra and Tarxien temples have multiple altars, including altars appearing to be for animal sacrifice. The purpose of the other altars is unknown. A salient feature of the temples includes large stone bowels. To view the large bowl or cauldron from a good site on the Maltese temples go to: <http://www.art-and-archaeology.com/malta/ta16.html>.

It appears from these structures that part of the ritual within the Maltese temples included the pouring of libations, the cauldrons were located near altars, and associated with the pouring of the libations was an hearth. To the fire was probably served libations and meat. Associated with the structures are meanders, plant designs ending in a meander, and one altar whose base had a tree carved upon it. Among the sites on Malta is also the Hypogeum, an underground sanctuary with many chambers and several levels. One chamber had the plant design motif replicated on the ceiling. The design looks like algae. Celts (the Irish) to this day use algae for food and also as fertilizer for their windswept, rocky fields.

We don't imply that the people who built the temples of Malta (dating as early as 4,000 BC.) were related to the Celts, but to question whether there was an underlying belief structure and technology common to the Celts and the Maltese temples. Stonehenge, in Somerset, England, and the Maltese

temples in fact date from the same period. We know that whoever built Stonehenge and related megaliths in Britain and the Continent (Brittany), left their structures to the current occupants of the land: the Celts.



The Greek historians Hecateus of Miletus (c. 500-476 B.C.) and Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c. 490-425 B.C.) were the first to record the Celts, calling them Keltoi, with their place of origin at the headwaters of the Danube, the Rhine and the Rhône. During this period of time there was a culture that lived within this area, called the Hallstatt (~1,200-500 B.C.). The Hallstatt culture is divided into four periods: Hallstatt A & B correspond to 1,200-800 B.C.; Hallstatt C, an early iron age phase, refers to 800-600 B.C.; and Hallstatt D refers to 600-500 B.C. ~500 B.C. The community located at Hallstatt itself abandoned the area

in favor of mining the salt at Hallein, a place near modern Salzburg, Austria; the abandonment of the area may also have been due to a landslide. The main area of the Hallstatt culture was on the northern side of the Alps, from France through Austria. Trade or copying of Hallstatt goods occurred, however, in an area outlined in blue in the adjacent map. This map is based upon a map in Barry Cunliffe's *The Ancient Celts*, Oxford University Press, 1997, covering the distribution of the popular bronze Gundlingen sword.

Continuing and improving upon the Hallstatt culture was the La Tène culture, which flowered c. 400-200 B.C. spreading to Cadiz, Spain, into Northern Italy with a center at Milan, and east across the

Carpathian Mountains to Dacia. About 279 B.C. the Celts raided Delphi and carried off the treasure, storing it in Toulouse, France. They crossed the Bosphorus and settled in Central Turkey, where their territory was called Galatia. In 74 B.C. the powerful ruler of Galatia, Deiotaros, made an alliance with Rome against some of the surrounding Greek states. He took sides with the Roman general Pompey and later took Mark Anthony's side in the Roman Civil War. After Deiotaros died the Romans converted Galatia into an official province of the Roman Empire. The area was speaking Gaelic during the times of St. Jerome in the fourth century A.D. One of the epistles of St. Paul was addressed to the Galatians.

The Celts were well known for their military prowess and were used as mercenaries by the Romans and others. Some Celts hired themselves out to the pharaoh of Egypt in 186 B.C. Whatever the Celts recorded as to their origins and history or historians have accounted to them has been nominal information. The Celtic version of the *Rig Veda*, for instance, has been lost, though we know that in the circulation of their tribes across most of Europe their language and culture survived. After Julius Caesar conquered Britain, there was religious persecution of the Celts. For instance their holy site, a grove on the island of Anglesey (Mona), was destroyed by Suctonius Paulinus about 61 A.D. The Celtic tradition, like the Vedic, was based upon memorization of the sacred scriptures and stories, and these were carried on by Druids, the Celtic equivalent of the Brahmins. The literature of the Celts that did survive is owed to the fact that around 1,100-1,200 A.D. there was a revival of all things Celtic in Britain and Ireland, perhaps from the Celtic occupation of illuminating books, and the bards began to record that which they could gather together at the time. Some of these works, such as the Irish cattle-raid, *The Tain*, and the Anglo-Saxon adventure of *Boewulf*, have already been discussed.

The Celts were horsed, Indo-European warriors. They were also a people who navigated the sea, crossing from the Continent to Britain and Ireland in boats generally covered with animal skins. Whatever the structure of the ancient boats, we know they were large enough and strong enough to carry livestock, including horses. When that first took place is anyone's guess. The Celtic literature dates itself to iron-age memories, and many of them are suffused with "Christian" characterizations. The gods are barely remembered and if anything at all converted to heroes. This happened in the *Iliad*, as well, but in the opposite vein, where heroes, like Hercules, were deified. As a result of Christian suppression of Celtic religion, no doubt throughout the Roman empire, the Celtic pantheon — which may have been around 33 in number as in the case of the *Rig Veda* — became transformed in the memories of the Bards. The gods Llyr, the god of the sea, Lug, Bran and Brigit became heroes; Druidesses and some women — who led armies and were foster-parents of heroes — became known as witches. To utter their names would condemn one to hell. Other characters were changed into fairies and goblins and a god that was a cobbler became a leprechaun. The extent to which the Celtic religion was suppressed is brought home when we realize that only 300 years ago in the United States 150 women were rounded up and brought to trial for witchcraft: From May–October 1692, a series of investigations and persecutions resulted in 19 convicted “witches” to be hanged and many other suspects to be imprisoned in the town of Salem in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In spite of the wide distribution of the Celts, the only pockets of these feared and praised people that did hold onto the Celtic tradition were the Irish, Scots, the Welsh and the people of Brittany.

*The Mabinogion* is one such work that survived from Wales, and parts of it survived in a modified form in Ireland. The Welsh word *mab* means "boy" and the translation of Lady Charlotte concluded that mabinogi was a noun meaning, "a story for children." The word *mabinogion*, however, does not exist in Welsh. Like *The Tain* it is a wonderful story fit for all ages, and one of the mechanisms of the story-tellers, or bards, was the fact that every story seemed to always drift into a reality where it was being

told by men sitting around a hall, each man eager to hear another story and perhaps each attempting to better the other's story.

Each story of the Mabinogion ends with a phrase, "With that this Branch of the Mabinogi ends." For the stories are like a family history, on the order of the Mahabharata, but more disjointed. The stories are related because they are about relatives and the relatives take on characterizations that are in reality gods. Bran, for instance, we find as he crosses from Wales to Ireland to reclaim Branwen the daughter of King Llyr, is a giant. He is too big to fit in a ship, so he wades across to Ireland in front of his great fleet of ships. A person sitting on land sees a mountain with two lakes appear on the sea, and around the mountain are tall trees. When he reports of the vision it turns out that the two lakes were Bran's eyes and his head was the mountain. The trees were the masts of the ships. So that is how Bran first appeared on the horizon as he crossed the Irish Sea. Once the fleet arrived in Ireland there was a problem on how to cross the river estuary and Bran offered to stretch across the river (near Dublin) so that his army could cross the river using him as a bridge: "...said Bran, let him who is a chief be a bridge. (This is the first time these words were spoken, and the proverb is still current.)"<sup>102</sup>

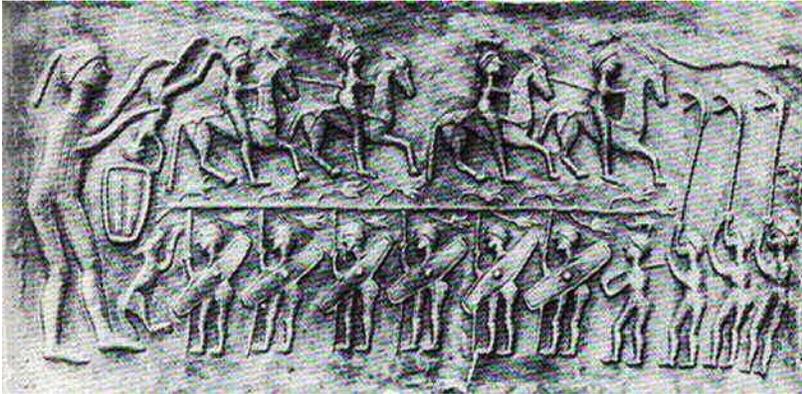
Bran was received by the king of Ireland and they offered to provide him quarters, but Bran was too big to fit in a house. So the king had a special house built in which he would fit, but in the building rows of pegs were placed on the walls where soldiers were hung, hidden in sacks. When Bran would lay down to sleep the armed men would jump out of the sacks and massacre everyone in the house. But their plot was foiled by Ebnissyen who put his hand in each sack, finding instead of flour a man's head and crushing it. He killed all 200 of the men thus hidden away. After this the Irish and Bran's company made peace. Following this Ebnissyen took it upon himself to take the lad Gwern by the feet and throw him into the fire. He was the son of the lovely Branwen. Being shocked, all in the room were in the greatest commotion, causing Bran to reach for Branwen and drag her between his shoulder and his shield, fending off the men. Then this happened:

"The Irish, however, began to kindle a fire under the cauldron of rebirth; corpses were thrown in until it was full, and next morning the warriors sprang forth as fierce as ever, except that they could not speak. When Ebnissyen saw these corpses and no room anywhere in the cauldron for the men of the Island of the Mighty (Britain), he thought, 'Alas, God, wretched am I who brought this about on the men of the Island of the Mighty, and shame on me if I do not seek to deliver them.' He crept in among the Irish dead, and two bare-bottomed Irishmen found him and threw him in with the rest; Ebnissyen stretched out inside the cauldron until he broke it into four pieces, and then his heart broke also. Consequently such victory as there was went to the men of the Island of the Mighty, though there was no victory save for the escape of seven men, and at that Bran had been wounded in the foot with a poisoned spear. The seven who escaped were Pryderi, Manawydan, Glinyeu son of Taran, Talyessin, Ynawg, Gruddyeu son of Muryel and Heilyn son of Gwynn the Old. Bran commanded them to cut off his head. 'Take my head,' he said, 'and carry it to the White Hill in London, and bury it there with the face turned towards

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<sup>102</sup> *The Mabinogion*, translated by Jeffrey Gantz, Penguin Classics, 1976. *Branwen Daughter of Llyr*, p. 76. The parenthetical quote is part of the story, and shows how the story-teller was passing on his parenthetical thought, how the proverb began.

France. You will be a long time on the road...and the head will be as good a companion as it ever was.."<sup>103</sup>



The Celtic bards did have a charm about them (and still do). Here we show a view from the Gundestrop Cauldron that shows from a German point of view the cauldron of rebirth. This panel is on the inside of the cauldron which itself was broken in pieces and thrown into a sacred well. We have already examined the image of Cernunnos

on this cauldron and compared it to the three-faced god on the Indus Valley seals. On the bottom of the cauldron is an image of a bull. Other images are on the cauldron suggesting that the entire cauldron has to do with rebirth.

The making of mead, or meath, is part of the central ceremony of the Indo-European sacred rites. Inherent in the rites is the worship of a sun-god, and an attribute of the sun-god is a wheel. A wheel, of course, could not have been part of the characterization prior to the invention of the chariot and harnessing of the horse. So the image, in the case of the Celts, of Cernunnos with a wheel over his head pretty well dates the age of that god: when he acquired the symbol of a wheel and association of the horse.

Among the myths about the British is that of the Hyperboreans who lived in the far distant north and once a year would send their messages to the oracle of Delphi wrapped in sheaves of grain. Hecataeus, who wrote in the sixth century B.C., is quoted by Diodorus who reported that the Hyperboreans lived on a large island in the ocean facing the country of the Celts. There, in their magnificent circular temple they worshipped the sun god.

Hecataeus may be repeating something passed down through memory from the Mycenaeans. It is noteworthy that some of the large stones of Stonehenge have carvings of Mycenaean daggers on them. Colin Burgess, *The Age of Stonehenge*, J. M. Dent, Great Britain, 1980, notes that the carvings were added long after Stonehenge was built. He also notes — which we will explore in more detail later — that the culture that built Stonehenge c. 4,000 B.C. was rather stable for a thousand years. Then there was a change involving the "beaker people" a people who practiced cremation and who persevered until about 1,500 B.C. But in 1,200 B.C. there was a major change which involved a hill-fort culture that continued down to the Roman occupation. In 1,200 B.C. hill forts were built in western France and they spilled across the channel to Britain, consisting of scattered Urnfield and northern French bronzes. Two ship-wrecks off the coast of southern England show the trade from the Continent increasing.(5) Those wrecks contained bronzes headed from France to England. Says Burgess, "Field systems from Achnacree in Argyll to Fengate in the Midlands and Dartmoor in the south-west were abandoned. At some of these the insidious spread of blanket peat has been revealed. Great areas of Celtic fields on the chalk were also abandoned, and the land reorganized for stock rising by division into grazing blocks with 'ranch boundaries'. These were drawn across the downland, often directly over abandoned field

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<sup>103</sup> *ibid*, p. 79, 80. St. Paul's cathedral is the place where Bran's head reposes. It was a tradition, or requirement, of the Church to build over or beside sacred pagan sites. We aren't told why Bran's head should be facing France.

systems..Widespread waterlogging is indicated by the appearance on river banks from the Thames to the Trent of pile dwellings, and new trackways were laid down in all those areas, such as the Somerset Levels, prone to flooding." <sup>104</sup>

About 1,200 B.C. there was a major climate change in Britain. The climate was getting wetter and the place was getting waterlogged. We see in the stories of the bards, in fact, descriptions of chariots racing across the land kicking up sod (not dust). From Burgess' description of that period – where logs were laid to make roads passable, where before they were dry – we can suppose that what was witnessed in Britain was connected with a major shift to a wetter period there but perhaps a drought in the south. The Etruscan mythology recalls that the reason why their patriarchs migrated from Lydia after the Trojan War was because there was a great drought. As we saw above, with regard to the cauldron of rebirth of *The Mabinogion*, myths can have a good foundation, and there probably was a great drought in the southern part of Europe. And we also noted how the *Rig Veda* witnesses the drying up of the Sarasvati region. To Indra the dragon slayer who would break loose the flood they prayed. The Aryans may have fled into the Indus Valley from the Black Sea area for the same reason the Etruscans moved out of Lydia, and the Celts of 1,200 B.C. may very well have moved to Britain because of a drought in southern France. The period was also a time of considerable instability, where forts were built along sea-coasts from Greece to France, Egypt records its defense against the invasion of sea-peoples, the Philistines from Crete invade Egypt (recorded in Egypt as the Pulusti) and Palestine (a name derived from Philistine), and hill-top, fortified villages appear all over Europe.

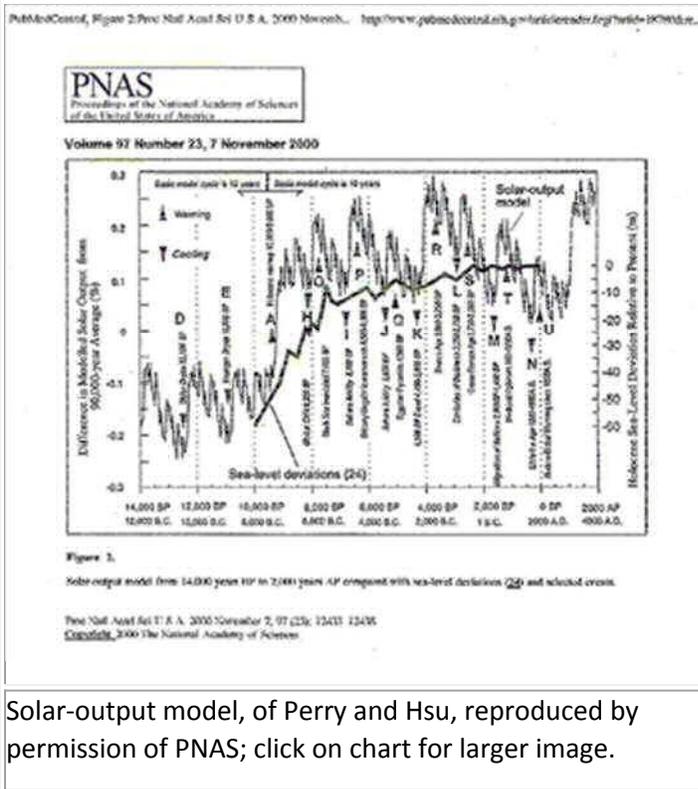
Henry F. Lamb, in an online paper, [Paleoperspectives – drought in North Africa](#), comments on the drought record in Egypt in the last 5,000 years:

Lake Qarun, in the Faiyum depression of Middle Egypt, is fed by annual overflows of the Nile through the Bahr Yusef channel. Its sediments provide a link between the Nilometer readings and the longer proxy record of floods and droughts, and with the archaeological record (Hassan, 1986, 1998; <http://ecrc.geog.ucl.ac.uk/qarun/>). Lake level fell abruptly on three occasions in the last 5,000 years — 3,000 BP, 3,800 BP, and most drastically at 4,200 BP. These low Nile flows affected ancient Egyptian society, founded on the rich alluvial soils of the floodplain, replenished annually during peak discharge caused by summer rainfall over the blue Nile headwaters in Ethiopia. The Old Kingdom collapsed in chaos at 4,200 BP, at a time of drought across much of SW Asia and the eastern Mediterranean (Bell, 1971; Hassan, 1981; Peiser, 1998; Cullen et al., 2000; Weiss, 2002). Prolonged aridity set in across all of northern Africa (Gasse, 2000). Less severe low-flow conditions in the Nile may also have been detrimental to irrigation agriculture in Egypt, because canals are less efficient during conditions of both low discharge and high sediment load.

A wonderful article by Charles A. Perry and Kenneth J. Hsu published online before print October 24, 2000 provides a chart that visually describes the environmental changes on the earth from 12,000 B.C. to the present. The title of the article is: [Geophysical, archaeological, and historical evidence support a solar-output model for climate change](#). Figure 2 of the article, “Solar-output model from 14,000 BP (12,000 B.C.) to 2,000 years AP compared with sea-level deviations and selected events.” shows a spike in solar activity about 1,200 B.C.

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<sup>104</sup> *The Age of Stonehenge*, by Colin Burgess, J. M. Dent, Great Britain, 1980, p. 157.



Solar-output model, of Perry and Hsu, reproduced by permission of PNAS; click on chart for larger image.

Essentially increased solar radiation cycles correspond to warming periods, resulting in sea-level rise. Decreased solar radiation cycles correspond to cooling periods (Ice ages) and droughts. Two events on the chart are relevant here, which include the 4,000 BP warming event, ending about a 1,500 year cooling cycle, and the "Centuries of Darkness event," 3,250 BP - 2,750 BP (1,250 B.C. - 750 B.C.) which marked the end of a short, 500 year cooling cycle (drought), and the beginning of a warming cycle that has essentially continued. We all know that it is continuing as we speak, and for what it is worth the Caspian Sea level has been rising. In an online article, [Caspian Sea-Level Rise: An Environmental Emergency](#), Dr. A. Tolkathev, Senior Assistant Secretary, IOC Secretariat, UNESCO, says: "The rapid rise of the Caspian Sea level ( about 2.25 meters since 1978) has caused great concern to all

five surrounding countries: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan. Endowed with an oil rich basin and one of the planet's most biologically productive water bodies, the region is characterized by many big cities and other human settlements along the sea coastal line."

It would appear that we are in a dramatic climatic event, just as was experienced about 1,200 B.C. Both droughts and increased deviations moisture can cause people to move for a variety of reasons, depending upon where they are located. In Britain one could possibly — according to myth — walk to the Isle of Wight. (The Celts identified their land as including the Island of Britain and its three smaller islands, the island of Anglesey (Mona), Man, and Wight). But when it began to get warmer ~1,200 B.C. lands that were arable turned into bogs, roads could not be used without being cordoned, where the lowlands were excellent for growing wheat the lands had to be abandoned, and in some cases barley became the staple where wheat would not grow. In modern terms we all have witnessed major flooding in Britain and the Eastern seaboard of the United States, the increase of hurricanes in frequency coming from the African coast riding on winds from the Sahara desert; and we all watch the evening news describing the movement of the Sahara desert south, impacting the people of the Sudan. Climatic changes have political effects, where a dominant group having more difficulty sustaining itself due to climatic change may kick out another group from an adjacent territory to take over its land (as appears to be happening in the Sudan). Frequently throughout our archeological past we find areas and cities completely abandoned and later reoccupied. Some cities never are reoccupied.

## Celtic Religion as it relates to the *Rig Veda*

We can use as a point of reference the [Treaty of Mitanni](http://www.angelfire.com/nt/Gilgamesh/hurrian.html) c. 1,380 B.C. which invokes Gods important to the Hittites and the Persian ancestors: Mitra and Varuna, Indra and the two Nasatyas. In essence these boil down to the Fire/Sun god, Mitra (Helios / Apollo), the Sky-god, Varuna (Uranus) and Thunder-god, Indra (Zeus). A history of the Mitanni and the Hurrians, who are connected with them, is at: <http://www.angelfire.com/nt/Gilgamesh/hurrian.html>. (Not much is known about the Mitanni).

These gods can help us understand a little more about the Celtic gods, who were briefly recorded by historians (in different contexts). In his commentaries on the Gallic Wars, Book VI, Julius Caesar says that the most popular god of the Celts was comparable to the Roman Mercury, of whom the Celts have many images. He is regarded as the inventor of all arts and presides over travel and commerce. He says that the other deities include Apollo, who averts diseases; Minerva, who instructs in industry and craft, Mars who controls warfare, and Jupiter who has supremacy among the gods. Lucan, in *Pharsalia*, names three Celtic deities: Teutates, Taranis and Esus, all of whom were propitiated by human sacrifice. The victims of Teutates were to be drowned, Taranis's victims would be burnt, and those sacrificed to Esus hanged. "The Celtic names are informative. Teutates means 'the god of the tribe' from the Celtic teuta 'tribe'; Taranis is probably a sky god whose name comes from the Celtic taran 'thunder'; while Esus means 'good' in the sense of all-competent. It is reasonable, therefore, to equate Taranis with Jupiter as a deity of the sky and Esus (the all-competent) with Mercury ('inventor of the arts'). In another guise Esus may have been synonymous with Lugh, a widely revered deity in the Celtic world whose name is preserved in a number of place names such as Lugudunum (Lyons) and Luguvalium (Carlisle). In Ireland Lugh (whose associated description means 'skilled in many arts together') conquered the evil creatures of the other world and was celebrated at the harvest feast of Lughnasad held on 1 August...Teutates, who was the protector of the tribe in times of war, is to be seen as roughly equivalent to Mars in Caesar's list. His Apollo and Minerva find no parallels in Lucan's classification but may be recognized among the Celtic gods. Minerva (Etruscan Manra) is most likely to be a generalization for a formidable troop of female deities who appear under various names as the consorts of male gods of the tribal kind, as protectors of springs and rivers, or simply as Matres or Matronae — the divine mothers. Caesar's Apollo is probably the Celtic Maponos — the divine son — whose cult is known in Gaul and Britain and may be associated with healing springs.

"If the Celtic deities are approached through the vernacular literature of Ireland, a rather different perspective is achieved. Here the essential structure was a dualism between the male tribal god and the female deity of the land. The male deity was the Dagda, which means the good (that is all-competent) god who served as the protector of the tribe. He was all-embracing and included among his functional attributes control of warfare and the provision of wisdom. The Dagda's counterpart and consort was the Morrigan, a native goddess frequently referred to as 'the Queen of Demons' in the Irish texts but also known under the other names such as Mach and Maeve..."<sup>105</sup>

The Celtic calendar (a sample of it was found on a copper alloy at Coligny near Bourg, dating to the first century B.C.) had three or four principal festivals:

The first festival was *Samain*, November 1, which marked the end of the old year and beginning of the

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<sup>105</sup> *The Ancient Celts*, Barry Cunliffe, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 185.

new, which we celebrate as Halloween. This was a time when the spirits of the dead could roam freely. Dagda and Morrigan would come together and perform their fertility rite, and it is at this time that communities would elect their harvest king and queen, for this also marked the official beginning of the harvest (though it would vary depending upon location and season). To read some traditions about the harvest king and queen in Britain go to: <http://www.whitedragon.org.uk/articles/harvest.htm>. In some societies, as recorded by anthropologists such as Joseph Campbell in his *Masks of God*, etc., the harvest king and queen were sacrificed. The binding of the sheaves on this site recalls the Greek memory of the Hyperboreans binding their messages in sheaves, sending them to the oracle at Delphi. The oracle at Delphi (of Apollo) was a female served by virgins.

The next festival, *Imbolc*, took place on 1 February and is associated with the goddess Brigit, a goddess of fertility, learning and healing, equated to Athena (Roman, Minerva). She is the daughter of the Dagda and one of the great mother-goddesses of Ireland. There is a Saint Brigit of Kildare, who is believed to have lived from 450-523 A.D.

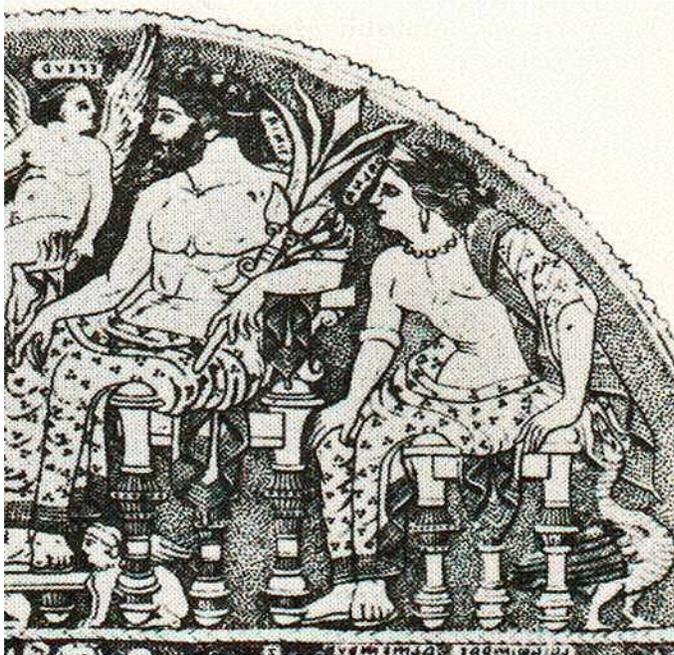
The third festival was *Beltan*, *Beltine*, held on 1 May (May day). This festival is associated with the Celtic god Bel, or Belenus, who is associated with fire.

August 1 was the festival of *Lugnasad* in tribute to the god Lug. This is a time when the Council of the Gauls would meet and taking advantage of this — in order to break up Celtic unity — the Emperor Augustus relocated the place of the meeting to his controlled territory: at the Altar of Rome and Augustus at Lyons.

The Winter Solstice, December 21, *Alban Arthuan* (The Light of Arthur), also referred to as Yule, Jul, Saturnalia, and Christmas. This feast takes place on or about December 21 and marks the longest, darkest night of the year. This is a festival of peace and a celebration of waxing solar light. Many honor the new Sun by burning an oaken Yule log, and honor the Goddess in her many Mother aspects. The Father God is honored as Santa Claus today, but as the Old Sky God he was Father Time and Holly King.

## Importance of the Treaty of Mittani

The gods we know to have existed in ~1,380 B.C., mentioned in the *Treaty of Mitanni*, can help us organize the major Celtic gods, as well as the Etruscan gods, with the *Rig Veda*. The link between the Celtic Cernunnos Horned god and the Indus Valley Horned god can lead us— through a process of elimination — in reconstructing a pantheon of the major ancient Indo-European gods. For instance, in the treaty Indra, Mithra, Varuna and the twins, the Nasatyas, are invoked. Who is not represented in this formative pantheon are the Hindu gods Agni, Vishnu and Shiva. Since Shiva is not mentioned in the *Rig Veda* and only comes later in Vedic literature, by process of elimination we can conclude that Indra represents characteristics later acquired by Shiva. The major gods of the *Rig Veda* are: Agni (the sacrificial fire and messenger of the gods); Indra (the ram, the conqueror who wields the thunder-bolt; heroic god, rich in deeds, who slays enemies like the dragon Vrtra; who has a form, Kapinjala, called the Francoline partridge); Vayu (the wind); Soma, the sacred mead; Rbhus (the Celestial race, of Rbhus, Vibhvan and Vaja); Brahmanaspati (a god of thunder, used by Indra), Rudra (the wild-boar, him with the braided hair, father of the Maruts); the Maruts (the clouds, of weather); Mitra; Varuna (the far-seeing sky and sea god, king of earth and heaven); Surya (the sun); Ushas (the dawn), the Aṣvins (Nasatyas, the [male] twins); the Adityas; Savitar, Dyaus Pita (the sky), Prithivi (the earth); the Vishvadevas (all the gods); Vishnu (making the stalk that gives meath flow forth with might— *Rig Veda*, Book X, CXIII.2); the preserver of the cosmos; reincarnated as Avatars, including Rama); Tvastar (the inventor and smithy of the gods), Pushan (protector of cattle; Soma and Pushan, Parents of all riches); Bhaga (a general name for god — see Slavic, bog), Dadhikravas, Lord of travel, the horse [the sun] of Varuna), Brhaspati (Lord of Prayer, leader of the song), Sarasvati (the sacred river, Sarasvati); Vac (Queen of Gods, vox, voice, whose home is in the waters; I bring forth the father); and the goddess Ila; Yama, (God of the dead, Lord of the place where our ancient fathers, Angirasas, etc. have departed) and Kama (desire, the primal seed and germ of Spirit, Eros).



An ancestral god of the Celts is Dispater. He may equate to the *Rig Veda's* Dyaus Pita. Another Celtic god, is Tannus (also called Tinnus, Taranis and Taranus). The modern Breton word for thunder is "taran"; thus we can compare him to the Nordic Thor and Indra. He is the Greek Zeus and related to the Roman Jupiter. But Zeus and Jupiter are also compared to the *Rig Veda's* Dyaus Pita. The feast of Tannus is Yule. Tannus is Zeus / Jupiter and can be confirmed in the Etruscan thunder-bolt-god, Tinia. One can read about him at the [Divine Mirror.html](#). Tinia (Lat. tono-are, to thunder) changed into a swan to catch Thalna (Gr. Nemesis; Thalna — meaning retaliation, after Etruscan, thalio, L. talio-onis, f.), who turned into a goose; the result of which was the production of the egg from which Helen of

Troy hatched. The Greek version of the story holds that Zeus turned into a swan to catch the goddess

Nemesis whose egg was turned over to Leda, wife of King Tyndareus, to be reared. Some say that it was Leda who turned into a goose, being chased by Zeus, the swan, and produced the egg. Here we see Tinia and his consort Thalna (note the goose beside her) who is the Greek Nemesis.

Another Etruscan god is IVPATER (Jupater), who is probably Iuppiter (Jupiter), also called Jovis, mentioned once in the Etruscan scripts at Q224. It is believed that Celtic Dis Pater is the ancestor, the primal God of creation, who later merged with Don and Cernunnos, the Horned God. Don is the Deep Sea, Queen of the Heavens, goddess of sea and air. Her consort is Beli and she is the mother goddess from whom the Britons believe they are descended. She is known for the control of the elements and eloquence. In these terms she is Vac in the *Rig Veda*.

Dis, Ditis, is the Latin name of Pluto, God of the Lower World; he is the Greek Hades. We can see Hades, whose Etruscan name is *Aita*, on an Etruscan mural from the Tomb of Orcos. Orcos is another name of the Underworld, also the Greek Erebes (Lat. Erebus-i). The Etruscan word for Erebes is Arepes, used in script N; the locations of the word can be viewed in [Etruscan GlossaryA.xls](#). Yama would be the *Rig Veda* equivalent of Hades, and we can see in the *Rig Veda* his rule and place is respected. The hymns appeal to him to come to the banquet, drink of the Soma and bring the ancestors with him. In the Greek myths three gods rule all: Hades, god of the Underworld, Zeus, God of Heaven and Earth, and Poseidon, God of the Sea. In Roman mythology Dis or Pluto represent both the Underworld and wealth. In Celtic images Cernunnos, likewise a god of wealth, is shown seated on his throne with a cornucopia



at his feet. In an Etruscan mural we can see visually what is related about Hades, as we know from the story of Theseus, that it is a place of both good and evil attributes. In the story Theseus (Etruscan, *These*)

descends into hell to abduct Persephone (spelled in Etruscan, *Phersipnei*; Lat. Proserpina), seen in a mural, Script PH above. The Elysian Fields are reached by descending into Erebus and crossing the river Styx which is guarded by the ferryman, Charon. Charon carries a hammer and he uses the hammer to hit the dead over the head, particularly those who do not pay for their passage across the river to the heavenly, Elysian fields. Charon appears in Etruscan tombs as he gives chase to the occupants of the tomb. Coincidentally we have the Etruscan name *Atieria*, (See ([Etruscan GlossaryA.xls](#)), probably referring to the descendents of the Lydian patriarchs named, *Atys*, ancestors of the Etruscans.

The Celts, thus, are a link to understanding Etruscan mythology. And Etruscan mythology can shed light on Celtic mythology. Because the Celtic mythology remembers a pantheon mentioned in 1,380 B.C. in the *Treaty of Mitanni*, it is an important link to understanding other ancient mythologies. For instance, the Slavic version of Indra is called Perun. We know that the Slavic word for god is "bog," and "Bhaga" is a generic name for god in the *Rig Veda*.

If Indra is the Etruscan Tinia and Celtic Tannus / Tinnus, then we are left with identifying Mitra, Varuna and the Asvins, of those names listed in the *Treaty of Mitanni*. We know that Varuna is Uranus. It was Uranus who mated with Ge to beget the other gods. Their son, Cronus (L. Saturn), castrated his father with a sickle of flint given to him by his mother Ge. He and his sister, Rhea, had children: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus. Cronus (L. Saturn) swallowed all of his children, except Zeus, whom Rhea, seeing the god devouring their children, secreted away in Crete. She bundled a rock in swaddling clothes and gave it to Cronus (Saturn) to swallow, in lieu of Zeus. When Cronus (L. Saturn) castrated his father, Uranus, the genitals fell into the ocean near Cyprus, and from the foam grew the

goddess of love, Aphrodite (L. Venus, Etruscan Turan).

There is a Celtic god who has a sickle over his shoulder, and he is probably Cronus (L. Saturn). An Akkadian god in cylinder seals also appears with a sickle.

In a Gallo-Roman altar found at Reims Cernunnos is pictured with a sack or cornucopia of coins on his lap, and to his right is Apollo, who holds a lyre; and on his left is what appears to be Mercury, who appears to hold a herald's staff (L. caduceus). Above the head of the three gods is a rat, and below them is a bull and a stag. The bull and stag are signs of Cernunnos.

On the bottom of the Gundestrup Cauldron is an engraving of a man with a hound on a leash, two animals, possibly another dog and a horse who have been kicked by the bull, and a bull with an infinity

sign on its forehead. In another stone altar of Cernunnos, called *Les Bollards*, Cernunnos has to his right two other divinities. In this stone the figure adjacent to Cernunnos appears to be a woman and the figure to the right of them may be their child. Below them are animals and below the female is a plant. Between her leg and the leg of Cernunnos is a skull. Cernunnos is pictured in this stone with three faces,



which, as we can see, is common to the [Indus Valley seal with the three-faced Horned god](#). In the Reims Gallo-Roman altar Cernunnos is obviously the god of wealth, with coins spilling from his lap, in addition to being the Lord of the beasts (like the Hindu god, Shiva). A three-faced god also appears on Akkadian cylinder seals.

If the Roman god Dis (Pluto) is identified with wealth, then Cernunnos would be Dis, or Hades. The wife of Hades is Persephone. She is the goddess of the Underworld and is the daughter of Zeus and Demeter. Hades obtained the consent of Zeus to abduct her; and near Henna, Sicily it is reported that he appeared in his chariot and carried her off, down to his world, into the innards of the earth. After much pleading from her to be released from the dark and dismal place, he agreed to let her go, provided that she spend half of the year with him (some say 1/3 of a year). Her rising on the earth celebrates rebirth; and though she was feared there is one case where she allowed a woman to return from the dead.

The only other person who escaped from Hades was the hero, Theseus, who, with his friend, Peirithoüs, had been frozen in Hades' "stone chairs of forgetfulness," lost in a deep, sleep-like state. He [alone] was rescued by Hercules (Gr. Heracles, Etruscan Hercle). Hades was like Dyaus Pita in the *Rig Veda* and does not fit into the *Treaty of Metanni* pantheon. Pluto (Ploutos) stems from Demeter, the corn-goddess (L. Ceres) and Iasion, who produced Plutus in a thrice-grown field in Crete. He was commonly represented in art as a boy bearing a cornucopia. He was merged with the Roman god, Dis (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 996-974).

In the *Les Bollards* stone, next to the third person is a vase with a flower. In *The Mabinogion* we have the story of Bran and Branwen. In the rescue of Branwen from Ireland the Cauldron of Rebirth was broken, Bran was shot in the leg with a poisoned arrow, and he asked that his head be placed in London, facing France. Branwen is the sister of Bran and she is considered the Venus of the Northern Seas, and through the story of the Cauldron of Rebirth she represents rebirth. She was married to the Irish king Mathowch who mistreated her, causing Bran to leave Wales and raid Ireland to redeem her. The skull in the stone may be a version of the "Talking Head" of Bran.

The Greek god Zeus was married to Hera, but he had many liaisons with other goddesses and mortal women. We have seen seated next to the Etruscan god Tinia his wife Thalna, as she relates to the story of the Trojan War and the abduction of their daughter Helen. But Tinia (also written as Tini; the "ia" suffix appears to be a genitive ending, in several Etruscan names) was officially married to the goddess Uni (also spelled Unia), who is Latin Juno and Greek Hera. We can confirm this through a mirror which shows [Uni suckling Heracles](#) (as Hera did). The equivalent Roman god to Zeus is Jupiter, Etruscan Tinia, *Rig Veda*, Indra. The main Celtic goddess of wealth is considered to be Brigit. Brigit shares attributes with the ancient Greek goddess Hecate; however, Hecate was, like Persephone, a goddess of the Underworld. She was initially compared to Demeter, as a fertility goddess, since the Underworld was the source of fertility, but she was a nocturnal goddess, going round with a torch. The pre-Christian Brigantes, from whom Brigit's name derives, believed her to be identical to the Roman Juno, Queen of Heaven.

Rosmerta is another Celtic goddess, of fertility and wealth, who was the wife of the god Esus, but also of the Gaulish Mercury. Her attributes are a cornucopia and a stick with two snakes. She probably equates to the Roman goddess Ops, Greek Rhea, Phrygian Cybele, Etruscan Rae, Raia. If Rosmerta was the wife of the Celtic Mercury, then she would not have been the lady sitting next to Cernunnos in the stone from *Les Bollards*. A discussion on the principal ladies of Heaven and /or the Underworld follows in chapter IV, [Banquet4.html](#). The lady's influence concerning hopes in the afterlife will be discussed there.

Keeping in context the *Treaty of Mitanni*, knowing that Indra, Mitra, Varuna and the Asvins are the acknowledged gods, we can —for the sake of elimination — identify Indra as the three-faced god on the Indus Valley seals and the Celtic Tannus, as Etruscan Tinia. The Roman Janus, god of ports would equate to them as well. Juppiter may have entered the Latin pantheon in some other role as Chief of the Gods, following this line of thought. The gods with multiple eyes (faces) may represent the original Chiefs of the Indo-European Gods. Indra, for instance, was marked in a battle where the marks turned into a thousand eyes.

Varuna, the older god, was the supreme lord of the cosmos, the keeper of divine order, the bringer of rain, and the enforcer of contracts. He represents the sky and the sea, from which Indra the thunder-bolt thrower is created. Varuna is the Greek Uranus, who fathered Cronos, the father of Zeus, etc. The reason why Varuna would be cited in the *Treaty of Mitanni* is because he is the keeper of contracts, like Father Time (L. Saturn). The Greek Cronos, in Roman mythology, is Saturn (from which we have Saturday), who was associated with fertility and agriculture. Saturn was associated with the goddess Ops, of wealth and abundance. Ops was identified with Cronos' wife, Rhea. Saturn's festival was the Saturnalia which took place in celebration of the Winter Solstice, initially December 17 and Ops' festival December 19; during the empire the festival took place over a week: December 17-23. On the pre-Julian calendar the Winter Solstice was December 25. During the festival gifts were exchanged. This is also the Yule festival of the Celts and Germans, of which we have the sign of the wheel, representing the sun, and a character who brings gifts, as a father (Santa Claus) and remembered in antiquity as the father who carried a sickle over his shoulder as Father Time. This brings us back to the Celtic god, Tannus / Tinnus, whose feast-time was Yule, associated with the oak tree and the eagle and was a god of the wheel (sun) and fertility. The Etruscan Tinia and Celtic Tinnus must be the same diety, equating to Zeus and Indra.

Indra's festival, like Saturn's, is the New Year, which would be at the Winter Solstice, when the Sun turns from its northward journey. Tannus, Indra and Saturn share the same (Winter Solstice) festival. Saturn is a god more peculiar to the Latins though the rest of the Roman pantheon became somewhat of an imitation of the Greek. What exists of Roman Mythology tends to be borrowed from the Greeks. In the *Aeneid* by Virgil we are reminded of that, how the Latins reconstructed their mythology, picking up from the *Iliad*. We are also told by Virgil that there was a Greek colony near the site that would become Rome; in fact he notes that the neighbors of the Trojan ancestors of Rome were Etruscans and Greeks. We can readily see through the "Hellenic Period" of Etruscan artifacts the influence the Greeks had on their culture as well. Remarkably, some of the best preserved examples of Corinthian pottery was made by Etruscan artisans.

What happened in the Roman or Latin tradition that caused the Romans to get their own traditions subsumed to the Greek tradition? How is it that Jupiter became the head of the Roman pantheon whilst Saturn had the main feast day? Saturn was a mythical ancestral king of Latium, and it may be that he is the real Dis Pater, the Hindu Dyaus Pita (the sky).

Wednesday is Woden's (Odin's) day, also known as *dies Jovis* [Jove's or Jupiter's day]. Jove's feast day was July 5, *Poplifugia*, held in the Campus Martius; and September 4-September 19, *Ludi Romani*, also known as the Roman Games. For a complete list of Roman festivals go to: [http://home.comcast.net/~rthamper/html/body\\_feasts-holdiays.html](http://home.comcast.net/~rthamper/html/body_feasts-holdiays.html).

Varuna (Greek Uranus may) have become Saturn in the Roman religion. In the *Rig Veda* most of the feasts (three times a day) are dedicated to Indra and, of course, Agni. Varuna hardly comes into view, except in dualities such as Indra-Varuna, Agni-Varuna. In India the seasons were different. But if we keep

the Winter Solstice, then it would be Indra's major feast day, since it is the feast-day of the Roman Saturn and Celtic Tannus. It would also be the feast day of the Etruscan god Tinia.

The feast day dedicated to Indra today is *Nutan Varsh*, which is the Hindu New Year, a time of the new harvest, held ~ 14 April. India's official calendar is based upon the *Rig Veda* and is a lunar calendar, called the *Saka* Calendar, this year being 1922. The New Year's festival varies from one area to another in India, and it could occur as early as 26 March. They also use a Solar Calendar and the Solar New Year is celebrated as *Mesh Sankranti*, when the sun rises in Aries (March).

The Winter Solstice is celebrated as *Makar Sankranti*, usually falling in the middle of January. According to <http://www.hinduism.co.za/makar.htm>, "Makara Sankranti is called Pongal by the Tamilians, from whom it ushers in the New Year. The day begins with Surya Pongal or sun worship. The newly harvested corn is then cooked for the first time." According to that web site, there are four other festivals, all dedicated to goddesses:

"There are also four universally observed parvas (festivals) namely Shravani Upakarma, Vijaydashami, Deepawali and Holi. Parva means a link that joins two things. It is that link on which the skeleton stands. The joints of a man's skeleton are, therefore, called parvas. It is with the help of these that an individual can stand, can sit, can bend and can lunge. Without these joints man would be stiff and not be able to make any movements. Likewise is the state of nations and societies, the framework of which is based on parvas (festivals). Without these parvas society would have collapsed a long time ago.

"These four festivals commence with Upakarma (Raksha-bandhan) and end with Holi. The four festivals are associated with four different goddesses. Raksha-bandhan is associated with Goddess Saraswati (the goddess of education); Vijaydashami with Shakti (goddess of power); Holi with Prasannata (goddess of joy) and Deepawali is associated with Lakshmi (goddess of wealth).

"Joyous festivities mark the celebration in every home. Servants, farmers and the poor are fed and clothed, and given presents of money. On the next day, the cow, which is regarded as the symbol of the Holy Mother, is worshipped. Birds and animals are also fed."

It appears that Cernunnos best equates to Tannus and the goddess next to him should be his consort and next to them their child. As noted, Zeus fathered many gods and demi-gods, such as Hercules (Heracles). A female deity is not invoked in the *Treaty of Mitanni*, and in the *Rig Veda* only Earth, Prithivi, is addressed to any degree, and she is usually addressed with her counterpart, Dyaus Pita (the sky).



In the *Rig Veda* there are three worlds. The heavens form a 1/2 bowl above and the earth forms a 1/2 bowl below. A third world, the Otherworld or Underworld, is in an undefined region. To reach it, the place ruled over by the Dragon, the hero Rama, in *The Ramayana*, waded across the sea (as Bran waded across the Irish Sea).

The female deity who is the consort of Cernunnos in the *Les Bollards* stone must be represented on the Gundestrup Cauldron. The Gundestrup Cauldron shows a female goddess being dressed with a head-band. Above her are two eagles. In her left hand

appears to be the legs of a man, and raised in her right hand appears to be an animal. She would be a fertility goddess and no doubt associated with animals. For the moment we might recall the Mycenaean snake goddess, who is bare-breasted holding in either hand a snake (considered a messenger of the Underworld). This may lead us to the Greek goddess Hera, Zeus' wife, who was jealous of his fooling around with other women, such as Nemesis, and put two poisonous snakes in the crib of Heracles. An Etruscan fertility goddess, apart from Uni (Roman Juno, Greek Hera), was Aph. She may be the equivalent of Ceres / Demeter. The Celtic Great Queen goddess was Rhiannon, who was the goddess of enchantments, fertility and the Underworld. She is seen riding a swift white horse and believed to be the Welsh counterpart of Epona, the Gaulish horse goddess. She is the wife of Pwyll and mother of the hero Pryderi. She is associated as a sun goddess and also a death goddess. Pictured here on the Gundestrop Cauldron may be Brigit, and not Rhiannon. But Rhiannon seems close to the Greek Rhea.

A good online glossary on Celtic Mythology is at: <http://www.joellessacredgrove.com/Celtic/deities-s.html>.

Since the focus of the Banquet of the Gods had to do with eternal life, and it seems that the ladies were in the center of that hope of mythology, we shall continue with the banquet, now addressing the ladies of the Underworld.

## Book IV, Trimalchio's Banquet

A banquet scene in a tomb or on a sarcophagus 2,500 years ago reflects what the people then enjoyed and hoped to participate in in the afterlife. Of course those who could afford lavish representations within their tombs were the upper class. To appreciate what people might have enjoyed in those days it is appropriate to tell you the story that Petronius told in his work *The Satyricon*. While historians are not sure exactly who Petronius was, it is believed that he probably was Gaius Petronius (who is mentioned by Tacitus, *Annals*, XVI.18 ff). Gaius Petronius was, as Tacitus describes him, "not regarded as either a spendthrift or a debauchee, but rather as a refined voluptuary." He was a governor of Bithynia and later a consul and admitted into the close circle of the Emperor Nero's (54-68 A.D.) associates. He wasn't keen on Nero's ways, in any event, and ended his life in an unusual way. When one reads *The Satyricon* (it gets into some salacious stuff, so be prepared), one can reflect upon how appropriate Gaius Petronius' death was with respect to one who would be the author of *The Satyricon*. The wit is the same. The banquet scene, *Dinner with Trimalchio*, is a fun, bawdy experience. It may be a stretch from the truth, but probably close enough, and reminds one of a banquet of the middle Ages. The version of *The Satyricon* I quote here is William Arrowsmith's translation, A Meridian Book, Penguin Books USA Inc., NY, 1994. Keep in mind that this is an account that is about 2,000 years old and its value to this work is its record of how people viewed things in those days. The ways expounded by Petronius aren't what I would subscribe to — nor would I think I could fit into a "dinner with a Trimalchio" as described here, but I can appreciate its humour and description of people, and I am sure Shakespeare got some ideas from this dinner scene and would have been there himself had he lived a few years earlier. And Voltaire may have fashioned his hero in *Candide* from the hero of *The Satyricon*. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* had the name until it was changed, for good reason, I think, since the central part of Trimalchio's dinner involved slaves and slaves had no function in Fitzgerald's world. In his world there were only the needlessly poor and overburdened rich. Today it is the opposite, so Trimalchio may apply the better to this day, a legacy of the Bush estate, than in the 1920's.

## Chapter V, Dinner with Trimalchio

At last the third day had come with its prospect of a free meal and perhaps our last meal on this earth. But by now our poor bodies were so bruised and battered that escape, even if it cost us a meal, seemed preferable to staying where we were. While we were gloomily wondering how we could avoid the orgy in store for us with Quartilla, one of Agamemnon's slaves came up and dispelled our despair. "What's eating you?" he asked. "Have you forgotten where you're going tonight? Trimalchio's giving the meal. He's real swank. Got a great big clock in his dining room and a uniformed bugler who blows a horn every hour so the old man won't forget how fast his time is slipping away." Needless to say, we forgot our troubles fast when we heard this. We slipped into our best clothes, and when Giton very sweetly offered to act as our servant, we told him to attend us to the baths.

[27] There we wandered around at first without getting undressed. Or rather we went joking around, mixing with various groups of bathers at their games. Suddenly we caught sight of an old, bald man in a long red undershirt, playing ball with a bunch of curly-headed slave boys. It wasn't so much the boys who took our eyes — though they were worth looking at — as the old man himself. There he stood, rigged out in undershirt and sandals, nothing else, bouncing a big green ball the color of a leek. When he dropped one ball, moreover, he never bothered to stoop for it, but simply took another from a slave who stood beside him with a huge sack tossing out fresh balls to the players. This was striking enough, but the real refinement was two eunuchs standing on either side of the circle, one clutching a chamber pot of solid silver, the other ticking off the balls. He was not, however, scoring the players points, but merely keeping count of any balls that happened to drop on the ground. While we were gawking at these elegant gymnastics, Menelaus came rushing up. "That's him!" he whispered, "That's the fellow who's giving the meal. What you're seeing now is just the prelude to the show." These words were hardly out when Trimalchio gave a loud snap with his fingers. The eunuch came waddling up with thy chamber pot, Trimalchio emptied his bladder and went merrily on with his game. When he was done, he shouted for water, daintily dipped the tips of his fingers and wiped his hands in the long hair of a slave.

[28] But the details of his performance would take too long to tell. We quickly undressed, went into the hot baths, and after working up a sweat, passed on to the cold showers. There we found Trimalchio again, his skin glistening all over with perfumed oil. He was being rubbed down, not with ordinary linen, but with cloths of the purest and softest wool. During this rubdown, right before his eyes, the three masseurs were guzzling away at the finest of his rare Falernian wines. In a minute, moreover, they were squabbling and in the next second the wine had spilled all over the floor. "Tut, a mere trifle," said Trimalchio, "they were merely pouring me a toast." He was then bundled into a blazing scarlet wrapper, hoisted onto a litter and trundled off. Before him went four runners in spangled harness and a little wheelbarrow in which the old man's favorite rode, a little boy with a wrinkled face and bleary, crudded eyes, even uglier than his master. A musician with a miniature flute trotted along at Trimalchio's head and during the entire trip played into his master's ear as though whispering him little secrets.

Drunk with admiration, we brought up the rear and Agamemnon joined us when we reached Trimalchio's door. Beside the door we saw a sign:

ANY SLAVE LEAVING THE PREMISES  
WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION FROM THE MASTER  
WILL RECEIVE ONE HUNDRED LASHES!

At the entrance sat the porter, dressed in that same leek-green that seemed to be the livery of the house. A cherry-colored sash was bound around his waist and he was busily shelling peas into a pan of

solid silver. In the doorway hung a cage, all gold, and in it a magpie was croaking out his welcome to the guests.

[29] I was gaping at all this in open-mouthed wonder when I suddenly jumped with terror, stumbled, and nearly broke my leg. For there on the left as you entered, in fresco, stood a huge dog straining at his leash. In large letters under the paint was scrawled:

BEWARE OF THE DOG!

The others burst out laughing at my fright. But when I'd recovered from the shock, I found myself following the rest of the frescoes with fascination. They ran the whole length of the wall. First came a panel showing a slave market with everything clearly captioned. There stood Trimalchio as a young man, his hair long and curly in a slave fashion; in his hand he held a staff and he was entering Rome for the first time under the sponsorship of Minerva. In the next panel he appeared as an apprentice accountant, then as a paymaster — each step in his career portrayed in great detail and everything scrupulously labeled. At the end of the portico you came to the climax of the series: a picture of Mercury grasping Trimalchio by the chin and hoisting him up to the lofty eminence of the official's tribunal. Beside the dais stood the goddess Fortuna with a great cornucopia and the three Fates, busily spinning out Trimalchio's life in threads of gold, while in the background a group of runners were shown working out with their trainer. In the corner at the end of the portico was a huge wardrobe with a small built-in shrine. In the shrine were silver statuettes of the household gods, a Venus in marble, and a golden casket containing, I was told, the clippings from Trimalchio's first beard. I began questioning the attendant about some other frescoes in the middle. "Scenes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*," he explained, "and the gladiator games given by Laenas."

[30] But there was far too little time to ask about everything that took my eye.

We approached the dining room next where we found the steward at the door making up his accounts. I was particularly struck by the doorposts. For fixed to the jamb were faces, bundles of sticks with axes protruding from them; but on the lower side the bundles terminated in what looked like the brass ram of a ship, and on the brass this inscription had been engraved:

TO GAIUS POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO,  
OFFICIAL OF THE IMPERIAL CULT,  
FROM HIS STEWARD  
CINNAMUS

Hanging from the ceiling on a long chain was a two-bracket lamp with the same inscription, and on each of the doorposts a wooden tablet had been put up. On one of these, if I remember rightly, this memo was written:

"The Master will be dining in town  
on the 30th and 31st of December."

On the other tablet was a diagram of the orbits of the moon and the seven planets, with the lucky and unlucky days all indicated by knobs of different colors. <sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> The *Saturnalia* celebration is seven days, from December 17 to December 24. December 30 is the date in which the birth of Isis is celebrated. Isis, the Queen of Heaven of Egypt, was involved in the resurrection of her husband, Osiris, the god of the Underworld and Judge of the Dead. Isis was honored with a temple in Rome and her festival is a time when there is great festivity, with musicians, dancers and actors playing out the mystery plays that

We duly noted these refinements and were just about to step into the dining room when suddenly a slave — clearly posted for this very job — shouted, "RIGHT FEET FIRST!" Well, needless to say, we froze. Who wants to bring down bad luck on his host by walking into his dining room in the wrong way? However, we synchronized our legs and were just stepping out, right feet first, when a slave, utterly naked, landed on the floor in front of us and implored us to save him from a whipping. He was about to be flogged, he explained, for a trifling offense. He had let someone steal the steward's clothing, worthless stuff really, in the baths. Well, we pulled back our right feet, faced about and returned to the entry where we found the steward counting a stack of gold coins. We begged him to let the servant off. "Really, it's not the money I mind," he replied with enormous condescension, "so much as the idiot's carelessness. It was my dinner-suit he lost, a birthday present from one of my dependants. Expensive too, but then I've already had it washed. Well, it's a trifle. Do what you want with him."

[31] We thanked him for his gracious kindness, but when we entered the dining room up ran the same slave whom we'd just begged off. He overwhelmed us with his thanks and then, to our consternation, began to plaster us with kisses. "You'll soon see whom you've helped," he said. "The master's wine will prove the servant's gratitude."

At last we took our places. Immediately slaves from Alexandria came in and poured ice water over our hands. These were followed by other slaves who knelt at our feet and with extraordinary skill pedicured our toenails. Not for an instant, moreover, during the whole of this odious job, did one of them stop singing. This made me wonder whether the whole menage was given to bursts of song, so I put it to the test by calling for a drink. It was served immediately by a boy who trilled away as shrilly as the rest of them. In fact, anything you asked for was invariably served with a snatch of song, so that you would have thought you were eating in a concert-hall rather than a private dining room.

Now that the guests were all in their places, the *hors d'oeuvres* were served, and very sumptuous they were. Trimalchio alone was still absent, and the place of honor — reserved for the host in the modern fashion — stood empty. But I was speaking of the *hors d'oeuvres*. On a large tray stood a donkey made of rare Corinthian bronze; on the donkey's back were two panniers, one holding green olives, the other, black. Flanking the donkey were two side dishes, both engraved with Trimalchio's name and the weight of the silver, while in dishes shaped to resemble little bridges there were dormice, all dipped in honey and rolled in poppy seed. Nearby, on a silver grill, piping hot, lay small sausages, while beneath the grill black damsons and red pomegranates had been sliced up and arranged so as to give the effect of flames playing over charcoal.

[32] We were nibbling at these splendid appetizers when suddenly the trumpets blared a fanfare and Trimalchio was carried in, propped up on piles of miniature pillows in such a comic way that some of us couldn't resist impolitely smiling. His head, cropped close in a recognizable slave cut, protruded from a cloak of blazing scarlet; his neck, heavily swathed already in bundles of clothing, was wrapped in a large napkin bounded by an incongruous senatorial purple stripe with little tassels dangling down here and there. On the little finger of his left hand he sported an immense gilt ring; the ring on the last joint of his fourth finger looked to be solid gold of the kind the lesser nobility wear, but was actually, I think, an imitation pricked out with small steel stars. Nor does this exhaust the inventory of his trinkets. At least he rather ostentatiously bared his arm to show us a large gold bracelet and an ivory circlet with a shiny

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celebrate the death and resurrection of Osiris. This day was also the Birthday of Inanna, the Mesopotamian Queen of Heaven and Earth. To review the Roman Calendar and the significance of each day go to: <http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/w/x/wxk116/RomanCalendar/dec26.htm>. It may be that for Trimalchio leaving his house on the 30th of December would be akin to sacrilege with his "cult." There must be a pun here.

metal plate.

[33] He was picking his teeth with a silver toothpick when he first addressed us. "My friends," he said, "I wasn't anxious to eat just yet, but I've ignored my own wishes so as not to keep you waiting. Still, perhaps you won't mind if I finish my game." At these words a slave jumped forward with a board of juniper wood and a pair of crystal dice. I noticed one other elegant novelty as well: in place of the usual black and white counters, Trimalchio had substituted gold and silver coins. His playing, I might add, was punctuated throughout with all sorts of vulgar exclamations.

We, meanwhile, were still occupied with the *hors d'oeuvres* when a tray was carried in and set down before us. On it lay a basket, and in it a hen, carved from wood, with wings outspread as though sitting on her eggs. Then two slaves came forward and, to a loud flourish from the orchestra, began rummaging in the straw and pulling out peahen's eggs which they divided among the guests. Trimalchio gave the whole performance his closest attention. "Friends," he said, "I ordered peahen eggs to be set under that hen, but I'm half afraid they may have hatched already. Still, let's see if we can suck them." We were handed spoons — weighing at least half a pound apiece — and cracked open the eggs, which turned out to be baked from rich pastry. To tell the truth, I had almost tossed my share away, thinking the eggs were really addled. But I heard one of the guests, obviously a veteran of these dinners, say, "I wonder what little surprise we've got in here." So I cracked the shell with my hand and found inside a fine fat oriole, nicely seasoned with pepper.

[34] By this time Trimalchio had finished his game. He promptly sent for the same dishes we had had, and with a great roaring voice offered a second cup of mead to anyone who wanted it. Then the orchestra suddenly blared and the trays were snatched away from the tables by a troupe of warbling waiters. But in the confusion a silver side dish fell to the floor and a slave quickly stooped to retrieve it. Trimalchio, however, had observed the accident and gave orders that the boy's ears should be boxed and the dish tossed back on the floor. Immediately the servant in charge of the dishware came pattering up with a broom and swept the silver dish out the door with the rest of the rubbish. (2) Two curly-haired Ethiopian slaves followed him as he swept, both carrying little skin bottles like the circus attendants who sprinkle the arena with perfume, and poured wine over our hands. No one was offered water.

We clapped enthusiastically for this fine display of extravagance. "The god of war," said Trimalchio, "is a real democrat. That's why I gave orders that each of us should have a table to himself. Besides, these stinking slaves will bother us less than if we were all packed in together."

Glass jars carefully sealed and coated were now brought in. Each bore this label:

GENUINE FALERIAN WINE  
GUARANTEED ONE HUNDRED YEARS  
OLD!  
BOTTLED  
IN THE CONSULSHIP  
OF  
OPIMIUS (3)

While we were reading the labels, Trimalchio clapped his hands for attention. "Just think, friends, wine lasts longer than us poor suffering humans. So soak it up, it's the stuff of life. I give you, gentlemen, the genuine Opimian vintage. Yesterday I served much cheaper stuff and the guests were much more important." While we were commenting on it and savoring the luxury, a slave brought in a skeleton, cast of solid silver, and fastened in such a way that the joints could be twisted and bent in any direction. The

servants threw it down on the table in front of us and pushed it into several suggestive postures by twisting its joints, while Trimalchio recited this verse of his own making:

Nothing but bones, that's what we are.  
Death hustles us humans away.  
Today we're here and tomorrow we're not,  
so live and drink while you may!

[35] The course that followed our applause failed, however, to measure up to our expectations of our host, but it was so unusual that it took everybody's attention. Spaced around a circular tray were the twelve signs of the zodiac, and over each sign the chef had put the most appropriate food. Thus, over the sign of Aries were chickpeas, over Taurus a slice of beef, a pair of testicles and kidneys over Gemini, a wreath of flowers over Cancer, over Leo an African fig, virgin sowbelly on Virgo, over Libra a pair of scales with a tartlet in one pan and a cheesecake in the other, over Scorpio a crawfish, a lobster on Capricorn, on Aquarius a goose, and two mullets over the sign of the Fishes. The centerpiece was a clod of turf with the grass still green on top and the whole thing surmounted by a fat honeycomb. Meanwhile, bread in a silver chafing dish was being handed around by a black slave with long hair who was shrilling in an atrocious voice some song from the pantomime called *Asafoetida*. (4) With some reluctance we began to attack this wretched fare, but Trimalchio kept urging us, "Eat up, gentlemen, eat up!"

[36] Suddenly the orchestra gave another flourish and four slaves came dancing in and whisked off the top of the tray. Underneath, in still another tray, lay fat capons and sowbellies and a hare tricked out with wings to look like a little Pegasus. At the corners of the tray stood four little gravy boats, all shaped like the satyr Marsyas, with phalluses for spouts and a spicy hot gravy dripping down over several large fish swimming about in the lagoon of the tray. The slaves burst out clapping, we clapped too and turned with gusto to these new delights. Trimalchio, enormously pleased with the success of his little *tour de force*, roared for a slave to come and carve. The carver appeared instantly and went to work, thrusting with his knife like a gladiator practicing to the accompaniment of a water-organ. But all the time Trimalchio kept mumbling in a low voice, "Carver, carver, carver, carver...." I suspected that this chant was somehow connected with a trick, so I asked my neighbor, an old hand at these party surprises, "Look," he said, "you see that slave who's carving? Well, he's called Carver, so every time Trimalchio says 'Carver,' he's also saying 'Carve 'er!' and giving him order to carve."

[37] This atrocious pun finished me: I couldn't touch a thing. So I turned back to my neighbor to pick up what gossip I could and soon had him blabbing away, especially when I asked him about the woman who was bustling around the room. "Her?" he said, "why, that's Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife. And the name couldn't suit her better. She counts her cash by the cartload. And you know what she used to be? Well, begging your Honor's pardon, but you wouldn't have taken bread from her hand. Now, god knows how or why, she's sitting pretty: has Trimalchio eating out of her hand. If she told him at noon it was night, he'd crawl into bed. As for him, he's so loaded he doesn't know how much he has. But that bitch has her finger in everything— where you'd least expect it too. A regular tightwad, never drinks, and sharp as they come. But she's got a nasty tongue; get her gossiping on a couch and she'll chatter like a parrot. If she likes you, you're lucky; if she doesn't, god help you.

"As for old Trimalchio, that man's got more farms than a kite could flap over. And there's more silver plate stuffed in his porter's lodge than another man's got in his safe. As for slaves, whoosh! So help me, I'll bet not one in ten has ever seen his master. Your ordinary rich man is just peanuts compared to him;

he could knock them all under a cabbage and you'd never know they were gone.

[38] "And buy things? Not him. No sir, he raises everything right on his own estate. Wool, citron, pepper, you name it. By god, you'd find hen's milk if you looked around. Now take his wool. The home-grown strain wasn't good enough. So you know what he did? Imported rams from Tarentum, bred them into the herd. Attic honey he raises at home. Ordered the bees special from Athens. And the local bees are better for being crossbred too. And, you know, just the other day he sent off to India for some mushroom spawn. Every mule he owns had a wild ass for a daddy. And you see those pillows there? Every last one is stuffed with purple or scarlet wool. That boy's loaded!

"And don't sneer at his friends. They're all ex-slaves, but every one of them's rich. You see that guy down there on the next to last couch? He's worth a cool half-million. Came up from nowhere. Used to tote wood on his back. People say, but I don't know, he stole a cap off a hobgoblin's head and found a treasure. He's the gods' fair-haired boy. That's luck for you, but I don't begrudge him. Not so long ago he was just a slave. Yes sir, he's doing all right. Just a few days ago he advertised his apartment for rent. The ad went like this:

APARTMENT FOR RENT AFTER THE FIRST OF JULY.  
AM BUYING A VILLA. SEE C. POMPEIUS DIOGENES.

"And you see that fellow in the freedman's seat? He's already made a pile and lost it. What a life! But I don't envy him. After the first million the going got sticky. Right now I'll bet he's mortgaged every hair on his head. But it wasn't his fault. He's too honest, that's his trouble, and his crooked friends stripped him to feather their own nests. One thing's sure: once your little kettle stops cooking and the business starts to slide, you get the brushoff from your friends. And, you know, he had a fine, respectable business too. Undertaking. Ate like a king: boars roasted whole, pastry as tall as buildings, pheasants, chefs, pastry cooks — the whole works. Why, he's had more wine spilled under his table than most men have in their cellars. Life? Hell, it was a dream! Then when things started sliding, he got scared his creditors would think he was broke. So he advertised an auction:

GAIUS JULIUS PROCULUS  
WILL HOLD  
AN AUCTION  
OF HIS  
SPARE FURNITURE!

[39] By now the astrological course had been removed, the guests were gaily attacking the wine, and there was a loud hubbub of laughing and chatter. My neighbor's pleasant prattle, however, was interrupted by Trimalchio. Lounging back on his elbow, he burst out: "Gentlemen, I want you to savor this good wine. Fish must swim, band that's a fact. But I'd like to know if you were really taken in by that stuff you saw on the top tray. Is that what you think of me? What does our Virgil say?

Is this what men report of great Ulysses?

Not on your life. At dinner, I say, there should be culture as much as food. My old master — may his bones rest in peace — wanted me to be a man of the world and a gentleman of culture. And I think that last course will show you there isn't much that I don't know. Listen now, and I'll explain to you about the zodiac. This heaven, which is where the twelve gods live, changes into twelve signs. Now sometimes it turns into the Ram, that is, Aries. Everyone who gets himself born under the Ram owns heaps of sheep and lots of wool; besides, his head is hard, his forehead like brass and his horns like swords. That's why

many professors and also muttonheads are born under the sign of the Ram."

We all applauded our droll astrologer and he continued. "After the Ram, the Universe switches over to the Bull, who's sometimes called Taurus. The people who are born under the Bull include bullies and cowboys and people who lie down in soft pastures. Under the Twins, old Gemini, you get two-horse teams, yokes of oxen, lechers who are led around by their balls, and two-faced politicians. (5) Cancer, or the Crab, is my sign; therefore I walk on many legs and my possessions stretch over land and sea, for the crab is at home in both those elements. That's why I avoided putting anything on my sign for a long time: I didn't want my birth-sign queered. Under Leo the Lion you get gluttons and big shots; under Virgo the Virgin you get useless women, deserters, and those who wear chains on their ankles, fetters for men, bracelets for women. Stinger Scorpio has poisoners and murderers. Under Archer Sagittarius you get cross-eyed thieves who cock an eye at the beets but snitch the ham. Under Capricorn, because it means goat-horn, come men who have horns or corns, corn-men are workers who sweat for their wages and horn-men are cuckolds all. Aquarius is a water carrier, so under him you find innkeepers who water the wine and people who are all wet. But Pisces is for Fishes and he gives us the fishier types of men: gape-mouthed lawyers or just plain fish peddlers. That's why things are as they are. The universe goes whizzing around like a millwheel and is always up to some mischief and people are either dying or just getting born. As for the hunk of earth you saw sitting in the middle that was packed with meaning too. For dead in the center of everything sits old Mother Earth, as fat as an elf, and loaded with goodies like a honeycomb."

[40] We all cheered and cried, "Bravo" and swore that Aratus and Hipparchus were mere amateurs, not to be compared with our host. But while we were flattering him, servants came and draped our couches with special covers, each one entirely embroidered with hunting scenes — nets, hunters with spears lying in ambush, and all the rest. We were wondering what all this was leading up to, when suddenly there came a hideous uproar outside the room and then huge Spartan mastiffs came bounding in and began to gallop around the table. Following the dogs came servants with a tray on which we saw a wild sow of absolutely enormous size. Perched rakishly on the sow's head was the cap of freedom which newly freed slaves wear in token of their liberty, and from her tusks hung two baskets woven from palm leaves: one was filled with dry Egyptian dates, the other held sweet Syrian dates. Clustered around her teats were little suckling pigs made of hard pastry, gifts for the guests to take home as it turned out, but intended to show that ours was a brood-sow. The slave who stepped up to carve, however, was not our old friend Carver who had cut up the capons, but a huge fellow with a big beard, a coarse hunting cape thrown over his shoulders, and his legs bound up in cross-gaiters. He whipped out his knife and gave a savage slash at the sow's flanks. Under the blow the flesh parted, the wound burst open and dozens of thrushes came whirring out! But bird-catchers with limed twigs were standing by and before long they had snared all the birds as they thrashed wildly around the room. Trimalchio ordered that a thrush be given to each guest, adding for good measure, "Well, that old porker liked her acorns juicy all right." Then servants stepped forward, removed the baskets hanging from the sow's nose, and divided the dry and sweet dates out equally among the guests.

[41] Meanwhile I was desperately trying to figure out why the sow had been brought in with that freedom cap on her head. One after another, I tried all kinds of crazy, far-fetched ideas; finally I mustered up my courage and asked my neighbor. "Why, gods alive," he snorted, "even your slave could have figured that one out. It's no riddle at all, clear as day. Look: yesterday this sow was served for dinner, but the guests were so stuffed they let it go. Get it? They let it go. So today naturally she comes back to the table as a free sow." I cursed myself for being so slow and decided to ask no more questions.

Altogether it was beginning to look as though I'd never dined in good company before.

During this exchange a pretty little boy came into the room, wearing a wreath of vine leaves and ivy in his hair like a little Bacchus or Father Liber. He did us a number of imitations of Bacchus under various forms: as Lyaeus, Bromius, Evius, and so on. (6) Then warbling some of Trimalchio's poetry in a shrill soprano, he went around offering the guests grapes from his basket. Finally Trimalchio took notice of the boy's efforts and called him over. "Come here, you baby Dionysus. Little Father Liber I hereby liberate you." At this the boy snatched the freedom cap from the boar's head and stuck it on his own. Trimalchio wheeled back, laughing. "Well, gentlemen. It's all on me!" We clapped our approval of his elaborate pun and kissed the little boy soundly as he made the round of the couches to be congratulated on his new freedom.

At this point Trimalchio heaved himself up from his couch and waddled off to the toilet. Once rid of our table tyrant, the talk began to flow more freely. Damas called for larger glasses and led off himself. "What's one day? Bah, nothing at all. You turn round and it's dark. Nothing for it, I say, but jump right from bed to table. Brrrr. Nasty spell of cold weather we've been having. A bath hardly warmed me up. But a hot drink's the best overcoat of all; that's what I always say. Whoosh, I must have guzzled gallons. I'm tight and no mistake. Wine's gone right to my head...'

[42] "As for me," Seleucus broke in, "I don't take a bath every day. Your bath's a fuller; the water's got teeth like a comb. Saps your vital juices. But once I've had a slug of mead, then bugger the cold. Couldn't have had a bath today anyway. Had to go to poor old Chrysanthus' funeral. Yup, he's gone for good, folded his tent forever. And a grand little guy he was; they don't make 'em any better these days. I might almost be talking to him now. Just goes to show you. What are men anyway but balloons on legs, a lot of blown-up bladders? Flies, that's what we are. No, not even flies. Flies have something inside. But a man's a bubble, all air, nothing else. And, you know, Chrysanthus might still be with us if he hadn't tried that starvation diet. Five days and not a crumb of bread, not a drop of water, passed his lips. Tch, tch. And now he's gone, joined the great majority. Doctors killed him. Maybe not doctors, call it fate. What good's a doctor but for peace of mind? But the funeral was fine, they did it up proper: nice bier, fancy drapes, and a good bunch of mourners turned out too. Mostly slaves he'd set free, of course. But his old lady was sure stingy with the tears. Not that he didn't lead her a hard life, mind. But women, they're a race of kites. Don't deserve love. You might as well drop it down a well. And old love's a real cancer..."

[43] He was beginning to be tiresome and Phileros shouted him down. "Whoa there," he cut in, "let's talk about the living. He got what was coming to him. he lived well, he died well. What the hell more did he want? And got rich from nothing too. And no wonder, I say. That boy would have grubbed in the gutter for a coin and picked it out with his teeth too. God knows what he had salted away. Just got fatter and fatter, bloated with the stuff. Why, that man oozed money the way a honey-comb oozes honey. But I'll give you the lowdown on him, and no frills either. He talked tough, sure, regular pair of fists and legs. But you take his brother: now that's a real man for you, friendly and generous as they come, and what's more, he knows how to put on a spread. Anyway, as I was saying, what does our boy do but flop on his first big deal and end up eating crow? But come the vintage and he got right back on his feet and sold his wine at his own figure. What really gave him a boost was some legacy he got. And I don't mind telling you, he milked that legacy for all it was worth and then some. So what does the sap do next but pick a fight with his own brother and leave everything to a total stranger? I mean, it just shows you. Run from your kin and you run a damn long ways, as the saying goes. Well, you know, he had some slaves and he listened to them as though they were a lot of oracles, so naturally they took him in the end. It's like I always say, a sucker gets screwed. And that goes double when a man's in business. But there's a saying,

it isn't what you're given, but what you can get that counts. Well, he got the meat out of that one all his life. He was Lady Luck's fair-haired boy and no mistake. Lead turned to gold in his hand. Of course, it's easy when the stuff comes rolling in on its own. And you know how old he was when he died? Seventy and then some. But carried it beautifully, hard as nails and his hair as black as a crow. I knew him for ages, and he was horny, right to the end. By god, I'll bet he even pestered the dog. Boys were what he really liked, but he wasn't choosy: he'd jump anything with legs. I don't blame him, a bit, you understand. he won't have any fun where he's gone now."

[44] But Ganymedes struck in, "Stuff like that doesn't matter to man or beast. But nobody mentions the real thing, the way the price of bread is pinching. God knows, I couldn't buy a mouthful of bread today. And this damn drought goes on and on. Nobody's had a belly full for years now. It's those rotten officials, you take my word for it. They're in cahoots with the bakers: you scratch me and I'll scratch you. So the little people get it in the neck, but in the rich man's jaws it's jubilee all year. By god, if we only had the kind of men we used to have, the sort I found here when I arrived from Asia. Then life was something like living. Man, milk and honey day in and day out, and the way they'd wallop those blood-sucking officials, you'd have thought old Jupiter was having himself a tantrum. I remember old Safinius now. He used to live down by the old arch when I was a boy. More peppercorn than man. Singed the ground wherever he went. But honest and square and a real friend! Why, you could have matched coins with him in the dark. And in the town hall he'd lay it right on the line, no frills at all, just square on the target. And when he made a speech in the main square, he'd let loose like a bugle blowing. But neat as a pin all the time, never ruffled, never spat: there was something Asiatic about him. And you know, he always spoke to you, even remembered your name, just as though he were one of us. And bread was dirt-cheap in his day. For a penny you got a loaf that two men couldn't finish. Nowadays bulls' eyes come bigger than bread. But that's what I mean, things are just getting worse and worse. Why, this place is running downhill like a heifer's ass. You tell me, by god, the good of this three-fig official of ours who thinks more of his his graft than what's happening to us. Why, that boy's just living it up at home and making more in a day than most men ever inherit. If we had any balls, let me tell you, he'd be

Mark my words, we're in for bad times if some man or god doesn't have a heart and take pity on this place

laughing out of the other side of his face. But not us. Oh, no, we're big lions at home and scared foxes in public. Why, I've practically had to pawn my clothes and if bread prices don't drop soon, I'll have to put my houses on the market. Mark my words, we're in for

bad times if some man or god doesn't have a heart and take pity on this place. I'll stake my luck on it, the gods have got a finger in what's been happening here.

And you know why? Because no one believes in the gods, that's why. Who observes the fast days any more, who cares a rap for Jupiter? One and all, bold as brass, they sit there pretending to pray, but cocking their eyes on the chances and counting up their cash. Once upon a time, let me tell you, things were different. The women would dress up in their best and climb barefoot up to the temple on the hill. Their hair was unbound and their hearts were pure and they went to beg Jupiter for rain. And you know what happened? Then or never, the rain would come sloshing down by the bucket, and they'd all stand there like a pack of drowned rats, just grinning away. Well, that's why the gods have stuffed their ears, because we've gotten unreligious. The fields are lying barren and..."

[45] "For god's sake," the rag seller Echion broke in, "cut out the damned gloom, will you? 'Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad,' as the old peasant said when he sold the spotted pig. Luck

changes. If things are lousy today, there's always tomorrow. That's life, man. Sure, the times are bad, but they're no better anywhere else. We're all in the same boat, so what's the fuss? If you lived anywhere else, you'd be swearing the pigs here went waddling around already roasted. And don't forget, there's a big gladiator show coming up the day after tomorrow. Not the same old fighters either; they've got a fresh shipment in and there's not a slave in the batch. You know how old Titus works. Nothing's too good for him when he lets himself go. Whatever it is, it'll be something special. I know the old boy well, and he'll go whole hog. Just wait. There'll be cold steel for the crowd, no quarter, and the amphitheater will end up looking like a slaughterhouse. He's got what it takes too. When the old man died — and a nasty way to die, I'm telling you — he left Titus a cool million. Even if he spent ten thousand, he'd never feel it, and people won't forget him in a hurry either. He's already raked together a troupe of whirling dervishes, and there's a girl who fights from a chariot. And don't forget that steward that Glyco caught in bed with his wife. You just wait, there'll be a regular free-for-all between the lovers and the jealous husbands. But that Glyco's a cheap bastard. Sent the steward down to be pulled to pieces by the wild beasts, you know. So that just gave his little secret away, of course. And what's the crime, I'd like to know, when the poor slave is told to do it? It's that piss-pot-bitch of his that ought to be thrown to the bulls, by god! Still, those who can't beat the horse must whop the saddle. But what stumps me is why Glyco ever thought old Hermogenes' brat would turn out well anyway. The old man would have pared a hawk's claws in mid-air, and like father, like daughter, as I always say. But Glyco's thrown away his own flesh and blood; he'll carry the marks of this mess as long as he lives and only hell will burn it away. Yes sir, that boy has dug his own grave and no mistake.

"Well, they say Mammaea's going to put on a spread. Mmmm, I can sniff it already. There'll be a nice little handout all around. And if he does, he'll knock old Norbanus out of the running for good. Beat him hands down. And what's Norbanus ever done anyway, I'd like to know. A lot of two-bit gladiators and half-dead at that: puff at them and they'd fall down dead. Why, I've seen better men tossed to the wild animals. A lot of little clay statues, barnyard strutters, that's what they were. One was an old jade, another was a clubfoot, and the replacement they sent in for him was half-dead and hamstrung to boot. There was one Thracian with some guts but he fought by the book. And after the fight they had to flog the whole lot of them the way the mob was screaming, 'Let 'em have it!' Just a pack of runaway slaves. Well, says Norbanus, at least I gave you a show. So you did, says I, and you got my cheers for it. But tot it up and you'll see you got as much as you gave. So there too, and tit for tat, says I.

[46] "Well, Agamemnon, I can see you're thinking, 'What's that bore blabbing about now?' You're the professor here, but I don't catch you opening your mouth. No, you think you're a cut above us, don't you, so you just sit there and smirk at the way we poor men talk. Your learning's made you a snob. Still, let it go. I tell you what. Someday you come down to my villa and look it over. We'll find something to nibble on, a chicken, a few eggs maybe. This crazy weather's knocked everything topsy-turvy, but we'll come up with something you like. Don't worry your head about it, there'll be loads to eat.

"You remember that little shaver of mine? Well, he'll be your pupil one of these days. He's already doing division up to four, and if he comes through all right, he'll sit at your feet someday. Every spare minute he has, he buries himself in his books. He's smart all right, and there's good stuff in him. His real trouble is his passion for birds. I killed three of his pet goldfinches the other day and told him the cat had got them. He found some other hobby soon enough. And, you know, he's mad about painting. And he's keen on his Latin. But the tutor's a little stuck on himself and won't keep him in line. The older boy now, he's a bit slow. But he's a hard worker and teaches the others more than he knows. Every holiday he spends at home, and whatever you give him, he's content. So I bought him some of those big red

lawbooks. A smattering of law, you know, is a useful thing around the house. There's money in it too. He's had enough literature, I think. But if he doesn't stick it out in school, I'm going to have him taught a trade. Barbering or auctioneering, (7) or at least a little law. The only thing that can take a man's trade away is death. But every day I keep pounding the same thing into his head: 'Son, get all the learning you can. Anything you learn is money in the bank. Look at Lawyer Phileros. If he hadn't learned his law, he'd be going hungry and chewing on air. Not so long ago he was peddling his wares on his back; now he's running neck and neck with old Norbanus. Take my word for it, son, there's a mint of money in books, and learning a trade never killed a man yet.'"

[47] Conversation was running along these lines when Trimalchio returned, wiping the sweat from his brow. He splashed his hands in perfume and stood there for a minute in silence. "You'll excuse me, friends," he began, "but I've been constipated for days and the doctors are stumped. I got a little relief from a prescription of pomegranate rind and resin in a vinegar base. Still, I hope my tummy will get back its manners soon. Right now my bowels are bumbling around like a bull. But if any of you has any business that needs attending to, go right ahead; no reason to feel embarrassed. There's not a man been born yet with solid insides. And I don't know any anguish on earth like trying to hold it in. Jupiter himself couldn't stop it from coming — What are you giggling about, Fortunata? You're the one who keeps me awake all night with your trips to the potty. Well, anyone at table who wants to go has my permission, and the doctors tell us not to hold it in. Everything's ready outside — water and pots and the rest of the stuff. Take my word for it, friends, the vapors go straight to your brain. Poison your whole system. I know of some who've died from being too polite and holding it in."

As yet we were unaware that we had slogged only halfway through this "forest of refinements," as the poets put it. But when the tables had been wiped — to the inevitable music, of course — servants led in three hogs rigged out with muzzles and bells. According to the head-waiter, the first hog was two years old, the second three, but the third was all of six. I supposed that we would now get tumblers and rope dancers and that the pigs would be put through the kind of clever tricks they perform for the crowds in the street. But Trimalchio dispelled such ideas by asking, "Which one of these hogs would you like cooked for your dinner? Now your ordinary country cook can whip you up a chicken or make a Bacchante mincemeat (8) or easy dishes of that sort. But my cooks frequently broil calves whole." With this he had the cook called in at once, and without waiting for us to choose our pig, ordered the oldest slaughtered. Then he roared at the cook, "What's the number of your corps, fellow?"

"The fortieth, sir," the cook replied.

"Were you born on the estate or bought?"

"Neither, sir. Pansa left me to you in his will."

"Well," barked Trimalchio, "see that you do a good or or I'll have you demoted to the messenger corps."

The cook, freshly reminded of his master's power, meekly led the hog off toward the kitchen. [48] While Trimalchio gave us all an indulgent smile. "If you don't like the wine," he said, "we'll have it changed for you. I'll know by the amount you drink what you think of it. Luckily too I don't have to pay a thing for it. It comes with a lot of other good things from a new estate of mine near town. I haven't seen it yet, but I'm told it adjoins my lands at Terracina and Tarentum. Right now what I'd really like to do is buy up Sicily. Then I could go to Africa without ever stepping off my own property. (9)

"But tell me," he said, turning to Agamemnon, "what was the subject of the debate today? Of course, I'm no orator myself, but I've learnt a thing or two about law for use around the place. And don't think I'm one of those people who look down on learning. No sir, I've got two libraries, one Greek and the

other Latin. So tell us, if you will, what your debate was about."

"Well," said Agamemnon, "it seems that a rich man and a poor man had gone to court..."

"A poor man?" Trimalchio broke in, "what's that?"

"Very pretty, very pretty," chuckled Agamemnon and then launched out into an exposition of god knows which of his debating topics.

But Trimalchio immediately interrupted him: "If that's the case, there's no argument; if it isn't the case, then what does it matter?" Needless to say, we pointedly applauded all of Trimalchio's sallies.

"But tell me, my dear Agamemnon," continued our host, "do you remember the twelve labors of Hercules or the story about Ulysses and how the Cyclops broke his thumb trying to get the log out of his eye? When I was a kid, I used to read all those stories in Homer. And, you know, I once saw the Sibyl of Cumae in person. She was hanging in a bottle, and when the boys asked her, "Sibyl, what do you want?" she said, 'I want to die.'"

[49] He was still chattering away when the servants came in with an immense hog on a tray almost the size of the table. We were, of course, astounded at the chef's speed and swore it would have taken longer to roast an ordinary chicken, all the more since the pig looked even bigger than the one served to us earlier. Meanwhile Trimalchio had been scrutinizing the pig very closely and suddenly roared, "What! What's this? By god, this hog hasn't even been gutted! Get that cook in here on the double!"

Looking very miserable, the poor cook came shuffling up to the table and admitted that he had forgotten to gut the pig.

'You forgot? Bellowed Trimalchio. "You forgot to gut the pig? And I suppose you think that's the same thing as merely forgetting to add salt and pepper. Strip that man!"

The cook was promptly stripped and stood there stark naked between two bodyguards, utterly forlorn. The guests to a man, however, interceded for the chef. "Accidents happen," they said, "please don't whip him. If he ever does it again, we promise we won't say a word for him." My own reaction was anger, savage and unrelenting. I could barely restrain myself and leaning over, I whispered to Agamemnon, "Did you ever hear of anything worse? Who could forget to gut a pig? By god, you wouldn't catch me letting him off, not if it was just a fish he'd forgotten to clean."

Not so Trimalchio, however. He sat there, a great grin widening across his face, and said: "Well, since your memory's so bad, you can gut the pig here in front of us all." The cook was handed back his clothes, drew out his knife with a shaking hand, and then slashed at the pig's belly with crisscross cuts. The slits widened out under the pressure from inside, and suddenly out poured, not the pig's bowels and guts, but link upon link of tumbling sausages and blood puddings.

[50] The slaves saluted the success of the hoax with a rousing, "LONG LIVE GAIUS!" The vindicated chef was presented with a silver crown and honored by the offer of a drink served on a platter of fabulous Corinthian bronze. Noticing that Agamemnon was admiring the platter, Trimalchio said, "I'm the only man in the world who owns genuine Corinthian bronze." I expected him to brag in his usual way that he'd had the stuff imported directly from Corinth, but he was way ahead of me. "Perhaps," he said, "you'd like to know why I'm the only man who owns genuine Corinthian. Well, I'll tell you. It's because I have it made by a craftsman of mine called Corinthus, and what's Corinthian, I'd like to know, if not something Corinthus makes? And don't think I'm just a stupid half-wit. I know very well how Corinthian bronze got invented. You see, when Troy was taken, there was this fellow called Hannibal, a real swindler, and he ordered all the bronze and gold and silver statues to be melted down in a pile. Well, the stuff melted and made a kind of mixture. So smiths came and started carting it off and turning out platters and side dishes and little statues. And that's how real Corinthian began, a kind of mishmash

metal, and nothing on its own. If you don't mind my saying so though, I like glass better. It doesn't stink like bronze, and if it weren't so breakable, I'd prefer it to gold. Besides, it's cheap as cheap.

[57] "But, you know, there was once a workman who invented a little glass bottle that wouldn't break. Well, he got in to see the emperor with this bottle as a present. Then he asked the emperor to hand it back to him and managed to drop it on the floor on purpose. Well, the emperor just about died. But the workman picked the bottle back up from the floor and, believe it or not, it was dented just a little, as though it were made out of bronze. So he pulled a little hammer out of his pocket and tapped it back into shape. Well, by this time he thought he had Jupiter by the balls, especially when the emperor asked him if anyone else was in on the secret. But you know what happened? When the workman told him that nobody else knew, the emperor ordered his head chopped off. Said that if the secret ever got out, gold would be as cheap as dirt.

[52] "But silver's my real passion. I've got a hundred bowls that hold three or four gallons apiece, all of them with the story of Cassandra engraved on them: how she killed her sons, you know, and the kids are lying there dead so naturally that you'd think they were still alive. And there's a thousand goblets too which Mummius left my old master. There's pictures on them too, things like Daedalus locking up Niobe in the Trojan Horse. And on my cups, the heavy ones, I've got the fights of Hermeros and Petraitas. No sir, I wouldn't take cash down for my taste in silver."

In the midst of this harangue, a slave dropped a goblet on the floor. Once he had finished talking, Trimalchio wheeled on him and said, "Why don't you go hang yourself? You're no damn good to me." The slave began to whimper and beg for mercy. But Trimalchio was stern: "Why come whining to me for pity? As if I got you into your mess. Next time tell yourself not to be so damn dumb." However, we interceded once more and managed to get the slave off. The instant he was pardoned, he began to scamper around the table...

Then Trimalchio shouted, "Out with the water, in with the wine!" We dutifully applauded the joke, and particularly Agamemnon who was an old hand at wangling return invitations.

By now Trimalchio was drinking heavily and was, in fact, close to being drunk. "Hey, everybody!" he shouted, "Nobody's asked Fortunata to dance. Believe me, you never saw anyone do grinds the way she can." With this he raised his hands over his forehead and did an impersonation of the actor Syrus singing one of his numbers, while the whole troupe of slaves joined in on the chorus. He was just about to get up on the table when Fortunata went and whispered something in his ear, probably a warning that these drunken capers were undignified. Never was a man so changeable: sometimes he would bow down to Fortunata in anything she asked; at other times, as now, he went his own way.

[53] But it was the secretary, not Fortunata, who effectively dampened his desire to dance, for quite without warning he began to read from the estate records as though he were reading some government bulletin.

"Born," he began, "on July 26th, on Trimalchio's estate at Cumae, thirty male and forty female slaves.

"Item, five hundred thousand bushels of wheat transferred from the threshing rooms into storage.

"On the same date, the slave Mithridates crucified alive for blaspheming the guarding spirit of our master Gaius.

"On the same date the sum of three hundred thousand returned to the safe because it could not be invested.

"on the same date, in the gardens at Pompeii, fire broke out in the house of the bailiff Nasta..."

"What?" roared Trimalchio. "When did I buy any gardens at Pompeii?"

"Last year," the steward replied. "That's why they haven't yet appeared on the books."

"I don't care what you buy," stormed Trimalchio, "but if it's not reported to me within six months, I damn well won't have it appearing on the books at all!"

The reading was then resumed. First came the directives of the superintendents on various estates and then the wills of the gamekeepers, each one excluding Trimalchio by a special clause. There followed a list of his overseers, the divorce of a freedwoman by a nightwatchman for being caught in flagrante with an attendant from the baths, and the banishment of a steward to Baiae. It closed with the accusation against a cashier and the verdict in a dispute between several valets.

At long last the tumblers appeared. An extremely insipid clown held up a ladder and ordered a boy to climb up and do a dance on top to the accompaniment of several popular songs. He was then commanded to jump through burning hoops and to pick up a big jug with his teeth. No one much enjoyed this entertainment except Trimalchio who claimed that the stunts were extremely difficult. Nothing on earth, he added, gave him such pleasure as jugglers and buglers; everything else, such as animal shows and concerts, was utter trash. "I once bought," he bragged, "several comic actors, but I used them for doing farces and I told my flutist to play nothing but Latin songs, the funny ones."

[54] Just at this point the ladder toppled and the boy on top fell down, landing squarely on Trimalchio. The slaves shrieked, the guests screamed. We were not, of course, in the least concerned about the boy, whose neck we would have been delighted to see broken; but we dreaded the thought of possibly having to go into mourning for a man who meant nothing to us at all. Meanwhile, Trimalchio lay there groaning and nursing his arm as though it were broken. Doctors came rushing in, Fortunata at their head, her hair flying, a goblet in her hand, and filling the room with wails of distress. As for the boy, he was already clutching us by the legs and begging us to intercede for him. My own reaction was one of suspicion. I was afraid, that is, that these pleas for pity were simply the prelude to one more hoax; for the incident of the slave who had forgotten to gut the pig was still fresh in my mind. So I started to examine the room rather uneasily, half expecting, I suppose, that the walls would split open and go knows what contraption would appear. And these suspicions were somewhat confirmed when they began flogging a servant for having bound up his master's wounded arm with white, rather than scarlet, bandages. Actually, as it turned out, I was not far wrong, for instead of having the boy whipped, Trimalchio ordered him to be set free, so that nobody could say that the great Trimalchio had been hurt by a mere slave.

[55] We gave this ample gesture our approval and remarked on the uncertainties of human existence. "Yes," said Trimalchio, "it would be a shame to let an occasion like this pass by without some enduring record of it." he then called for writing materials and after a brief but harrowing effort produced the following lines:

*We think we're awful smart, we think we're awful wise,  
but when we're least expecting, comes the big surprise.  
Lady Luck's in heaven and we're her little toys,  
So break out the wine and fill your glasses, boys!*

From this beginning, the conversation went on to poetry, and for a considerable time somebody was maintaining that the best poet of all time was the Thracian poet, Mopsus. (10) Then Trimalchio turned to Agamemnon and said, "Professor, what's the difference between Cicero and Publilius (11) in your opinion? to my way of thinking, Cicero jogs along better but Publilius has him all beat when it comes to the message. What, after all, could be more profound than this?"

*Extravagance and Waste have breach'd our walls,  
and Mars' vast ramparts crumble down in ruin.  
To please thy palate, Rome, that haughty bird,  
the peacock, glistens in his cage to die;  
the cock from Afric strand thy victim is;  
upon thy plate the capon perisheth.  
Lo, e'en the friendly stork, our peregrine,  
blest bird of piety that stalks on stilts,  
cold winter's refugee, who rattleth on  
the tiles and struts the roof in sign of Spring,  
now builds his final nest — upon the plate  
of Greed!*

*Ah, and why should distant Ind produce  
the harvest of her pearl, that berried stone?  
That matrons should, forsooth, in baubles dress  
and raise their shameless legs upon the couch  
of lust?*

*Why, why should emeralds make  
magnificence of green, and rubies glow  
with coruscation of expensive fire,  
unless sweet Chstity, among such stones,  
might better blaze her innocence abroad?  
O shame, that brides in gossamer should go,  
and filmy gauze their nakedness should gloze!*

[56] "But next to literature," he continued, "which profession do you think has the roughest time of it? To my mind, doctors and money-changers are the worst off. Doctors, because they have to guess what's going on in the tummies of poor mankind and when the fever comes. But doctors I despise: they're always sticking me on a diet of roast duck. Money-changers come next because they have to detect the phony copper beneath the silver. Now of dumb animals the ones who have things worst are oxen and sheep. Poor dumb oxen, because its their work that puts the bread in our mouths, and sheep because the clothes on our backs we owe to them. And it's a dirty shame, I think, the way we eat their mutton and wear their wool when the poor dumb sheep pay the bill. But bees are really good; they're almost like gods, I say, because they vomit honey and pretend they got it from Jupiter. Of course, they sting too, but that's because there's a bit of bitterness in all good things..."

He had started in easing the philosophers out of their jobs when servants brought around jars from which we all drew slips. Then the boy whose task it was read each of our slips aloud. Every one contained some conundrum or pun which entitled us to a humorous present. Thus when the slip SOUR SILVER SAUCES SOW was read, a leg of ham topped by a silver cruet filled with vinegar was carried in. HEADREST earned a neck of mutton, while HINDSIGHT and LAMBASTING was matched by a bowl of lamb gravy with buckeyes floating around in it. HORSERADISH AND PRUNES won a riding whip and a pruning knife, and several wrinkled plums and a jar of Attic honey went to the slip reading PLUMAGE AND FLYTRAP. For GOOD FOOD FOR FOOTWEAR? They produced a fillet of sole broiled on the sole of a

sandal. SOMETHING FOR THE FEET won a pair of rabbit-lined slippers, while MUSSELS AND SOME LETTERS INA AN ENVELOPE received a mouse tied between two eels and a pod of peas. We chuckled at these jokes, but there were hundreds of them and I have forgotten most of them by now.

[57] Ascylltus, however, was no longer able to swallow his snickers and he finally tossed back his head and roared and guffawed until he was almost in tears. At this one of Trimalchio's freedmen friends, the man just above me at the table, took offense and flared out in wild rage. "You cheap muttonhead," he snarled, "what are you cackling about? Entertainment isn't good enough for the likes of you, I suppose? you're richer, huh? And eat better too? I'll bet! So help me, if you were down here by me, I'd stop your damn bleating!

"Some nerve he's got, laughing at us. Stinking runaway, that's what he is. A burglar. A bum. Bah, he's not worth a good boot in the ass. By god, if I tangle with him, he won't know where he's headed! So help me, I don't often fly off the handle like this. Still, if the flesh is soft, I say, the worms will breed.

"Still cackling, are you? Who the hell are you to snicker? Where'd your daddy buy you? Think you're made out of gold, eh? So that's it, you're a Roman knight? That makes me a king's son. Then why was I a slave? Because I wanted to be. Because I'd rather be a Roman slave than a tax-paying savage. And as I live and breathe, I hope no man thinks I'm funny. I walk like a free man, I don't owe any man a thing. I've never been hauled into court. That's right: no man ever had to tell me to pay up. I've bought a few little plots of land and a nice bit of silver plate. I feed twenty stomachs, not counting the dog. I bought my wife's freedom so no man could put his dirty paws on her. I paid a good two hundred for my own freedom. Right now, I'm on the board for the emperor's worship, and I hope when I die I won't have to blush for anything. But you're so damn busy sneering at us, you don't look at your own behind. You see the lice on us but not the ticks on yourself. Nobody but you thinks we're funny. Look at your old professor there: he appreciates us. Bah, you're still sucking tit; you're limp leather, limper, no damn better. Oh you're rich, are you? Then cram down two lunches; bolt two suppers, sonny. As for me, I'd rather have my credit than all your cash. Who ever had to dun me twice? Forty years, boy and man, I spent as a slave, but no one could tell now whether I was slave or free. I was just a curly-headed kid when I came to this place. The town hall wasn't even built then. But I did everything I could do to please my master. He was a good man, a real gentleman, whose fingernail was worth more than your whole carcass. And there were some in that house who would have liked to see me stumble. But thanks to my master I gave them the slip. Those are real trials, those are real triumphs. But when you're born free everything's as easy as saying, 'Hurry on down.' Well, what are you gaping at now, like a goat in vetch?"

[58] At those last words, Giton, who was sitting at our feet, went rudely off into a great gale of whooping laughter which he had been trying to stifle for some time. Ascylltus' tormentor promptly trained his fire on the boy. "So you're snorting too, are you, you frizzle-headed scallion? You think it's time for capers, do you, carnival days and cold December? When did you pay your freedom tax, eh? Well, what are you smirking at, you little gallows bird? Look, birdbait, I'll give it to you proper and the same for that master who won't keep you in line. May I never eat bread again, if I let you off for anyone except our hose here; if it weren't for him, I'd fix you right now. We were all feeling good, nice happy party, and then those half-baked masters of yours let you cut out of line. Like master, like slave, I always say.

"Damnation, I'm so hopping mad, I can't stop. I'm no sorehead either, but when I let go, I don't give a damn for my own mother. Just you wait, I'll catch you out in the street someday. You mouse, you little potato! And when I do, if I don't knock your master into the cabbage patch, my name's not Hermeros. You can holler for Jupiter on Olympus as loud as you like, and it won't help you one little bit. By god, I'll

fix those frizzle-curls of yours, and I'll fix your two-bit master too! You'll feel my teeth, sonny boy. And you won't snicker them, or I don't know who I am. No, not if your beard were made out of gold! By god, I'll give you Athena's own anger, and that goes for the blockhead who set you free! I never learned geometry or criticism or hogwash of that kind, but I know how to read words carved in stone and divide up to a hundred, money, measure, or weights. Come on, I'll lay you a little bet. I'll stake a piece of my silver set. You may have learned some rhetoric in school, but let me prove your daddy wasted his money educating you. Ready? Then answer me this: 'I come long and I come broad. What am I?' I'll give you a clue. One of us runs, the other stays put. One grows bigger; the other stays small. Well, that's you, skittering around, bustling and gaping like a mouse in a jug. So either shut up or don't bother your elders and betters who don't know you exist. Or do you think I'm impressed by those phony gold rings of yours? Swipe them from your girl? Sweet Mercury, come down to the main square in town and try to take out a loan. Then you'll see this plain iron ring of mine makes plenty of credit. Hah, that finished you. You look like a fox in the rain. By god, if I don't pull up my toga and hound you all over town, may I fail in my business and die broke! So help me! And isn't he something, that professor who taught you your manners? Him a professor? A bum, that's what he is. In my time, a teacher was a teacher. Why, my old teacher used to say, 'Now, boys, is everything in order? Then go straight home. No dawdling, no gawking on the way. And don't be sassy to your elders.' But nowadays teachers are trash. Not worth a damn. As for me, I'm grateful to my old teacher for what he taught me..."

[59] Ascylltus was on the point of replying, but Trimalchio, charmed by his friend's eloquence, broke in first: "Come on now. That's enough. No more hard feelings. I want everyone feeling good. As for you, Hermeros, don't be too hard on the boy. He's a little hotheaded, so show him you're made of better stuff. It's the man who gives in in arguments like this who wins every time. Besides, when you were all cockadoodledoo and no damn sense. So let bygones be bygones. Come on, everybody, smile! The rhapsodes are going to perform for us now."

Immediately a troupe of rhapsodes burst into the room, all banging away on their shields with spears. Trimalchio hoisted himself up on his pillows and while the rhapsodes were gushing out their Greek poetry with the usual bombast, he sat there reading aloud in Latin. At the end there was a brief silence; then Trimalchio asked us if we knew the scene from Homer the rhapsodes had just recited. "Well," he said, "I'll tell you. You see, there were these two brothers, Ganymede and Diomedes. Now they had a sister called Helen, see. Well, Agamemnon eloped with her and Diana left a deer as a fill-in for Helen. Now this poet called Homer describes the battle between the Trojans and the people of a place called Paros, which is where Paris came from. Well, as you'd expect, Agamemnon won and gave his daughter Iphigenia to Achilles in marriage. And that's why Ajax went mad, but here he comes in person to explain the plot himself."

At this the rhapsodes burst into cheers, the slaves went scurrying about and promptly appeared with a barbecued calf, with a cap on its head, reposing on a huge platter – it must have weighed two hundred pounds at the very least. Behind it came Trimalchio's so-called Ajax. He pulled out his sword and began slashing away at the calf, sawing up and down, first with the edge and then with the flat of his blade. Then with the point of the sword he neatly skewered the slices of veal he had cut and handed them around to the astounded guests.

[60] Our applause for this elaborate tour de force, however, was abruptly cut short. For all at once the coffered ceiling began to rumble and the whole room started to shake. I jumped up in terror, expecting that some acrobat was about to come swinging down through the roof. The other guests, equally frightened, lay there staring at the roof as though they were waiting for a herald from heaven.

Suddenly the paneling slid apart and down through the fissure in the ceiling an immense circular hoop, probably knocked off some gigantic cask, began slowly to descend. Dangling from the hoop were chaplets of gold and little jars of perfume, all, we were informed, presents for us to take home. I filled my pockets and then, when I looked back at the table, saw a tray garnished with little cakes; in the center stood a pastry statuette of Priapus with the usual phallus propping up an apron loaded with fruits and grapes of every variety. You can imagine how greedily we all grabbed, but then a fresh surprise sent us off again into fresh laughter. For at the slightest touch the cakes and fruit all squirted out jets of liquid saffron, splattering our faces with the smelly stuff. Naturally enough, the use of the sacred saffron made us conclude that this course must be part of some religious rite, so we all leaped to our feet and shouted in chorus, "LONG LIVE THE EMPEROR, FATHER OF OUR COUNTRY!" Even this act of homage, however, failed to prevent some of the guests from pilfering the fruit and stuffing their napkins full. And I, of course, was among the chief offenders, thinking nothing in this world too good to fill the pockets of my Giton.

Meanwhile three slaves dressed in snowy tunics had made their entrance. Two of them set out Trimalchio's household gods, small statures with the usual gold medallion of the owner on the chest. The third boy brought around a bowl of wine and solemnly intoned a prayer to the gods for blessings on the house and guests. The names of his household gods, Trimalchio told us, were Fat Profit, Good Luck, and Large Income. And because we saw all the other guests piously kissing Trimalchio's medallion, we felt embarrassed not to do likewise. [61] We then offered our congratulations to our host and wished him the best of health and soundness of mind.

Trimalchio now turned to his old friend Niceros. "You used to be better company, my friend," he said, "but now you're solemn and glum, and I don't know why. But if you'd like to make your host happy, why not tell us the story of your famous adventure?"

Niceros was delighted to have been singled out. "So help me," he said, "but may I never earn a thing, if I'm not ready to burst at your kind words. Well, here goes. Happiness here we come! Though I confess I'm a bit nervous our learned professors are going to laugh me down. Still, so what? I'll tell you my story and let them snicker. Better to tell a joke than be one, I say."

With these "winged words" our storyteller began. "When I was still a slave, we used to live in a narrow little street about where Gavilla's house stands now. There the gods decreed that I should fall in love with the wife of the tavern keeper Terentius. You remember Melissa, don't you? Came from Tarentum and a buxom little package, if ever I saw one. But, you know, I loved her more for her moral character than her body. Whatever I wanted, she gladly supplied, and we always went halves. I gave her everything I had, and she'd stow it all safely away. What's more, she never cheated.

"Well, one day, down at the villa, her husband died. Needless to say, I moved heaven and earth to get to her, for a friend in need is a friend indeed. [62] By a stroke of real luck my master had gone off to Capua to do some odds and ends of business. So I grabbed my chance and persuaded one of our guests to go with me as far as the fifth milestone. He was a soldier and strong as the devil. Well, we stumbled off at cockcrow with the moon shining down as though it were high noon. But where the road leads down between the graves, my man went off among the tombstones to do his business, while I sat by the road mumbling a song to keep my courage up and counting the graves. After awhile I started looking around for him and suddenly I caught sight of him standing stark naked with all his clothes piled up on the side of the road. Well, you can imagine: I stood frozen, stiff as a corpse, my heart in my mouth. The next thing I knew he was pissing around his clothes and then, presto! he changed into a wolf. Don't think I'm making this up. I wouldn't kid you for anything. But like I was saying, he turned into a wolf, then

started to howl and loped off for the woods. At first I couldn't remember where I was. Then I went to get his clothes and discovered they'd been changed into stones. By now, let me tell you, I was scared. But I pulled out my sword and slashed away at the shadows all the way to my girlfriend's house. I arrived as white as a ghost, almost at the last gasp, with the sweat pouring down my crotch and my eyes bugging out like a corpse. I don't know how I ever recovered. Melissa, of course, was surprised to see me at such an hour and said, 'If you'd only come a little earlier, you could have lent us a hand. A wolf got into the grounds and attacked the sheep. The place looked like a butchershop, blood all over. He got away in the end, but we had the last laugh. One of the slaves nicked him in the throat with a spear.'

"That finished me. I couldn't sleep a wink the rest of the night and as soon as it was light, I went tearing back home like a landlord chasing the tenants. When I reached the spot where my friend's clothing had been turned into stones, there was nothing to be seen but blood. But when I got home, I found the soldier stretched out in bed like a poleaxed bull and the doctor inspecting his neck. By now, of course, I knew he was a werewolf and you couldn't have made me eat a meal with him to save my own life. You're welcome to think what you like of my story, but may the gods strike me dead if I'm feeding you a lie."

[63] Far from doubting him, we were all dumb with astonishment. "I, for one," said Trimalchio, "wouldn't dream of doubting you. In fact, if you'll believe me, I had goosebumps all over. I know old Niceros and he's no liar. Nope, he's truth itself and never exaggerates. But now I'm going to tell you a horrible story of my own, as weird as an ass on the roof.

"When I was just a little slave with fancy curls — I've lived in the lap of luxury from my boyhood on, as coddled as they come— my master's pet slave happened to die one day. He was a jewel all right, a little pearl of perfection, clever as hell and good as good. Well, while his mother was tearing out her hair and the rest of us were helping out with the funeral, suddenly the witches started to howl. They sounded like a whole pack of hounds on the scent of a hare. Now at that time we had a slave from Cappadocia, a giant of a man, scared of nothing and strong as iron. That boy could have picked up a mad bull with one hand. Well, this fellow whips out his sword and rushes outside with his left arm wrapped in his cloak for a shield. The next thing we knew he had stabbed one of those wild women right through the guts — just about here, heaven preserve the spot! Then we heard groans and when we looked out, so help me, there wasn't a witch to be seen. Well, our big bruiser came stumbling in and collapsed on a bed. He was covered from head to toe with black and blue spots as though he'd been flogged, though we knew it was that evil hand that had touched him. We shut the door and went back to work. But when his mother went to give him a hug, she found there was nothing there but a bundle of straw. No heart, no guts, no anything. As I see it, the witches had made off with the body and left a straw dummy in its place. But it just goes to show you: there are witches and the ghouls go walking at night, turning the whole world upside down. As for our big meathead, after the witches brought him back, he was never the same again, and died raving mad a few days later."

[64] We were, of course, dumfounded, and no less credulous than amazed. So we kissed the table and implored the spirits who walk by night to keep to themselves and leave us in peace when we went home from dinner that night.

I must admit that by this time I was beginning to see the lamps burning double and the whole room seemed to be whirling around. But Trimalchio was in splendid form and turned to another of his guests. "Come on, Plocamus," he joshed him, "won't you entertain us with a story? You used to be better company, you know. Remember those bits from the plays you used to recite and the songs you sang? Oh well, I suppose we're all getting along now and we're not what we used to be. So it goes, so it goes."

"My racing days ended," declared Plocamus, "the day I got the gout. But when I was younger, I almost got T.B. from singing so much. Remember? The dancing and the recitations and the good old times we had at the barbershop? Why, except for Apelles, I doubt the world has ever seen my equal." With that, he clapped his hand over his mouth and mumbled some hideous doggerel which he later boasted was Greek.

Not to be outdone, Trimalchio promptly launched into an imitation of a bugler. That over, he turned his attention to his pet slave, that cruddy-eyed little boy with hideously stained teeth whom he called Croesus. At the moment Croesus was busily engaged in wrapping up a disgustingly fat lapdog with a green shawl and at the same time trying to force half a loaf of bread down the poor dog's throat, though the dog was on the point of throwing up. This little tableau gave Trimalchio the brilliant idea of having Bowser, "the guardian of my hearth and home," as he expressed it, brought in. Immediately an immense mastiff on a leash was led into the room and ordered by a kick from the porter to lie down beside the table. Trimalchio tossed him several chunks of white bread. "Nobody in this whole house," he declared, "loves me as much as that mutt." Croesus, instantly jealous of this handsome praise of Bowser, dropped his lapdog to the floor and sicked him on to yap at the big dog. Bowser naturally responded by filling the room with ear-splitting barks and nearly tore Croesus' dog to pieces. The uproar continued until someone knocked the chandelier onto the table, smashing all the crystal goblets and splattering several of the guests with burning oil. Wishing to appear unruffled by the damage, Trimalchio kissed Croesus and told him to clamber up on his shoulders. This the boy promptly did, riding his master piggyback, beating him with the palms of his hands, and shrieking, "Horsey, horsey, guess how many fingers I'm holding up!" For awhile the utter confusion and uproar silenced even Trimalchio. But at the first opportunity he ordered a great vat of wine to be mixed and divided among the slaves who were standing about ready to serve us. "If anyone refuses," he barked, "dump it on his head. The day's for work, the evening's for pleasure."

[65] Following this extravagant display of kindness came a course the very memory of which, if you will believe me, I still find sickening. For instead of the usual small bird or thrush, each one of us was served a plump chicken and several goose eggs sporting little pastry caps. Trimalchio insisted that we sample the eggs, saying that they were nothing but geese minus the bones. Meanwhile someone was hammering at the door and before long a carouser dressed in a splendid white robe and accompanied by a throng of slaves made his entrance. His face was dignified and stern, so stern in fact that I took him for the praetor, slammed my bare feet onto the cold floor and made ready to run for it. But Agamemnon laughed at my fright and said, "Relax, you idiot, it's only Habinnas. He's an official of the imperial cult and a mason by trade. They say he makes first-rate tombstones."

Somewhat reassured, I sat down again but continued to observe Habinnas' entrance with mounting amazement. He was already half-drunk and was propping himself up by holding on to his wife's shoulders with both hands. He was literally draped in garlands of flowers and a stream of perfumed oil was running down his forehead and into his eyes. When he reached the place reserved for the praetor, he sat down and called for wine and warm water. Trimalchio was delighted to see his friend in such spirits and called for bigger glasses before asking him how he had eaten.

"Only one thing was missing," Habinnas smiled, "and that was you. My heart was really here the whole time. But, by god, Scissa did it up brown. She put on one fine spread for that poor slave's funeral, "I'll say that for her. What's more, she set him free after his death. And what with the 5 percent tax, I'll bet that gesture cost her a pretty penny. The slave himself was valued at about two thousand. Still, it was very nice, though it cut across my grain to have to pour out half my drinks as an offering to the poor

boy's bones."

[66] "But what did they give you to eat," Trimalchio pressed him.

"If I can remember, I'll tell you," said Habinnas. "But my memory's so bad these days, I sometimes can't even remember my own name. Let's see, first off we had some roast pork garnished with loops of sausage and flanked with more sausages and some giblets done to a turn. And there were pickled beets and some whole wheat bread made without bleach. I prefer it to white, you know. It's better for you and less constipating too. Then came a course of cold tart with a mixture of some wonderful Spanish wine and hot honey. I took a fat helping of the tart and scooped up the honey generously. Then there were chickpeas and lupins, no end of filberts, and an apple apiece. I took two apples and I've got one wrapped up in my napkin here. If I forgot to bring a little present to my pet slave, I'd be in hot water. And oh, yes my wife reminds me: the main course was a roast of bear meat. Scintilla was silly enough to try some and almost chucked up her supper. But it reminds me of roast boar, so I put down about a pound of it. Besides, I'd like to know, if bears eat men, why shouldn't men eat bears? To wind up, we had some soft cheese steeped in fresh wine, a snail apiece, some tripe hash, liver in pastry boats and eggs topped with more pastry and turnips and mustard and beans boiled in the pod and — but enough's enough. Oh yes, and they passed around a dish of olives pickled in caraway, and some of the guests had the nerve to walk off with three fistfuls. But we sent the ham back untasted. [67] See here, Gaius, why isn't Fortunata eating?" "You know how she is," said Trimalchio. "Until she's put the silver away and divided the leftovers among the servants, she won't touch even a drop of water."

"Well, if she doesn't come and eat right now," said Habinnas, "I'm leaving."

With that he started to rise and probably would have left if Trimalchio had not signaled and the whole corps of slaves shouted four or five times in chorus: "FORTUNATA!" She promptly appeared, her dress bound up so high by a pale green sash that beneath her cherry-colored tunic I could glimpse her massive ankle-rings of twisted gold and a pair of golden slippers. She wiped her fingers on the handkerchief she wore around her neck and sat down on the couch beside Habinnas' wife, Scintilla. Scintilla clapped her hands, Fortunata kissed her and burst out, "Why, darling, it's been just ages since I've seen you!"

In this way the two women chattered on for some time. The next thing I knew Fortunata was undoing the bracelets on her grotesquely fat arms and showing them off for Scintilla to admire. Then she undid her anklets and finally her hair net, which she kept insisting was woven of pure gold. Trimalchio, who was observing this byplay with interest, ordered all her jewelry brought to him. "Gentlemen," he said, "I want you to see the chains and fetters our women load themselves with; this is how we poor bastards are bankrupted. By god, she must be wearing six and a half pounds of solid gold. Still, I must admit I've got a bracelet that weighs a good ten pounds on its own. That was the value of two or three thousandths of my profits for the year, the same amount I give to Mercury as the patron-god of business. To prove his boast, he ordered a pair of scales brought in and the weights passed around for us to test. For her part, Scintilla was not to be outdone and took off the large locket which she wore around her neck and called her "lucky piece." Out of it she drew a pair of golden earrings and handed them over for Fortunata's inspection. "They're a present from my husband," she said. "Thanks to his generosity, no woman on earth has a finer pair."

"Generosity, my ass," snorted Habinnas. "You'd pester the life out of me to get a couple of glass beans. If I had a daughter, so help me, I'd have her ears chopped off. If it weren't for the women, things would be as cheap as dirt. But money — they waste it like water. Swallow it cold and good and piss it hot and useless."

By this time both the women were high and sat there giggling and exchanging little hugs and kisses, Fortunata boasting about her abilities as a housekeeper and Scintilla complaining of her husband's favorites and his indifference to her. At one point during this tender scene Habinnas rose stealthily to his feet, tiptoed over behind their couch and, grabbing Fortunata by the knees, toppled her over backwards onto the couch. As she fell her tunic slipped up above her knees. Fortunata gave a piercing shriek, threw herself into Scintilla's arms and tried to hide her blushes in her handkerchief.

[68] Once the confusion had died down, Trimalchio ordered the dessert brought on. The servant immediately removed not merely the dirty dishes but the tables themselves and replaced them with fresh ones. The floor was sprinkled with saffron sawdust and powdered mica, something I had never seen used for this purpose before. "Behold your dessert, gentlemen, these fresh vegetables," said Trimalchio. "I've made a clean sweep of everything, and that's all you get. That's what you deserve; that's your dessert. haw, haw. But if there's still anything in the kitchen worth eating, boys, bring it on." Meanwhile an Alexandrian slave was passing us hot water for our wine and at the same time doing an imitation of a nightingale, but Trimalchio kept muttering, "Change that stinking tune." Then the slave seated at Habinnas' feet and clearly acting on his master's orders started to chant a passage from Virgil, the one beginning:

Meanwhile Aeneas' fleet still rode the heavy swell.

...Altogether it was the most atrocious sound that ever fell on my ears. Not only was his pronunciation barbarous, a kind of sing-song rising and falling of the pitch, but he also jumbled in verses from some obscene farce, so that for the first time in my life Virgil actually jarred on me. At the end, however, Habinnas clapped enthusiastically and said: "You wouldn't believe it, but he's never had any formal training. I sent him off to learn from the hawkers at the fairs, and he can't be beat at imitating mule drivers and barkers. And he's real smart, does everything: makes shoes, cooks, bakes...In fact, he'd be perfect if he didn't have two bad points: he's been circumcised and he snores. He's cross-eyed too, but I don't mind that. Venus has a bit of a squint, they say. And I bought him for next to nothing..."

[69] "You haven't mentioned all the little bugger's tricks," broke in Scintilla angrily. "He's a little pimp and a fairy, that's what he is, and someday I'll see he's branded for it." Trimalchio guffawed at this. "Come on, Scintilla, don't be jealous. We know what the score is with you too. And why not, I'd like to know. Cross my heart and hope to die, if I didn't have a few tussles in the sheets with my old master's wife too. In fact, the old man got suspicious, so much so that he shipped me off to a farm in the country. But stop wagging, tongue, and I'll give you some bread to munch."

At this point that damned slave of Habinnas, obviously under the impression that we had been praising him, pulled a clay lamp with a spout out of his tunic and for a full half hour sat there mimicking a bugler while Habinnas hummed and fiddled his lower lip up and down in a kind of Jew's harp accompaniment. Then, to crown all this, the slave stepped out before us all and first parodied with two straws the flutists at the plays and next, waving a whip and twisting himself in his cloak, did an imitation of a mule driver. Habinnas called him over finally, gave him a kiss and a glass of wine and said, "Nice work, Massa. I'll see that you get a pair of shoes for this."

This deadly entertainment would never have ended if the servants had not brought on another course, consisting of pastry thrushes with raisin and nut stuffing, followed by quinces with thorns stuck in them to resemble sea urchins. We could have put up with these dishes, if the last and most sickening course of all had not killed our appetites completely. When it was first brought in, we took it for a fat goose surrounded by fish and little birds of all kinds. But Trimalchio declared, "My friends, everything

you see on that platter has been made from one and the same substance." I, of course, not the man to be deceived by appearances, had to turn and whisper to Agamemnon, "I'd be very surprised if everything there hadn't been made out of plain mud or clay. At the Carnival in Rome, I've seen whole meals made from stuff like that."

[70] I was still whispering when Trimalchio said, "As surely as I hope to get richer — but not fatter, please god — my cook baked all that junk out of roast pork. In fact, I doubt if there's a more valuable chef in the whole world. Just say the word, and he'll whip you up a fish out of sowbelly, pigeons out of bacon, doves from ham and chicken from pigs' knuckles. That's why I've named him Daedalus, and it suits him to a T. And because he's an inventor and a genius, I've brought him back some fine cutlery from Rome." He then ordered the knives brought in and passed around for us to admire and inspect. He also gave us permission to test the blades on the stubble of our cheeks.

Suddenly two slaves came rushing in looking as though they'd had an argument while drawing water at the well; at least they were carrying large jars on their backs and were obviously furious with each other. Trimalchio offered to act as arbiter of their argument but they refused to abide by his decision and began to pummel each other with their sticks. We were appalled by this drunken insolence but nonetheless kept our eyes glued to the fight. Suddenly we noticed that oysters and mussels were sloshing over from the jugs and a slave caught them as they fell and handed them around in a dish. Unwilling to be outstripped in extravagance, the clever chef matched the oysters by bringing around hot buttered snails on a silver grill and singing all the time in a hideously dismal, quavering voice.

What happened next was an extravagance so fantastic that I am almost embarrassed to mention it. However, young slaves with long flowing curls came around to each of us in turn, wreathed our legs and ankles with garlands of flowers and anointed our feet with perfume from a silver bowl. Then a generous amount of this same perfume was poured into the oil lamps and even into the wine bowl.

By now Fortunata was almost desperate to dance and Scintilla was clapping her hands even more frequently than she opened her mouth. Suddenly Trimalchio had an idea. "You there, Philargyrus," he called out to a slave, "I know you're a fan of the Greens in the races, but come and sit with us anyway. You too, Cario, and tell your wife to do the same." Well, you can imagine what happened. The dining room was by now so packed with slaves that in the rush for seats the guests were almost shoved bodily from the couches. For my part, I had to endure seeing the cook — the one who had made the goose out of pork and who reeked of pickles and hot sauce — installed just above me on the couch. Worst of all, not content with a place at the table, he had to do an imitation of the tragic actor Epheseus and then had the brass to bet his master that the Greens would win the next race in the Circus.

[71] But Trimalchio was charmed by the challenge. "My friends," he brayed, "slaves are human too. They drink the same mother's milk that we do, though an evil fate grinds them down. But I swear that it won't be long — if nothing happens to me— before they all taste the good water of freedom. For I plan to free them all in my will. To Philargyrus here I leave a farm and his woman, Cario inherits a block of flats and the tax on his freedom and his bed and bedding. To my dear Fortunata I leave everything I have, and I commend her to the kindness of my friends. But I'm telling you the contents of my will so my whole household will love me as much when I'm still alive as after I'm dead.

Once the slaves heard this, of course, they burst out with cheers and effusive thanks. But Trimalchio suddenly began to take the whole farce quite seriously and ordered his will brought out and read aloud from beginning to end while the slaves sat there groaning and moaning. At the close of the reading, he turned to Habinnas. "Well, old friend, will you make me my tomb exactly as I order it? First, of course, I want a statue of myself. But carve my dog at my feet, and give me garlands of flowers, jars of perfume

and every fight in Petraitēs' career. Then, thanks to your good offices, I'll live on long after I'm gone. In front, I want my tomb one hundred feet long, but two hundred feet deep. Around it I want an orchard with every known variety of fruit tree. You'd better throw in a vineyard too. For it's wrong, I think, that a man should concern himself with the house where he lives his life but give no thought to the home he'll have forever. But above all I want you to carve this notice:

THIS MONUMENT DOES NOT PASS INTO  
THE POSSESSION OF MY HEIRS

In any case I'll see to it in my will that my grave is protected from damage after my death. I'll appoint one of my ex-slaves to act as custodian to chase off the people who might come and crap on my tomb. Also, I want you to carve me several ships with all sail crowded and a picture of myself sitting on the judge's bench in official dress with five gold rings on my fingers and handing out a sack of coins to the people. For it's a fact, and you're my witness, that I gave a free meal to the whole town and a cash handout to everyone. Also make me a dining room, a frieze maybe, but however you like, and show the whole town celebrating at my expense. On my right I want a statue of Fortunata with a dove in her hand. And oh yes, be sure to have her pet dog tied to her girdle. And don't forget my pet slave. Also I'd like huge jars of wine, well stoppered so the wine won't slosh out. Then sculpt me a broken vase with a little boy sobbing out his heart over it. And in the middle stick a sundial so that anyone who wants the time of day will have to read my name. And how will this do for the epitaph?

HERE LIES GAIUS POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO  
MAECENATIANUS,  
VOTED IN ABSENTIA AN OFFICIAL OF THE  
IMPERIAL CULT.  
HE COULD HAVE BEEN REGISTERED  
IN ANY CATEGORY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE AT ROME  
BUT CHOSE OTHERWISE.  
PIOUS AND COURAGEOUS,  
A LOYAL FRIEND,  
HE DIED A MILLIONAIRE  
THOUGH HE STARTED LIFE WITH NOTHING.  
LET IT BE SAID TO HIS ETERNAL CREDIT  
THAT HE NEVER LISTENED TO PHILOSOPHERS.  
PEACE TO HIM.  
FAREWELL.

[72] At the end he burst into tears. Then Fortunata started wailing. Habinnas began to cry, and every slave in the room burst out sobbing as though Trimalchio were dying then and there. The whole room throbbed and pulsed to the sound of mourning. I was almost in tears myself, when Trimalchio suddenly cried, "We all have to die, so let's live while we're waiting! Come on, everybody, smile, be happy. We'll all go down to the bath for a dip. The water's hot as an oven."

"Hurrah!" shouted Habinnas. "We'll make one day do the work of two!" With that he leaped up in his bare feet and ran after Trimalchio who was clapping his hands with approval and excitement.

I turned to Ascyllus. "Well, what do you think? As for me, the mere sight of a bath would finish me off."

"Pretend to go along," he whispered back, "and when they head for the baths, we'll make off in the confusion."

Agreed on our strategy, we followed Giton's lead through the portico to the main entrance. There, however, we were given a deafening welcome by the chained watchdog, and his furious barking and growling so terrified Ascylltus that he tumbled backwards into the fishpond. The mere painting of that same watchdog had nearly been my ruin earlier, and the real thing frightened me so horribly that between my fear and my drunkenness, I managed to fall into the pool myself while trying to haul Ascylltus out. Fortunately for us the porter soon appeared, which somewhat calmed the dog. Finally, the porter succeeded in dragging us both, wet and shivering, out of the pool to terra firma. Meanwhile Giton had prudently made friends with the dog by tossing him all the tidbits we'd carefully saved from supper, and bribed by these offerings, the dog had finally stopped barking. Utterly soaking and shaking all over, we asked the porter to open the gate and let us out. "You're badly mistaken, gentlemen," he replied, "if you think you can leave by the same way you came. No guest in this house ever goes out by the same door again. There's one way in and another way out."

[73] So what were we poor devils to do now, trapped in this strange labyrinth of a place? As it was, we would have given anything in the world to be standing in a hot bath. At last, however, we succeeded in persuading the porter to lead us to the baths. There we stripped off our soaking clothes and went in, leaving Giton at the entrance so he could dry our clothes over the bath furnace.

The bath itself was narrow and shaped like a cold water cistern, and we found Trimalchio standing in the middle of the pool. But even here there was no escape from his revolting bragging. As for himself, he was saying, he preferred to bathe in private anyway from the crowd. In this very spot, moreover, there once used to be a bakery which he had bought out, etc., etc. Finally when simple exhaustion forced him to sit down, he became fascinated by the weird acoustics of the vaulted room and began in a drunken bass to murder some of Menecrates' songs. At least I was told by those who pretended to understand his gibberish that they belonged to Menecrates' repertoire. Meanwhile some of the other guests were cavorting around the edge of the pool and screeching out popular songs. Others, holding their hands behind their backs, were trying to pick up rings from the floor with their teeth, and still others, kneeling down on the ground, were attempting to arch themselves backward until they touched their toes. Leaving the drunkards to their games, we went on ahead and sampled the hot bath which had been drawn for Trimalchio. In no time at all the water had cleared the wine fumes from our heads, and we were taken into a second dining room where Fortunata had laid out some of her prize possessions. There was a number of curious lamps, but I particularly remember several figurines of fishermen in bronze and some tables of solid silver covered with gilded goblets into which fresh wine was being strained before our eyes. "My friends," said Trimalchio, apropos of nothing, "my pet slave is having his first shave today. He's a good boy and a model of thrift. So let's celebrate. We'll drink until dawn!"

[74] Pat to these last words, a cock ominously crowed somewhere. Alarmed by the coincidence, Trimalchio superstitiously ordered the servants to pour some wine under the table and even to sprinkle the lamps with wine. Then he slipped his ring from his left hand to his right and said, "Buglers don't bugle for kicks, and that cockcrow means there's a fire nearby or somebody's died. Don't let it be bad luck for us, please heaven. Whoever fetches me that calamity-crowing rooster first, gets a fat reward." In half a minute, somebody had brought in the rooster from somewhere, and Trimalchio promptly ordered it cooked. The chef, Daedalus, that culinary genius who had whisked up birds and fish from the leg of pork, beheaded the bird and tossed it into a pot. And while the cook drew off the boiling broth, Fortunata ground up the pepper in a little wooden mill.

We were sampling this unexpected snack, when Trimalchio suddenly remembered that the servants had not yet eaten. "What?" he roared, "you haven't eaten yet? Then off with you. Go eat and send in another shift to take your places." So a fresh shift of slaves soon appeared at the door, all shouting, "Greetings, Gaius!" while the first shift went out with a cry of "Goodbye, Gaius!" At this moment an incident occurred on which our little party almost foundered. Among the incoming slaves there was a remarkably pretty boy. Trimalchio literally launched himself upon him and, to Fortunata's extreme annoyance, began to cover him with rather prolonged kisses. Finally, Fortunata asserted her rights and began to abuse him. "You turd!" she shrieked, "you hunk of filth." At last she used the supreme insult: "Dog!" At this Trimalchio exploded with rage, reached for a wine cup and slammed it into her face. Fortunata let out a piercing scream and covered her face with trembling hands as though she'd just lost an eye. Scintilla, stunned and shocked, tried to comfort her sobbing friend in her arms, while a slave solicitously applied a glass of cold water to her livid cheek. Fortunata herself hunched over the glass heaving and sobbing.

But Trimalchio was still shaking with fury. "Doesn't that slut remember what she used to be? By god, I took her off the sale platform and made her an honest woman. But she blows herself up like a bullfrog. She's forgotten how lucky she is. She won't remember the whore she used to be. People in shacks shouldn't dream of palaces, I say. By god, if I don't tame that strutting Cassandra, my name isn't Trimalchio! And to think, sap that I was, that I could have married an heiress worth half a million. And that's no lie. Old Agatho, who sells perfume to the lady next door, slipped me the word: 'Don't let your line die out, old boy,' he said. But not me. Oh no, I was a good little boy, nothing fickle about me. And now I've gone and slammed the axe into my shins good and proper. — But someday, slut, you'll come scratching at my grave to get me back! And just so you understand what you've done, I'll remove your statue from my tomb. That's an order, Habinnas. No sir, I don't want any more domestic squabbles in my grave. And what's more, just to show her I can dish it out too, I won't have her kissing me on my deathbed."

[75] After this last thunderbolt, Habinnas begged him to calm himself and forgive her. "None of us is perfect," he said, "we're men, not gods." Scintilla burst into tears, called him her dear dear Gaius and implored him by every thing holy to forgive Fortunata. Finally, even Trimalchio began to blubber. "Habinnas," he whined, "as you hope to make a fortune, tell me the truth; if I've done anything wrong, spit right in my face. So I admit I kissed the boy, not because of his looks, but because he's a good boy, a thrifty boy, a boy of real character. He can divide up to ten, he reads at sight, he's saved his freedom price from his daily allowance and bought himself an armchair and two ladles out of his own pocket. Now doesn't a boy like that deserve his master's affection? But Fortunata says no. — Is that your idea, you high-stepping bitch? Take my advice, vulture, and keep your own nose clean. Don't make me show my teeth, sweetheart, or you'll feel my anger. You know me. Once I make up my mind, I'm as stubborn as a spike in wood.

"But the hell with her. Friends, make yourselves comfortable. Once I used to be like you, but I rose to the top by my ability. Guts are what make the man; the rest is garbage. I buy well, I sell well. Others have different notions. But I'm like to bust with good luck. — You slut, are you still blubbering? By god, I'll give you something to blubber about.

"But like I was saying, friends, it's through my business sense that I shot up. Why, when I came here from Asia, I stood no taller than that candlestick there. In fact, I used to measure myself by it every day; what's more, I used to rub my mouth with lamp oil to make my beard sprout faster. Didn't do a bit of good, though. For fourteen years I was my master's pet. But what's the shame, if you know what I mean,

I managed to do my mistress a favor or two. But mum's the word: I'm none of your ordinary blowhards.

[76] Well, then heaven gave me a push and I became master in the house. I was my master's brains. So he made me joint heir with the emperor to everything he had, and I came out of it with a senator's fortune. But we never have enough, and I wanted to try my hand at business. To cut it short, I had five ships built. Then I stocked them with wine — worth its weight in gold at the time — and shipped them off to Rome. I might as well have told them to go sink themselves since that's what they did. Yup, all five of them wrecked. No kidding. In one day old Neptune swallowed down a cool million. Was I licked? Hell, no. That loss just whetted my appetite as though nothing had happened at all. So I built some more ships, bigger and better and a damn sight luckier. No one could say I didn't have guts. But big ships make a man feel big himself. I shipped a cargo of wine, bacon, beans, perfume and slaves. And then Fortunata came through nicely in the nick of time: sold her gold and the clothes off her back and put a hundred gold coins in the palm of my hand. That was the yeast of my wealth. Besides, when the gods want something done, it gets done in a jiffy. On that one voyage alone, I cleared about five hundred thousand. Right away I bought up all my old master's property. I built a house, I went into slave-trading and cattle-buying. Everything I touched just grew and grew like a honeycomb. Once I was worth more than all the people in my home town put together, I picked up my winnings and pulled out. I retired from trade and started lending money to ex-slaves. To tell the truth, I was tempted to quit for keeps, but on the advice of an astrologer who'd just come to town, I decided to keep my hand in. He was a Greek, fellow by the name of Serapa, and clever enough to set up as consultant to the gods. Well, he told me things I'd clean forgotten and laid it right on the line from A to Z. Why, that man could have peeked into my tummy and told me everything except what I'd eaten the day before. You'd have thought he'd lived with me all his life.

[77] Remember what he said, Habinnas? You were there, I think, when he told my fortune. 'You have bought yourself a mistress and a tyrant,' he said, 'out of your own profits. You are unlucky in your friends. No one is as grateful to you as he should be. You own vast estates. You nourish a viper in your bosom.' There's no reason why I shouldn't tell you, but according to him, I have thirty years, four months, and two days left to live. And soon, he said, I am going to receive an inheritance. Now if I could just add Apulia to the lands I own, I could die content.

"Meanwhile, with Mercury's help, I built this house. As you know, it used to be a shack; now it's a shrine. It has four dining rooms, twenty bedrooms, two marble porticoes, an upstairs dining room, the master bedroom where I sleep, the nest of that viper there, a fine porter's lodge, and guest rooms enough for all my guests. In fact, when Scaurus came down here from Rome, he wouldn't put up anywhere else, though his father has lots of friends down on the shore who would have been glad to have him. And there are lots of other things I'll show you in a bit. But take my word for it: money makes the man. No money and you're nobody. But big money, big man. That's how it was with yours truly: from mouse to millionaire. " In the meantime, Stichus," he called to a slave, "go and fetch out the clothes I'm going to be buried in. And while you're at it, bring along some perfume and a sample of that wine I'm having poured on my bones."

[78] Stichus hurried off and promptly returned with a white grave-garment and a very splendid robe with a broad purple stripe. Trimalchio told us to inspect them and see if we approved of the material. Then he added with a smile, "See to it, Stichus that no mice or moths get into them, or I'll have you burned alive. Yes, sir, I'm going to be buried in such splendor that everybody in town will go out and pray for me."

He then unstopped a jar of fabulously expensive spikenard and had us all anointed with it. "I hope,"

he chuckled, "I like this perfume as much after I'm dead as I do now." Finally he ordered the slaves to pour the wine into the bowl and said, "Imagine that you're all present at my funeral feast."

The whole business had by now become absolutely revolting. Trimalchio was obviously completely drunk, but suddenly he had a hankering for funeral music too and ordered a brass band sent into the dining room. Then he propped himself on piles of cushions and stretched out full length along the couch. "Pretend I'm dead," he said, "say something nice about me." The band blared a dead march, but one of the slaves belonging to Habinnas — who was, incidentally, one of the most respectable people present — blew so loudly that he woke up the entire neighborhood. Immediately the firemen assigned to that quarter of town, thinking that Trimalchio's house was on fire, smashed down the door and rushed in with buckets and axes to do their job. Utter confusion followed, of course, and we took advantage of the heaven-sent opportunity, gave Agamemnon the slip, and rushed out of there as though the place were really in flames.

*finis*

Encolpus

## Book V

### Divine heroes of Mediterranean myths & the Bible

#### Introduction

*[From an email to Adil Orlander, November 25, 2007]*

Thanks for your kind comment. I talk about the "Branch" and the Tree of Life in many books (1) and am not sure where you saw it. Attached is an image taken from Evans' works, reproduced in a work by Clyde Keeler on the Tree of Life, and another from Kramer's work, "Sumerian Mythology." I comment a bit on the connection of the swastika and Tree of Life, with more images, in my [Phrygian.html](#). The swastika is shown in Mesopotamian pottery in various stages, first with each branch being a tree and finally in a simple geometric form whose tips carry a tiny branch and finally the geometry omits the "branch" from the bars of the swastika.

The Sumero-Akkadian stories depict the goddess Inanna guarding the Tree of Life. Associated with the story is that of Gilgamesh's journey to visit the Old Man of the Sea who can tell him how to obtain the "branch" of eternal life.

Tablets 1 - VI

...Go close to the Eanna Temple, the residence of Ishtar,  
such as no later king or man ever equaled!

Go up on the wall of Uruk and walk around,  
examine its foundation, inspect its brickwork thoroughly.

Is not (even the core of) the brick structure made of kiln-fired brick,  
and did not the Seven Sages themselves lay out its plans?

One league city, one league palm gardens, one league lowlands, the open area(?) of the Ishtar  
Temple,

three leagues and the open area(?) of Uruk it (the wall) encloses.

Find the copper tablet box,

open the ... of its lock of bronze,

undo the fastening of its secret opening.

Take and read out from the lapis lazuli tablet

how Gilgamesh went through every hardship.

... Offspring of Lugalbanda, Gilgamesh is strong to perfection,

son of the august cow, Rimat-Ninsun;... Gilgamesh is awesome to perfection.

It was he who opened the mountain passes,

who dug wells on the flank of the mountain.

It was he who crossed the ocean, the vast seas, to the rising sun,

who explored the world regions, seeking life.

It was he who reached by his own sheer strength Utanapishtim, the Faraway,

who restored the sanctuaries (or: cities) that the Flood had destroyed!

... for teeming mankind.

Who can compare with him in kingliness?

Who can say like Gilgamesh: "I am King!"?

Whose name, from the day of his birth, was called "Gilgamesh"?

Two-thirds of him is god, one-third of him is human.  
 ... When Ishtar heard this, in a fury she went up to the heavens  
 going to Anu, her father, and crying,  
 going to Anrum, her mother, and weeping:  
 "Father, Gilgamesh has insulted me over and over,  
 Gilgamesh has recounted despicable deeds about me,  
 despicable deeds and curses!"  
 Anu addressed Princess Ishtar, saying: "What is the matter?  
 Was it not you who provoked King Gilgamesh?  
 So Gilgamesh recounted despicable deeds about you,  
 despicable deeds and curses!"  
 Ishtar spoke to her father, Anu, saying:  
 "Father, give me the Bull of Heaven,  
 So he can kill Gilgamesh in his dwelling.  
 If you do not give me the Bull of Heaven,  
 I will knock down the Gates of the Netherworld,  
 I will smash the door posts, and leave the doors flat down,  
 and will let the dead go up to eat the living!  
 And the dead will outnumber the living!"  
 Anu addressed Princess Ishtar, saying:  
 "If you demand the Bull of Heaven from me,  
 there will be seven years of empty husks for the land of Uruk.  
 ... When Anu heard her words, he placed the noserope of the Bull of Heaven in her hand.  
 Ishtar led the Bull of Heaven down to the earth.  
 Then Enkidu jumped out and seized the Bull of Heaven by its horns.  
 the Bull spewed his spittle in front of him,  
 with his thick tail he flung his dung behind him (?)  
 After they had killed the Bull of Heaven,  
 they ripped out its heart and presented it to Shamash.  
 They withdrew bowing down humbly to Shamash.  
 Then the brothers sat down together.  
 Just as day began to dawn Gilgamesh opened (!)  
 ...and brought out a big table of sissoo wood.  
 A carnelian bowl he filled with honey,  
 a lapis lazuli bowl he filled with butter.  
 He provided ... and displayed it before Shamash.  
 Over his friend, Enkidu, Gilgamesh cried bitterly, roaming the wilderness.  
 "I am going to die!--am I not like Enkidu?!  
 Deep sadness penetrates my core.  
 I fear death, and now roam the wilderness--  
 I will set out to the region of Utanapishtim, son of Ubartutu,  
 and will go with utmost dispatch!  
 When I arrived at mountain passes at nightfall,  
 I saw lions, and I was terrified!

I raised my head in prayer to Sin,  
 to ... the Great Lady of the gods my supplications poured  
 forth, 'Save me from... !'  
 ...Enkidu, the wild ass who chased the wild donkey, panther of  
 the wilderness, we joined together, and went up into the mountain.  
 We grappled with and killed the Bull of Heaven,  
 we destroyed Humbaba who lived in the Cedar Forest,  
 we slew lions in the mountain passes!  
 My friend, whom I love deeply, who went through every hardship with me,  
 Enkidu, whom I love deeply, who went through every hardship with me,  
 the fate of mankind has overtaken him.  
 Six days and seven nights I mourned over him  
 and would not allow him to be buried  
 ... My friend whom I love has turned to clay.  
 Am I not like him? Will I lie down, never to get up again?"  
 Gilgamesh spoke to the tavern-keeper, saying:  
 "So now, tavern-keeper, what is the way to Utanapishtim!  
 What are its markers Give them to me! Give me the markers!  
 If possible, I will cross the sea;  
 if not, I will roam through the wilderness."  
 The tavern-keeper spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:  
 "There has never been, Gilgamesh, any passage whatever,  
 there has never been anyone since days of yore who crossed the sea.  
 The (only) one who crosses the sea is valiant Shamash,  
 except for him who can cross!  
 The crossing is difficult, its ways are treacherous--  
 and in between are the Waters of Death that bar its approaches!  
 And even if, Gilgamesh, you should cross the sea,  
 when you reach the Waters of Death what would you do!  
 Gilgamesh, over there is Urshanabi, the ferryman of Utanapishtim.  
 'The stone things' are with him, he is in the woods picking mint( !)  
 Go on, let him see your face.  
 If possible, cross with him;  
 if not, you should turn back."  
 Utanapishtim spoke to Gilgamesh, saying:  
 "Gilgamesh, you came here exhausted and worn out.  
 What can I give you so you can return to your land?  
 I will disclose to you a thing that is hidden, Gilgamesh,  
 a... I will tell you.  
 There is a plant... like a boxthorn,  
 whose thorns will prick your hand like a rose.  
 If your hands reach that plant you will become a young man again."  
 ... Hearing this, Gilgamesh opened a conduit (!) (to the Apsu)  
 and attached heavy stones to his feet.

They dragged him down, to the Apsu they pulled him.  
He took the plant, though it pricked his hand,



Relief from the N.W. palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.) showing anointing of the Tree of Life. A winged god holds what appear to be a pinecone and a pot with the anointing oil. Above the Tree of Life is the royal signet of the god Ashur. The god [Ashur](#) is depicted as a man with a bow inside a winged solar disk or as a winged solar disk. His image would be carried in the fore of Assyrian armies, and conquests were in his name.

and cut the heavy stones from his feet,  
letting the waves(?) throw him onto its shores.  
Gilgamesh spoke to Urshanabi, the ferryman, saying:  
"Urshanabi, this plant is a plant against decay (!)  
by which a man can attain his survival(!).  
I will bring it to Uruk-Haven,  
and have an old man eat the plant to test it.  
The plant's name is 'The Old Man Becomes a Young Man.'  
Then I will eat it and return to the condition of my youth."  
...At twenty leagues they broke for some food,  
at thirty leagues they stopped for the night.  
Seeing a spring and how cool its waters were,  
Gilgamesh went down and was bathing in the water.  
A snake smelled the fragrance of the plant,  
silently came up and carried off the plant.  
While going back it sloughed off its casing.'

[extracts from

<http://www.ancienttexts.org/library/mesopotamian/gilgamesh/tab11.htm>]

The story of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest versions of the pursuit of the tree of life, or its branch. His story includes a character like the Biblical Noah (Utanapishtim), the flood, and the building of the Ark and the release of a dove at the end of the flood.

The Tree of Life represents eternal life and the "branch" is a symbol of the tree. Seals from Mycenae and Crete represent the mother-goddess seated on her throne, flanked by two lions, with the Tree of Life behind the throne and from the Tree of Life flows a stream that gushes out at the feet of the mother-goddess. Thus, the Tree of Life and the "Fountain of Youth" carry forth the idea of eternal life. The Bible connects the Tree of Life to salvation. When Adam and Eve ate of the "forbidden fruit" of the Tree of Life they ceased to retain their eternal nature and were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. They were deceived into eating of the forbidden fruit by a snake.



Manuscript

FIGURE 18

Male figure stealing the Tree of Life. In one picture the Earthmother or her priestess is occupied, but in the middle picture she discovers the theft. Golden ring from Mycena. After Evans.



FIGURE 19

Male figure stealing the Tree of Life. Golden Ring from Vaphio. After Evans.

Image from "Apples of Immortality from the Cuna Tree of Life," by Clyde Keeler, Exposition Press, 1961

Interestingly the Old Testament prophets continued the theme relating to the "Branch" :

**Zechariah** 3.8 Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.

4.12 And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?

4.13 And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord.

4.14 Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

6.12-† And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD.

6.13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

6.15 And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.

Isaiah 4.1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

4.2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

4.3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.

4.4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning.

4.6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

The Book of Enoch carries an interesting discussion relating to the restoration of Adam and Eve to the Garden of Eden:

**Book of Enoch** 10.8 But God said unto Adam, I have made thee a promise; when that promise is fulfilled, I will bring thee back into the garden, thee and thy righteous seed.

14.2 But God the Lord said to Adam, Verily I say unto thee, this darkness will pass from thee, every day I have determined for thee, until the fulfillment of my covenant; when I will save thee and bring thee back again into the garden, into the abode of light thou longest for, wherein is no darkness. I will bring thee to it in the Kingdom of Heaven.

14.3 Again said God unto Adam, all this misery that thou hast been made to take upon thee because of thy transgression, will not free thee from the hand of Satan, and will not save thee.

14.4 But I will, when I shall come down from heaven, and shall become flesh of thy seed, and take upon me the infirmity from which thou sufferest, then the darkness that came upon thee in this cave shall come upon me in the grave, when I am in the flesh of thy seed.

15.1 Then Adam and Eve wept and sorrowed by reason of God's word to them, that they should not return to the garden until the fulfillment of the days decreed upon them [5 1/2 days]; but mostly because God had told them that He should suffer for their salvation.

The Branch is identified through many allegories. For instance, the branch is described as a rod and Zechariah speaks of two staves (2) :

**Zechariah** 11.4 Thus saith the Lord my God: Feed the flock of the slaughter; whose possessors slay them and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord; for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not.

11.7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me Two Staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

11.10 And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

11.14 Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

12.2 Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about..

12.8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

12.10 And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

**Isaiah** 11.1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

11.2 And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

11.3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

11.4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

Ezekiel refers to the Anointed servant(s) in the same context:

**Ezekiel** 37.21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land.

37.22 And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.

37.24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.

37.25...and my servant David shall be their prince forever.

37.26 Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore.

37.27 My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my

people.

37.28 And the heathen shall know that I the LORD do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forevermore.

Amos continues the connection between the Servant who is identified with restoration of the Tabernacle, both being connected with the restoration (redemption) of the children of Israel to their land. The Jews have always identified their redemption with the redemption of the whole world. Fundamental to the precept is the idea that the Jews would be evicted from the land and scattered to all the nations. A Sign of the scattering is the Virgin and her son, described in Isaiah 7.14.

**Amos 9.11** In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

9.15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.

**Jeremiah 23.5** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

23.6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

23.7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

23.8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, Commentary on Habakkuk, has an interesting interpretation of the two Anointed Ones (Messiahs, Christs):

**Dead Sea Scrolls:** And concerning his words to David, And I will give you rest from all your enemies (2 Sam. 8.11). This means that he will give them rest from all the children of Satan who cause them to stumble so that they may be destroyed by their errors.

The Lord declares to you that He will build you a House (2 Sam.8.2). I will raise up your seed after you (2 Sam. 8.12). I will establish the throne of His Kingdom forever (2 Sam. 8.13). I will be his father and he shall be my son (2 Sam. 8.14). He is the Branch of David who shall arise with the Interpreter of the Law to rule in Zion at the end of time. As it is written, I will raise up the tend of David that is fallen (Amos 9.11). That is to say, the fallen tent of David is He who shall arise to save Israel.

The redemption of Israel and thus the world through the Righteous Servant is likened to breaking the head of the dragon. The contest between good and evil is depicted much after the manner seen in the Sumero-Akkadian epics involving Gilgamesh who defeats the celestial bull and a dragon. Later Murdok, the god whose image is a dragon, contests with other gods, such as Asur, for sovereignty. Thus, the dominion of the Kingdom of God over which the Messiah reigns is established through defeating Satan which is depicted as a snake and a dragon.

**Testament of Joseph, 10.38:** For I know that ye shall sin, and be delivered into the hands of your enemies; and your land shall be made desolate, and your holy places destroyed, and ye shall be scattered unto the four corners of the earth.

39. And ye shall be set at nought in the dispersion vanishing away as water.  
40. Until the most high shall visit the earth, coming Himself as a man, with men eating and drinking, and breaking the head of the dragon in the water.  
41. He shall save Israel and all the Gentiles, God speaking in the person of man.

Psalm 40.7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.

The divine hero that defeats the dragon or celestial bull, or the divine king who wages war in the name of his god, such as the Assyrian kings who waged war in the name of Asur, ultimately reduces down to the criteria of establishing righteousness in the world. Interestingly, the Bible and scriptures relating to it, continues the epic of righteousness in the name of a new God who is configured as a Word. The Word replaces the many images established in the mythological past.

The Biblical epic, in fact, is described as a written epic. The Vedas of India, in contrast, were an oral epic, whose foundations include the god Indra, who defeats the dragon in the mountains. Other epics of the Indo-Europeans that contest the dragon or divine bull range from Mithra's contest with the divine bull (Mithra is a god of the Hindus and Persian religions)—† to the Celtic god, appearing to be Cernunnos, wrestling with the divine bull, as seen on the Gundestrup Cauldron. In Greek mythology Perseus, Jason and others fight the dragon, in one form seen as Medusa. The Anglo-Saxon Beowulf destroys the dragon that comes out of a bog to feed on the people of the castle. And, of course, we can see how the contest flows into medieval beliefs in the tale of St. George and the dragon, a symbol too of the current British monarchy.

While all of the contests, written or oral, tend to follow a similar theme, the Bible departs from them to establish the sovereignty of its God through the written word. He writes it down beforehand and then claims to confirm it "in the last days." The prophet often says, "When you see these things come to pass, then you will know that the Lord hath sent me."

Discerning a true prophet of God from a false prophet is achieved through God confirming his Word to that prophet. The Word, in fact, becomes a contract or covenant. To appreciate this scheme of things one needs to understand the Jewish Wedding tradition. Every Jewish groom had to know how to read and write (Thus, Jesus should have known how to read and write.) He had to know this in order to write a wedding contract. A proper marriage had to be confirmed through a written contract.

The Biblical view of redemption first of Israel and then the nations involves a fulfillment of a written covenant. The context of the covenant is of a marriage:

Isaiah 54.5 For thine maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called.

Finally, we have this view of Michael:

Revelation 12.7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.

12.8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

12.9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation depicts the final war between the dragon and his angels that are cast out of Heaven. The divine hero is identified finally as the Word of God:

Revelation 19.11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

19.12 His eyes were as a flame of fire and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

19.13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

19.15 and out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword..

As indicated above, I have written in many works upon the subject of the divine hero, defending the Tree of Life, as it were, by defeating the beast. The topic involves a scope that is demanding in its perspective, shifting from one allegory to another, one symbol to another, all which reduces down to a righteous servant defeating evil. In tracing the origin of the precept we must explore the Indo-European and Mesopotamian epics, and, equally meaningful, the myth of Osiris, who was married to Isis, the queen of heaven. His evil twin, Set, who signified the desert, attempted to destroy Osiris. After many contests, Set convinced Osiris to lie down in a coffin to see if it fits. When Osiris reclined in it Set nailed down the lid shut and cast the coffin into the Nile River where it floated out to sea and came to rest at the foot of a palm tree on the beach of Tyre. The tree grew around the coffin. The king ordered the tree — which at that time gave off a wonderful odor — to be cut down to serve as a pillar of his palace. Inside the tree was found the coffin which contained a small child, Osiris, who was raised by the queen of Tyre. The queen of heaven, Isis, heard about the child and went to Tyre to serve as the nursemaid of the child. When the child grew to adulthood Isis and Osiris married. In the meantime Osiris and Isis had had a child named Horus who became the avenger of his father's murder. Osiris became the judge of the dead and symbol of resurrection.

We can speculate as to how the Biblical narrative adapted many of the precepts found in the Mediterranean mythologies. In all probability its prophets adapted familiar themes to explain concepts that would otherwise be obtuse and over one's head.

An interesting theme in the Bible that conveys how it works is in that of the Unicorn, mentioned in Job 39 and the Psalms. Although it is a mythical beast and an allegory of the Messiah, writers speculating on it over time developed an image of a beast that has one horn on its forehead, once envisioned as a gazelle, another as a cross between a rhino and a hippo, and finally in its modern characteristic as a beautiful, white, winged horse. Its horn became prized by European kings who believed its powder had healing qualities and, in particular, would protect against poisoning. The epic that became the story of the unicorn concluded that the only way one could catch the mythical beast would be to set a virgin in the woods, dressed in a white gown. The unicorn would spy the girl and run over to her and place his head in her lap. At the moment he rests his head he can be captured, they alleged. Nevertheless, it was never known to have been captured. All of the tales tended to build upon the criteria set before them. In telling the story one could not negate, or subtract, what had already been written. This is particularly true of the Bible, since it is founded on the precept that God is capable of all things except to lie.

We can apply the same characteristics, of many allegories, to understanding the Biblical Messiah, since he goes by many names. As indicated above, the Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Jewish Talmud and Oral Torah describe two Messiahs. Of interest is the fact that the first appearance of the Messiah(s) is through a virgin, identified in Isaiah 7.14. She and her child are the sign of the scattering of Israel.

It is a sublime comment, indeed, if the reality of the Deliverer Messiah who appears at the time Israel is restored is in the context of the unicorn. For the unicorn has never been seen and how to catch him

has always been the main concern. One never knows when he will descend, snorting and pawing, into the valley.

Jesus was asked about this by his disciples, referring to his second coming. In Luke 21 he describes the world and the signs of his coming. But the essence of the appearance, in the end, would be as the Word, for he must be recognized as being faithful and true to the Word. "Ye will recognize me by my word," he argued. His appearance, of course, would prove his immortality.

In the Gilgamesh epic the hero secures immortality by diving to the bottom of the sea and getting the "Branch." He rested on the beach with the branch beside him. As he was sleeping a snake came up and stole the branch.

In the Mycenaean seals we see a youth stealing the entire tree, and in the Sumerian seals there appears to be Gilgamesh cutting down a tree. It may be another form of the same epic, where he cuts the tree down rather than diving for it at the bottom of the sea.

In the Biblical epic the hero becomes the Branch and God decides to break at least one of them. This can be compared, I suppose, to the Gilgamesh epic, since the gods were jealous of Gilgamesh (like Hera being jealous of Hercules) and they decided to destroy him by creating a double who became known as Enki. They hoped that Enki would destroy Gilgamesh, but the reverse happened: Enki and Gilgamesh became great friends. So the gods destroyed Enki, and when Gilgamesh saw the loss of his friend he realized his own mortality. This is what prompted Gilgamesh to seek out the Old Man of the Sea (Noah) who would show him how to secure immortality. Enki (or Enkidu), whose symbol was water, was the god of wisdom.

In the Bible God destroys the Messiah (see Isaiah 53, 54, etc.) but promises in terms of the Deliverer Messiah a redemption (marriage) of Israel and eternal peace for Israel and mankind. Here the Biblical story stays within the bounds of earlier myths by destroying both the hero and the dragon, but leaving the Double to reign eternally, like Gilgamesh the king of Erech appears to have done.

It is fairly easy to describe the theme involving regeneration, through the branch or Tree of Life, shown in Mediterranean records. When we see the same images being portrayed in the Bible the task to describe the whole complex seems overwhelming.

I've made somewhat of a lengthy reply to your question, since I had been thinking of such a work anyway.

## Chapter 1 "Come to my mountain"

Perhaps the most profound characteristic involving worship of the gods in the ancient world is the call to meet the gods in worship atop a mountain or great height. In the Bible we see expressions of a person going to the roof to worship, and in the Phrygian.html we can see natural mesas converted to outdoor cathedrals. Midas City in Turkey is a phenomenal example of a place containing step-altars to the myriad of gods the Phrygians worshipped there. Similar step-altars atop mountains are also seen in ancient Armenia, but in less abundance. In the Troad an entire mountain, such as Mt. Ida, was dedicated as a holy place, and that place was believed by the ancients to have been established in the name of an earlier place in Crete named Mt. Ida. And across the sea in Greece the ancient Greeks established their holy mounts, Mt. Olympus, the residence of the gods, and Delphi became a special high place where their gods were worshipped. While each Greek community had its own temples of worship, Delphi was the central place where the nation honored its gods and heroes. It may be that Midas City in Phrygia was similar to Delphi, hosting perhaps a hundred gods atop its many altars.

[Pausanias](#) toured many ancient cities and holy sites in his time (2nd century A.D.), and in his travelogue we are shown temples hosting portable gods made out of wood, some with ivory faces and decorated with gold, silver and precious stones. Other gods were made out of bronze, and some were perhaps on the scale of the Lincoln Monument in Washington D.C., and many temples had paintings hanging on their walls (as we see in modern churches and cathedrals). Pausanias describes his tour of some temples in a context that a tourist today might describe the works of art displayed in museums and religious places. Some of the gods carved into the rocks of Phrygia were more abstract, where human forms were geometrically represented, similar to the Phoenician goddess [Tanit](#).

Assyrian records (See [Phrygian1f.html](#) ff.) describe the Armenian gods that were taken as booty to the Assyrian capital Nineveh. The gods were housed in temples having a square plan. The capture of a nation's gods represents the complete subjugation of a people. Assyrian conquests of the lands in eastern Anatolia and the Levant were done in the name of Asur; often the goddess Ishtar led the army. The houses, or temples, of Asur and Ishtar were in Nineveh. A sample of an Assyrian chronicle is:

**Sargon II (724-705 B.C., Father of Sennacherib) - from Vol. II,  
"Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia," by Luckenbill**

10. Year 6. *The beginning of the subjugation of Armenia.* In my sixth year of reign, Ursâ, the Armenian .....[Mitatti] of Zikirtu, the governors of the Mannean land, .....set them at enmity with Sargon (and) with Azâ, the son of their lord .....on Mount Uaush, a steep mountain, started to destroy the land of the Mannans and cast out the body of Azâ, their lord. To Assur, my lord, that the Mannean land might be avenged and that it might be restored to Assyria's rule (?) , I raised my hand (in prayer), and in Mount Uaush, the mountain where they had cast out the body of Azâ, I flayed Bagdattu, and showed him to the Mannans. Ullusunu, his bother, I placed on the royal throne, the whole of the Mannean land I made subservient to him. [Ullusunu, the Mannean] .....put his trust in Rusâ, the Armenian. Assur-li'u of the land of Karalla and Itti of the land of Allabria he caused to revolt against me and called upon them to become vassals of Armenia. In the anger of my heart I overran (lit., covered) these lands like [a swarm] of locusts and Izirtu, the royal city of the Mannans, I overwhelmed as with a net. Multitudes of them I slew. Izirtu I burned with fire and captured the cities of Zibia and Armaid. Ullusunu, the Mannean, and all of his land gathered together as one man and seized my feet. I had mercy upon them. I forgave Ullusunu his transgression, on the royal throne [I placed him].....Ittî of

[Allabria], together with his family, I snatched away, and Assur-li'u of Karalla .....The city of Ganu -, .....[of the district of Niksama, I captured. Shêpâsharri, the mayor, .....of the city of Shurgadia I seized with my own hand. Those cities I added to the province of '{Parsuash}. Bêl-shar-usur, of the city of Kishesim, my hand captured and himself, together with the property of his palace, I carried off to Assyria. My official I set over his city as governor. The gods, who go before me, therein I caused to dwell and I called its name Kâr-Urta. My royal image I set up in its midst. The lands of Bît-Sagbat, Bît-Hirmami, Bît-Umargi, the cities of Harhubarban (?), Kilambâti, Armangu, I conquered and added to his province. I received gold, products of the mountain, precious stones, ivory, seed of the maple (?), all kinds of herbs, horses, and camels, as their tribute. I defeated Mitâ of the Muski, (7) in his province. The cities of Harrua and Ushnanis, fortresses of the land of Kue, which he had held by force since distant days I restored to their (former) status (lit., place). [From <http://www.maravot.com/Phrygian1c.html>]

In the lower, southern end of Mesopotamia were housed the Babylonian gods, among whom were Marduk (portrayed as a dragon) and Ishtar. The [Ishtar Gate](#) is the most significant, extant presentation of the Babylonian gods and many of them were hosted in stepped monuments or man-made mountains called [Ziggurats](#). In Babylon and the Sumero-Akkadian civilizations one would go up the ziggurats in worship of the gods. This practice, of course, was not limited to Mesopotamia, as can be seen in the many pyramids of Central America, such as the [Mayan](#) temple complexes, and the high places of Peru. What we saw in these examples is a conclusion in the human consciousness in the distant past that the proper place to worship the gods is atop a mountain.

Other gods were not worshipped atop the mountains. Among the Celts, Greeks, etc., we find temples risen beside, or dedicated to, gods of rivers and springs. The Sumero-Akkadian god, Enki, is such a god, and rivers and springs represented life and the ancients concluded that certain water gods were gods of wisdom. Wisdom was also associated with the sun, best typified in the Greek and Anatolian god Apollo. Among the beasts wisdom took on the form of the lion, the king of beasts, all-powerful and all-wise.

The historian and geographer [Strabo](#), who lived about the time of Pausanias, recounts in his mammoth work many of the beliefs and practices of the peoples recorded by himself and historians before him, such as [Herodotus](#). In each region discussed he describes the gods and temples of worship.

Another record of the ancient beliefs and practices relating to worship of the gods is the Bible. It begins as a chronicle of an "Aramean gone astray" who was from ancient [Haran](#) and compelled by the LORD (3) to go into Canaan. Among the acts required by God of Abraham when reaching Canaan was the sacrifice of his son Isaac atop the altar on Mt. Zion, believed to be the Temple Mount in Jerusalem (Gen. 22.1). Here the Bible is recalling an ancient practice attributed in particular to the god [Ba'al](#), to whom children were sacrificed. Children were also sacrificed to the Phoenician goddess [Tanit](#), and in the ruins of ancient Carthage a large cemetery has been found containing the graves of such sacrifices. With such ancient practices in mind we can now observe God's temptation of Abraham:

**Genesis 22.1** And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and said, Behold, here I am.

22.2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

22.9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

22.10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

22.11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

22.12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

The sacrifice of Isaac seems somewhat barbaric from my perspective, since it draws upon practices common in Canaan. There is what appears to be a step-altar atop the highest point on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem that is now preserved in the center of the Dome of the Rock. According to Moslem tradition the site is where Mohammed ascended atop his horse to heaven and also the place where Abraham built his altar to sacrifice Isaac. The step-altar looks very much like the step-altars in Midas City.

The Temple Mount became the site of the Temple of Solomon, constructed about 1,000 B.C., and replaced by the larger, "squared" Temple of Herod. The Herodian temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. during the siege of Jerusalem. The siege took place on the Jewish Passover, when the city's population expanded to about 1 1/2 million souls, most of whom were visiting there to celebrate the Jewish Passover. This was one of several [Jewish feast days](#) conducted as a national feast at the temple. Outside Jerusalem the Jews would worship God in synagogues. The only legal place for offering sacrifices was at the Temple Mount on the established, holy feast days.

After Abraham the next major event in the Bible involved Moses who was compelled to seek refuge in Sinai, fleeing from the Egyptian pharaoh. In Sinai Moses was compelled to climb atop a mountain, Mt. Sinai, and there, claims the report, saw God face to face, who identified himself as "I am that I am" (YHWH) and then instructed Moses to return to Egypt to bring forth the Children of Israel. The experience is recorded in Exodus 3 ff. The Biblical account can be compared to Strabo's account. Strabo was not aware of the Biblical account and had reported the event as concerning an Egyptian Moses who led a tribe of Egyptians out of Egypt into Canaan. Interestingly two Jewish philosophers had been published at the time, whose names are [Philo Judaeus](#) and [Flavius Josephus](#). Josephus was a captive of General Titus, who laid siege to Jerusalem, taking over from his father, Vespasian, who had returned to Rome to be crowned Emperor of Rome.

In any event, in Jewish records the giving of the Law of Moses (though of God, it is not called the Law of God) at Mt. Sinai and the national worship of God atop Mt. Zion, the Temple Mount. To this day the Jews worship at the only remaining, known ruin of the Temple: the Temple Wall. There is a controversy involving the Temple Mount that has been discussed in "[Philistia triumph thou...](#)". Men of yesteryear worshipped their gods atop mountains, they conquered and civilized in the name of God, they murdered, slaughtered innocents and wreaked all kinds of havoc too on behalf of gods. And these very old mind-sets that have wreaked so much chaos upon the earth are centered upon one place: the Temple Mount of Jerusalem. Many faiths today claim that mount and its holy city [of peace] as their own. Today, as in the eons past, they are willing to destroy peoples and cultures over it.

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## Notes to Chapter V

1) I found my research on the Etruscans, and recently the Phrygians, wraps directly into my other research relating to the Bible, ancient Jewish documents, etc. The work relates to the "Banquet of the

Gods" theme, of course, in the context of the Passover, and other feasts, and Christian Mass. Revelation's 19.9 Invitation to the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" is of interest, as it tends to wrap all of the teachings of the Bible into that context.

2) Staves were used to dig wells, as illustrated when the Children of Israel led by Moses "dug the well."

3) The Jewish scriptures used codes to represent various names of God, as they believed that the name of God, such as that represented by LORD (Yahwah) could not be written. The name of [El](#), was written as "God" and the plural form, [Elohim](#), was understood as "Gods." In other respects the Phoenician god Ba'al, meaning, "lord," was called Lord (uncapitalized) and the Bible refers to many lords, Ba'alim, followers of Ba'al. Another name of God introduced to Moses was YHVH (Yahwah, also spelled Jehovah, meaning, "I am that I am").

**Appendix A:**  
**How to make the divine Soma, according to the Rig Veda**  
**by Mel Copeland**

**Arrangement & facilities:**

1. Precisely cut grass laid upon which the guests will sit
2. Sacred grass that drips with oil [on which the gods to sit?], Book I, Hymn XIII.5
3. Doors, Book 1, Hymn XIII
4. Sacred grass upon which are expressed drops of Soma juice, Book 1, Hymn XVI.6
5. Wood-pile, made of good logs upon which to bind fast the Bullock, Book1, Hymn CXXI.7
6. Reservoir, Book 1, Hymn CXXXV.2, vats made of wood (Book 8, Hymn LXXXI.7)
7. House where the Soma is pressed, Book 1, Hymn CXXXV.7

**Sacrificial Equipment:**

1. Four (4) each Ladles with which to make offerings to Agni (upon the fire) and to the gods; pour 21 offerings to each; Book 1, Hymn XX6, 7
2. Cups in which to pour the Soma, also called meath or mead, Book 1, Hymn XIV; serve Indra with a chalice of Soma, Book 3 XXXII.14; chalices, Book 8, Hymn LXX.7.
3. Sacrificial Post to which the victims are tied. Here there are three mentioned, [possibly in a tripod per Griffith], Book 1, Hymn XXIV.13; located eastward of the fire, Book 3, Hymn VIII
4. Mortar stones, broad-based, Book 1, Hymn XXVIII.1, used to crush the Soma plant
5. Beakers, to take up what remains from the mortar pressing, and pour the juice on a woolen filter, Book 1, Hymn XXVIII.8,9; the meeting place (where Soma and milk are mixed), Book 9, Hymn XCII.2
6. Pitchers: flowing to the pitcher, he with a roar hath passed into the beakers, Book 9, XCVI.20; let him flow...through the filter...and rest in the pitcher, Book 9, Hymn XCVII.4 – the Soma is poured through the filter to rest in the beaker; the pitcher and the beaker are the same thing.
7. Jars, under which the woolen strainer is placed, Book 9, Hymn LXVIII, where the Soma is mingled with the milk, Book 9, Hymn LXXII
8. Woolen strainer or filter, Book 1, Hymn XXVIII.9; Book 8, I.15; Book 9, II.5
9. Ox-hide upon which to set the dregs of the Soma from the pressing, Book 1, Hymn XXVIII.9
10. Unrough fire-sticks from which to make the fire, Book 1, Hymn CXXVII.4
11. Sheepskin...flowing through the fleece He flows about the sheep-skin, longing for a bride.
12. Sacred cauldron for heating the contents of the fatty membrane Book 5, XLIII.7
13. Vats, casks of wood (Book 9, XXXVII.6)
14. Bowls: in the bowls sits the Gold-hued like a roosting bird, Book 9, Hymn LXXII.5; Book 9, Hymn LXXVIII.2; when, Indu, thou art balmed with milk within the bowl, thou sinkest in the jars., Book 9.LXXXVI.47; cleansed hath reached the bowls, Book 9, Hymn CIII.4; they have poured out a bowl to him, to Indra (Book 10, Hymn XXIX.7); the bowls, cups and chalices are from which to drink; (Book 10, Hymn XLIII.4)
15. Sanctifying gear: with sanctifying gear they sit around the song, Book 9, Hymn LXXIII.3

16. Pail: ...thou flowest to the pail, bellowing as a steer upon the water's lap, Book 9, LXXVI.5  
 17. Saucers: as thou art purified, flow to the saucers, Book 9, XCVII.48

**Offerings in addition to Soma:**

1. Viands or meat, free from disease (Book 3, Hymn XXII.4): cattle, goats, sheep, horses; goats were part of the sacrifice of horses (Book 1, Hymn CLXIII.12).
2. Butter, Book 1, Hymn CXXXIV.6; from spotted cows (Book 8, Hymn VI.19)
3. Sacrificial cake of meal, Book 3, Hymn XXVIII, for midday sacrifice
4. Contents of a fatty membrane, Book 5, Hymn XLIII.7

**Ingredients:**

1. Soma plant out of which Soma juice is pressed; the juice is sweet, Book 1, XXVIII.8; it is a stalk that gladdens, Book 1, CXXV.3; ; the pressing of the stalk is like pressing a skin, Book 5, XXXIII.7; the Indus Valley Seal with the Horned God in the center of the stalks of a plant might be the plant in question; Soma that is foaming forth = fermented, Book 9, Hymn I.6
2. Curds, Book 1, Hymn V; mix the curds with the barley-meal, Book 6, Hymn LVII.2
3. Grains bedewed with oil, Book 1, Hymn XVI.2; barley-meal, Book 1, Hymn CXXXV.8; fried grains of barley, Book 4, Hymn XXIV.7; the Soma juice with barley mixt, Book 8, LXXXI.4
4. Milk, Book 1, Hymn XIX.1; XXIII.1, to mix with the juices of Soma; pour it on the fire, Book 1, Hymn XXIII.23; milk-blent draughts of Soma, Book 1, Hymn XXX.2; juice divine with milk commingled, Book 7, Hymn XXI; milk from spotted cows (Book 8, Hymn VI.19)
5. Water, Book 1, Hymn CXXXV.6; press out the Soma with the stones and in the waters wash it clean, Book 8, Hymn I.15
6. Honey of the bee, blend it in the milk, Book 8, IV.8

**Application:**

Collect Soma stalks from the mountains (Book 3, XLVIII.2); Grind stalks of Soma between broad-based grinding stones (Book 1, Hymn XXVIII.1). Let the sap drain onto an oxhide placed under the stones. Press the Soma with water with the stones (Book 9, Hymn XXX.5); Strain the sap with water through a woollen filter (Book 1, Hymn CXXXV.6), (Book 8, Hymn II.2); the speckled sap runs like a flood..through the sieve..enrobed in water (Book 9, Hymn XVI.1,2); Mix the Soma juice with milk (Book 8, Hymn II.2); Soma in the jar is mingled with the milk (Book 9, Hymn LXXII); blended with milk and curds he flows on through the long wool (Book 9, Hymn CIII);the Soma flows tawny to the straining-cloth (Book 9, III.9) [into the beakers]; [from the beakers] Pour the sap into a large wooden vat; and settles in the wood (Book 9, Hymn VII.6); when through the filter poured, clothed with milk (Book 9, Hymn VIII.5); Swelling, as 'twere, to heights of heaven, the stream of the creative juice falls lightly on the cleansing sieve (Book 9, Hymn XVI.7); the swelling wave...flows into the sieve..hastens to the pitchers, poured upon the sieve (Book 9, Hymn XVII.3,4); when purified within the jars, bright red and golden-hued, hath clothed him with a robe of milk (Book 9, Hymn VIII.6) blend in the midst with milk and curd (Book 8, Hymn II.9); ..And pour the sweet milk in the meath..blend the libation with the curds (Book 9, Hymn XI 5,6); Blend the milk into the Soma juice (Book 1, XXX.2); Fry the barley-meal (Book 4, Hymn XXIV); Mix the milk with barley-meal (Book 1, CXXXV.8), (Book 3, XXXII.2); the brilliant juices blent with meal...cook with milk..(Book 9, Hymn XLVI.4); mix the milk with honey of the bee (Book 8.IV.8); Mix the barley-meal and milk with Soma juice (Book 3, XLII.7); Somas mixed with butter (Book 10, Hymn XXIX.6); Let the Soma ferment for three days? (Book 3, Hymn XXVIII); ...poured upon the filtering-cloth, the men conduct him...effused into the vats of wood (Book 9, Hymn XXVII.2, 3), (Book 9, Hymn XXVIII.1,4), (Book 9, Hymn

XXX 1,4); the living Somas being cleansed ...turned to the vat (Book 9, Hymn XXIII.4); Men beautify him in the vats..(Book 9, XV.7); heat the cauldron (Book 3, Hymn LII); keep the Soma in three reservoirs (Book 8, Hymn II.8); pour into the Soma the milk, prepare the cake and mix the Soma-draught (Book 8, Hymn II.11); Pour three times seven = 21 Soma libations to each god. Pour libations of milk on the fire (Book 1, XXIII.23). ; serve three beakers of Soma to Indra (Book 1, XXXII.3), three beakers filled to the brim (Book 8, II.8). When sacrificing the Steed, bring forth a goat, followed by the Steed, following him are sages and singers. The wise Priest sits to complete the sacrifice (Book 5, XI.2). Sing, and the priest dances (like Indra) around the fire-altar. The sages form a ring, looking and singing to the Ram [Indra] (Book 8, Hymn LXXXVI.12);The color of the Soma mixture is brown (Book 8.IV.14) pressed from yellow stalks (Book 8, IX.19)

### **Benefits & other characteristics based on the Persian Hoama**

(From the [Avesta, Yasna 9](#))

16. Good is Haoma, and the well-endowed, exact and righteous in its nature, and good inherently, and healing, beautiful of form, and good in deed, and most successful in its working, *golden-hued*, with *bending sprouts*. As it is the best for drinking, so (through its sacred stimulus) is it the most nutritious for the soul.

17. I make my claim on thee, O yellow one! for inspiration. I make my claim on thee for strength; I make my claim on thee for victory; I make my claim on thee for health and healing (when healing is my need); I make my claim on thee for progress and increased prosperity, and vigor of the entire frame, and for understanding, of each adorning kind, and for this, that I may have free course among our settlements, having power where I will, overwhelming angry malice, and a conqueror of lies.

(From the *Avesta Yasna 10*) 3. I praise the cloud that waters thee, and the rains which make thee grow on the summits of the mountains; and I praise thy lofty mountains where the Haoma *branches* spread.

5. Grow (then) because I pray to thee on *all thy stems and branches*, in all thy *shoots (and tendrils)* increase thou through my word!

8. All other toxicants go hand in hand with Rapine of the bloody spear, but Haoma's stirring power goes hand in hand with friendship. [*Light is the drunkenness of Haoma* (Pazand)].

12. There, Haoma, on the ranges dost thou grow of many kinds. Now *thou growest of milky whiteness, and now thou growest golden*; and forth thine healing liquors flow for the inspiring of the pious.

13. Praise be to thee, O Haoma, (for he makes the poor man's thoughts as great as any of the richest whomsoever.) Praise be to Haoma, (for he makes the poor man's thoughts as great as when mind reacheth culmination.) With manifold retainers dost thou, O Haoma, endow the man who drinks thee mixed with milk; yea, *more prosperous thou makest him, and more endowed with mind*.

17. Thereupon spake Zarathushtra: Praise to Haoma, Mazda-made. Good is Haoma, Mazda-made. All the plants of Haoma praise I, on the heights of lofty mountains, in the gorges of the valleys, in the clefts (of sundered hill-sides) cut for the bundles bound by women. From the silver cup I pour Thee to the golden chalice over. Let me not thy (sacred) liquor spill to earth, of precious cost.

### **Priests of the Persian Rite of Hoama**

(from <http://www.avesta.org/vendidad/vd5sbe.htm>)

This passage has to do with the cleanliness of a woman, her clothes, etc. whose child is born dead. The assignment of duties to those offering sacrifice in the Persian rite can be compared to the Hotar (the Herald, officially Agni, fire) and Zotar and Rsi of the *Rig Veda's* rites. Here there is a Zotar with eight assistants. The note to Fargard 61 is particularly interesting, since, if the ritual is in any way like that

performed by the Etruscans, we have the issue of the Zagreb Mummy which was wrapped in linen with Etruscan writings throughout. The linen wrapping was torn into segments. To observe a purity law similar to the Persian the wrapping would have had to have been old and thoroughly clean, then written upon and used for wrapping the dead. See [Zagreb Mummy Translation.html](http://www.zagreb-mummy.com/translation.html). Following this logic the [written] mummy wrapping could not have been used before, and following this precept much of the content of the wrapping should have had to do with the purification of the deceased and those involved with the wrapping of the Zagreb mummy. An article on Egyptian Mummification is at: <http://www.crystalinks.com/mum.html>. A comprehensive site on Egyptian mummies by Wm. Max Miller is at: <http://anubis4.2000.tripod.com/17A.htm>. Coffins and mummy wrappings were either reused or rededicated from one person to another, as will be discovered at Miller's site. Writings on mummy wrappings, called "Linen Dockets," describe this activity. A Linen Docket of Djedptahiuwankh's mummy (~935 B.C.) is: "Year 10 of Shoshenq I/luput: "Noble linen which the dual king (nsw bity) lord of the two lands Hedjkheperre son of Re lord of appearances Shoshenq-meramun made for his father Amun (in) year 10; noble linen which the high priest of Amon-Re, great chief of the army luput, true of voice, king's son of the lord of the two lands Shoshenq-meramun, made for his father Amun (in) Year 10" [(Source Bibliography: DRN, 239; MR, 573 [transcr.]; RNT, 253 [32].) Wm. Max Miller's *Theban Royal Mummy Project* website, <http://anubis4.2000.tripod.com/mummypages1/21B.htm>].

Fargard 57. O Maker of the material world, thou Holy One! Can those clothes, when once washed and cleansed, ever be used either by a Zaotar, or by a Havanan, or by an Atare-vakhsha, or by a Frabaretar, or by an Abered, or by an Asnatar, or by a Rathwiskar, or by a Sraosha-varez (68), or by any priest, warrior, or husbandman?

**Translator's Note:**

(68). These are the names of the different priests who were engaged in the sacrifices. The Havanan strains the Haoma; the Atarevakhsha kindles the fire; the Frabaretar brings to the Zaotar all that he needs; the Aberet brings the water; the Asnatar washes and strains the Haoma; the Rathwiskar mixes the Haoma and the milk; the Zaotar chants the hymns and says the prayers; the Sraosh-varez superintends the sacrifice. Nowadays there are only two priests, the Zaotar (Zot) and the Rathwiskar (Raspi), the latter performing all the accessory services formerly performed by several priests. Cf. Nirangistan, 71 sq.

61. 'Whosoever throws any clothing on a dead body (75), even so much as a maid lets fall in spinning, is not a pious man whilst alive, nor shall he, when dead, have a place in Paradise.

**Translator's Note:**

(75). Cf. Vd8.23 seq. It appears from those passages that the dead must lie on the mountain naked, or 'clothed only with the light of heaven' (Vd6.51). The modern custom is to clothe them with old clothing (Dadabhai Naoroji, *Manners and Customs of the Parsis*, p. 15). 'When a man dies and receives the order (to depart), the older the shroud they make for him, the better. It must be old, worn out, but well washed: they must not lay anything new on the dead. For it is said in the Zand Vendidad, If they put on the dead even so much as a thread from the distaff more than is necessary, every thread shall become in the other world a black snake clinging to the heart of him who made that shroud, and even the dead shall rise against him and seize him by the skirt, and say, 'That shroud which thou madest for me has become food for worms and vermin' (Saddar 12). After the fourth day, when the soul is in heaven, then rich garments are offered up to it, which it will wear in its celestial life (Saddar 87).

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