

Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies

Volume 24 (2017), Issue 2

The Indra Cult as Ideology A Clue to Power Struggle in an Ancient Society

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ISSN 1084-7561

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11588/ejvs.2017.2.2667>

The Indra Cult as Ideology

A Clue to Power Struggle in an Ancient Society

(including a discussion of the semantics of R̥gvedic *ari*
and its socio-political background)

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Abbreviations and Bibliography

(The abbreviated forms are those used in the Notes)

- ABORI : Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona (1919ff.).
- Añjali : AÑJALI : Papers on Indology and Buddhism, A Felicitation Volume presented to Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera on his sixtieth birthday, ed. J. Tilakasiri; Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 1970.
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- Mahīdhara: See V. S.
- Manu (smṛti): *The Manusmṛti, with the Commentary of Kullūka*. Nirṇaya-sāgar Press, Bombay, 1946 (10th ed.).
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- RV: Ṛgveda Saṃhitā.
- RV Poona: Vaidika Saṃsodhāna Mandala edition (Vedic Research Institute) Poona, 1933 - 1951.
- RV Harvard: van Nooten, Barend A.; Holland, Gary B. (eds.) 1994: *Rig Veda. A Metrically Restored Text. With an Introduction and Notes.*

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- RV Frankfurt : Gippert, Jost (ed.) 1997–2000: R̥gveda-Saṃhitā. On the basis of the edition by Th. Aufrecht, Bonn 1877 (2.Aufl.), entered by H.S. Ananthanarayana, Austin / Texas; TITUS version; with corrections by Fco.J. Martínez García, synoptically arranged with the metrically restored version by B. van Nooten and G. Holland and the "Padapātha" version by A. Lubotsky, by Jost Gippert. TITUS. Frankfurt. Online: <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/ind/aind/ved/rv/mt/rv.htm>.
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Foreword

"This monograph was prepared in 1972–73 and is presented here in substantially the same form. The author wishes to express his deep appreciation to the Center for the Study of World Religions of Harvard University, U. S. A., its then Director, Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith and present Director, Prof. John B. Carman for the warm hospitality and innumerable facilities offered to him, including the grant of a Visiting Scholarship at the Center, which enabled him to pursue his research and prepare the present monograph."

With these words the author concludes the original edition of this monograph which appeared 1981–82.¹ Unfortunately there have been few readers in the western world till now having got knowledge of this publication. This is all the more regrettable, as Mahinda Palihawadana's monograph is a philological masterpiece, both cautious and keen, which has brought about remarkable results on the social world of the Rigvedic Aryans and their inner and outer conflicts. Discontented with Paul Thieme's influential, but, as some Vedologists concede behind closed doors, in some essential respects fanciful theory of *ari* as the 'stranger' in the Rigveda and the *aryans* as 'the hospitable ones', Palihawadana set out for a completely new, exhausting contextual analysis of *ari*, this "*enfant terrible* of Vedic exegesis"². The core of Palihawadana's results may be best summarized with his own words, taken from the preface of his ensuing study *The God of War and Lavishness*³, p. iii:

"It is here argued that *ari* was the designation of the tribal chief among the early Aryans, there being only one *ari* in a given *jana* or tribal unit. In early clashes with the Dasyus this older tribal leadership stepped aside and yielded place to their youthful and militant descendants (sons or grandsons), who are designated in the RV by the terms *arya* and *sūri*. The *ari* chiefs, continued to hold a position of power in the tribes, mainly owing to the fact that the wealth of the tribe, which in the main consisted of its cattle and other

¹ *Vidyodaya Journal of Arts, Science and Letters* [the official journal of the Vidyodaya University of Sri Lanka, precursor of the present Sri Jayawardanapura University], Vol. 9, Nos. 1 & 2, January – July 1981: 37–112 and Vol. 10, Nos. 1 & 2, January – July 1982: 1–59.
<http://dr.lib.sjp.ac.lk/handle/123456789/399>; <http://dr.lib.sjp.ac.lk/handle/123456789/362>.

² Maurice Bloomfield in his review of *Zum Wörterbuch des R̥gveda* by Walter Neisser. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 45 (1925): 160.

³ Palihawadana, Mahinda: *The God of War and Lavishness* (Panaluwa, Padukka, Sri Lanka [Publication N^o 119 of State Printing Corporation] 1996 .
https://www.academia.edu/778848/THE_GOD_OF_WAR_AND_LAVISHNESS.

livestock, was traditionally under their command. In course of time they began to adopt some aspects of the settled way of life of the Dasyus (frugality and regular agriculture, perhaps) and, in consequence, also some of their ritual practices. Angered by this policy, and smarting under the loss of prestige that it entailed, the *ṛsis*, the spiritual mentors of the Aryans, began to oppose the *ari* — and one of the principal expressions of this offensive was the Indra cult and the call to action which it implied. This was addressed almost exclusively to the more youthful members of the *ari* families, namely the *aryas*. These protégés of the *ṛsis* are depicted as ever eager to win or wrest the *ari*'s wealth, with which they then dealt in a characteristically lavish style. The *ṛsis* sought to consecrate these militant *aryas* with *kṣatra* (ritually bestowed right of rulership), and to get them chosen as *rājans* in the tribes, thus replacing the *ari* with a leadership that vigorously supported the policy of Aryan expansion."

In its sociolinguistic orientation Palihawadana's investigation was far ahead of its time. Only in the recent 10-15 years the research focus has widened again in this direction. In the 70's and 80's there was no fertile ground for receiving an attempt at seeing traces of the real Vedic world in the text of the Rigveda. In 1977, Oswald Szemerényi in a short note condemned Palihawadana's theory as "nebulous".⁴ Hardly a judgement could be farer from the truth. At that time, though, Szemerényi – who always has been an open-minded scholar, curious for new insights – could know no more than a brief article.⁵ So he didn't see the philological evidence behind the theory.

In 2015 I organized a Symposium in Munich together with Walther Sallaberger. The title of the Symposium was "*Völker und Sprachen*" (*peoples and languages*) – provokingly simplistic in view of the intricacies involved in this subject. Our aim was to investigate the structure of general concepts testing them in the application to different empirical case studies, ranging from Echnaton's Egypt to Atatürk's language reform. In this Symposium I delivered a talk on "the *Aryans* in Old India". During the preparation to this talk I came across Mahinda Palihawadana's publications. Step by step I realized that they belong to the most important contributions to this subject.

In the beginning of this year I wrote a letter to Mahinda Palihawadana, expressing my

⁴ Szemerényi, Oswald 1977: Studies in the Kinship Terminology of the Indo-European Languages, with special references to Indian, Iranian, Greek and Latin. In: *Varia 1977. Acta Iranica*, troisième série, Vol. VII (= *Acta Iranica* 16), Leiden (Brill): 139.

⁵ Palihawadana, Mahinda: A new approach to the interpretation of R̥gvedic *ari*. In: *ANJALI: Papers on Indology and Buddhism*, A Felicitation Volume presented to Oliver Hector de Alwis Wijesekera on his sixtieth birthday, ed. J. Tilakasiri; Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, 1970: 88-96.

gratitude and admiration. And there came a response. During our correspondence the idea came up to republish the monograph on *ari*, in a better readable version at a better accessible site. Michael Witzel was so kind to encourage me to prepare a new edition, to be published in *EJVS*. Here it is.

The original text appears now in a completely new typesetting.⁶ Old typos have been removed, new typos hopefully avoided. Tina West did a fantastic job in proofreading. All RV citations are taken now from van Nooten's & Holland's text (Harvard 1994). In some cases I replaced a bibliographical reference by a later edition. So, in case of the *Dravidian Etymological Dictionary*, I took the second edition from 1984 and changed the lemma references respectively. An index of text passages and a subject index will follow soon.

München, 30.11.2017

Peter-Arnold Mumm

⁶ I chose the EB Garamond font by Georg Duffner. Thank you, Georg, for this excellent and beautiful font! <http://www.georgduffner.at/ebgaramond/>.

PART ONE

I. What Lies Behind Ṛgvedic *ari*?

Some years ago the present writer took up a project of writing a dissertation on the secular leadership in the Ṛgveda period. In the process of this work he found his attention constantly drawn to that peculiar Ṛgvedic word *ari* with its characteristically ambiguous sense.⁷ The word occurred in numerous contexts which seemed distinctly connected with the subject with which the writer was then concerned.

The problematic nature of the word was already reflected in the oldest Indian commentarial work, the Nirukta of Yāska. This work renders *ari* as (a) an unfriendly person and (b) a potentate (i.e., *foe* and *lord*).⁸

In rendering the word *ari*, modern translators have also found it impossible to be consistent. Thus Geldner frequently uses the German equivalents of “nobleman”, “rich patron”, “great lord”, “possessor of power” and so on to translate *ari*; but at other times he uses “rival”, “mighty foe”, “miser”, etc. — thus bringing out the double character of the meaning of the word.⁹

In 1938 Paul Thieme, the respected German Indologist, published his famous monograph *Der Fremdling im Ṛgveda* in which he attempted the task of unravelling the meanings of this word.¹⁰ He argued that if the ‘prevalent’ senses of the word are so divergent (as e.g. is reflected in the Nirukta comment), then its original significance could not have been either of these widely different meanings but something else from which these meanings should have developed in the course of time. In Thieme’s view,

⁷ F. pp. 5ff. esp. 8-10.

⁸ Nirukta S.7. Yāska’s explanatory words are *amitra* and *īśvara*, in that order. Yāska was not commenting on the history of the semantics of *ari*; so the order he followed is not material to our discussion. (Nirukta 5.7 Sarup = 52.2 of Calcutta ed., p.500).

⁹ F. pp.8 ff.

¹⁰ F. and M.A.

that original meaning was “stranger”.¹¹

Pondering on the contexts in which *ari* was used, from the point of view of one studying the problems associated with leadership, the present writer became convinced that all was not yet right with the interpretation of this crucial term.

The semantic common denominator for most uses of *ari* in the RV is that of association with wealth.¹² And the regular pattern of the statements regarding the *ari* can best be summed up in the form of a “norm and exception”.

Norm:

- The *ari* has riches (: the source of glory).
- They are to be won from him. Help our *sūris* to win them.¹³
- The *sūri* is the good worshipper and the generous giver, not the *ari*.¹⁴
- The *ari*'s worship is below par.¹⁵
- Accept our worship, bypassing the *ari*'s.¹⁶
- The *ari* gives us trouble and pain, denies us our due.
- Give us aid to stand up to these.¹⁷

References to the *ari* are normally found in statements like the above ones, in invocations addressed to the Vedic gods, especially Indra.

Exception:

- The few statements that associate the *ari* with conditions contrary to those evident in the above statements constitute the exception.¹⁸ Notably such exceptional statements depict the *ari* as a generous donor or an acceptable

¹¹ F. p.10.

¹² Mahīdhara on V.S.33.82 : *arya = dhanasvāmin*. Cattle constituted the main *dhana* in Vedic times. See also Geldner. Ved.Stud. III, 83.

¹³ See Ch. VII, 3, below.

¹⁴ Chh. VI, VII, VIII, below.

¹⁵ Ch. VII, below.

¹⁶ Ch. VIII, 6.

¹⁷ 2.23.12-15, 4.50.11, 6.59.8, 8.48.8, 9.79.3 etc.

¹⁸ Ch. IX below.

worshipper or one who promotes the *sūri* and encourages his liberal ways,¹⁹ but again always as a wealthy man, a possessor of cattle.

To one who reflects on these statements, it would appear that the basic premise on which Thieme built his argument is open to question. After all, if the word carries the meanings “foe” and “lord”, the latter could well have been the original sense. If the chief (lord) turns out to be hostile for some reason or other, then in the very position of chief he may become the object of one’s displeasure and opposition. The one sense (“lord”) would be the word’s denotation, while the other (“foe”) would be one of its significant connotations.

One does not have to go very far to look for similar words in other languages. Take, for example, a word like *capitalist*. Its denotative significance is the same to all, i.e., owner of capital. But its connotations would be distinctly different to communists or socialists on the one hand and to those with another political outlook on the other. To understand the distinction satisfactorily, one has to have an acquaintance with the facts of an ideological situation.

It would seem that *ari* too was such a word — whose true meaning lies hidden in the mist of our ignorance of its “social-political” context: the early tribal chieftaincy pattern and the stresses to which it must have been exposed in the first few centuries of the Aryan presence in India.

After all, one of the first creative sociological events in Aryan history in India must have been the change from migratory tribe to the settled tribal state. This could by no means have been such a trifling event, involving as it must have done vast changes in habit, ritual and values. The adaptations called for might not have been palatable to all alike. In the stresses and strains of such a situation, the tribal leadership might have been exposed to certain kinds of opposition.

Thus, if the word *ari* meant “lord”, as the Nirukta would have it, then it would not be surprising that we may have to answer the question, “Did the chief turn out to be a foe, and if so how?” in order to unravel the further complexities of its semantics.

To put our problem in its true perspective, and in order not to overlook or under-estimate its extreme complexity, it is necessary to remember that it is from *ari*

¹⁹ E.g. I.9.10, I.126.5, I.150.1, 4.38.2, 8.1.22.

that the ethnic designation *ārya* (Aryan) is derived.²⁰ This makes it doubly difficult to think that “stranger” was the original meaning of the word.

And also, we cannot forget the other derivatives of *ari*: *arya* (explained by the Indian grammatical tradition as meaning “master” and “*vaiśya*”²¹), and *aryaman*, a deity of the Āditya group.

When one studies the usages of *ari*, *arya*, *ārya* and *aryaman* from the perspective of the evolution of leadership, it seems likely that *ari* was an ancient designation for the tribal chief and holder of wealth and that, due to reasons that remain to be clarified, the chief at some point of time became an object of dislike to some among the Aryans themselves.²² If this was so, it would satisfactorily explain much of the complexity of the semantics of the word.

If we take the meanings given by Yāska as representing the denotative and connotative senses of *ari* as recorded in a tradition worthy of our respect, we could explain the semantic development of the cluster of words concerned somewhat as follows:

<i>ari</i>	chief (as holder of wealth and power).
<i>arya</i>	(a) pertaining to an <i>ari</i> ; having power; chieflike; noble; hospitable. (b) pertaining to an <i>ari</i> ; having wealth; <i>vaiśya</i> .
<i>ārya</i>	(a) of the community of tribes whose chiefs were <i>aris</i> . (b) chieflike; noble; elderly.
<i>aryaman</i>	god of chieflikeness (whence, of hospitality).

The second, and in the RV commoner, connotation of *ari* as “opponent” “foe”, should have evolved long after the above senses were established and should be reflecting later developments in the social, political and religious life of the Aryans

²⁰ F., p.145. Cf. also A. Debrunner, “Zwei altindische Probleme”, *Indian and Eastern Studies in Honour of F.W. Thomas*, Bombay, 1939, p.71.

²¹ Pāṇini III.1.103.

²² These include most of the well known families of Vedic *ṛṣis*. Cf. 1.4.6 (Maducchandas Vaiśvāmītra); 1.33.3 (Hiraṇyastūpa Āngirasa); 1.70.1, 1.71.3, 1.73.5 (Parāśara Śāktya); 1.81.6/9 (Gotama Rāhūgaṇa); 1.184.1 (Agastya Maitrāvaruṇi); 2.8.2, 2.12.4/5, 2.23.13 (Gṛtsamada Āngirasa); 4.2.12, 4.16.19, 4.4.6 (Vāmadeva Gautama); 5.2.12 (Kumāra Ātreya); 6.13.5-6; 6.16.27, 6.25.7, 6.47.9 (Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya); 7.21.9, 7.34.18, 7.56.22, 7.83.5, 7.92.4, 7.97.9 (Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi); 8.21.16 (Sobhari Kāṇva); 8.24.22 (Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva); 8.39.2 (Nābhāka Kāṇva); 8.48.8 (Pragātha Ghaura Kāṇva); 9.23.3 (Asita / Devala Kāśyapa).

which ultimately led to the passage of power from the hands of old-style tribal chiefs to other authorities.

Such changes did take place, in fact, as we can conclude from the disuse of significant sociological terms like *viśpati*, *vidatha* etc. And we must always remember that such changes necessarily betoken a turmoil of ideologies and religious views.

But what could the prevalence of both senses, favourable and unfavourable, indicate?

It would seem that this can indicate several things:

1. The original meaning of *ari* was not only denotative but also carried connotations of respect and admiration.
2. The changes in tribal life due to which the word gathered unfavourable connotations did not take place at once over all the Vedic tribes.
3. The favourable references reflect a period of old institutions lingering on until new ones were firmly established.

And a further point to be considered would be whether the ‘opponent’ sense of *ari* does not signify some of the functions of an old Aryan tribal chief: an aggressive culture may have evolved institutions in which the chief by functioning as an opponent could aid the rise of a strong leadership in the respective tribes.

There thus seems to be a clear case for re-opening the investigation of the meaning of Ṛgvedic *ari*. It appears that the major point of ‘attack’ should be an investigation of the political-social implication, which in other words is an inquiry into the evidence of ‘ideology’ in the Ṛgveda Saṃhitā.

In the very nature of our documents, this evidence is likely to remain concealed in a mythological garb. As an example we may cite what is said about Indra’s leadership of the gods when they were threatened by the prospect of Vṛtra’s rise to power: the gods conceded to Indra the rights of rulership (*kṣatra*), through him to thwart the Dragon’s challenge.²³ This seems to mythologize a historical experience of power passing into the hands of ‘warlords’ from other wielders of power: a shift from a patriarchal to a non-patriarchal arrangement. The mythologizing can be regarded as an attempt to legitimize the shift; in other words it may be viewed as an ideological act.

But since these trends may have arisen more early among some Aryan tribes than among others, it is desirable that we review the Ṛgvedic evidence on the major tribes

²³ Ch. II. 7 below.

and the conflicts and strains to which they were exposed. We must take particular note of the use of *ari* in the allusions to these conflicts, as also of any comments or hints on the religious (ideological) views of adversaries found in these allusions. In this way we can open an investigation of the political and ideological situations depicted in the Saṃhitā. Such studies could lead us on to other interesting vistas of inquiry from which perhaps an approach for resolving the *ari* problem may eventually be envisaged.

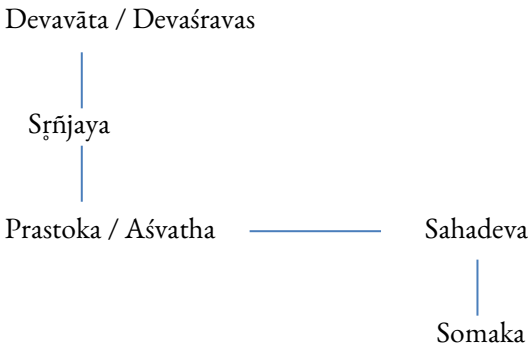
II. The Bharatas and their Opponents

(1)

The RV refers to a large number of Aryan tribes or *janas*, but of these only three are mentioned frequently. These are the Bharatas, the Pūrus and the Turvaśas. Naturally, they are also the three that are most important from the historical point of view.

The evidence of the RV shows that there was a series of conflicts between the Bharatas (and/or their allies) with other tribes, including the Turvaśas and the Pūrus (who even made common cause with non-Aryans in order to fight the Bharatas). But ultimately the complex of Aryan *janas* that were active in the region between the rivers Paruṣṇī and Dṛṣadvatī during this period so integrated themselves that the later Rgvedic hymns would refer to them as the *ārya varṇa* (literally, “the Aryan colour”).

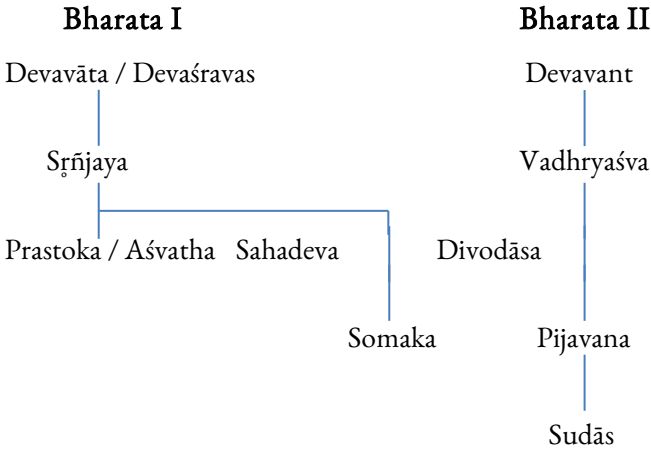
By carefully combining the evidence that is found scattered in various hymns of the RV, it is possible to construct a genealogy of the leading figures of the Bharata tribe that are mentioned in the Saṃhitā, beginning with Devavāta and Devaśravas of RV 3.23. If we link the evidence found in RV 3.23, 4.15, 6.47, we get the following genealogy:



Some of the most famous Bharata figures are however not included in this genealogy. Among these is Sudās the Bharata (7.33.3-6 with 7.83.6), descendant of Pijavana (7.18.22/23) and of Divodāsa (7.18.25) and of Devavant (7.18.22). Another scion of this line is Vadhryaśva, the father of Divodāsa (6.61.1). On the basis of the evidence of their relationships, it has been shown²⁴ that the genealogy of these Bharata chiefs can be thus arranged:



On the strength of the contemporaneity of Prastoka of the first group with Divodāsa of the second — clearly evident from RV 6.47²⁵ — it is possible to correlate these two genealogies as follows:



²⁴ See CHI p. 272 f.; Vedic Index, s.v. Devavant.

²⁵ 6.47.21-25; stz. 22 refers to the gifts given by Prastoka and Divodāsa at the end of the battle against Śambara (and 24 those given by Aśvatha) to the Bharadvāja priests.

Let us briefly review the careers of these five generations of Bharata chiefs with a view to gaining some insights relevant to the interpretation of the *ari* passages of the RV.

(a) Devavāta and Devavant

The similarity of the names Devavāta and Devavant is striking, but there is no way to determine their relationship or whether they refer to one and the same person.

The Bharatas at this time were living near the rivers Āpayā, Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī. In RV 3.23 which mentions Devavāta,²⁶ the emphasis is entirely on the fire ritual conducted near these “holy rivers” (as the later tradition refers to them), and there is nothing to suggest the martial milieu of the entrance phase of Aryan prehistory, or that of the time of later Bharata leaders such as Sṛñjaya, Divodāsa and Sudās. The few notices regarding this period of time do not contain any references to the *ari*.

(b) Sṛñjaya and Vadhryaśva

From our correlated Bharata genealogy it would appear that Sṛñjaya and Vadhryaśva should have been contemporaneous, and it is noteworthy that separate references to them show that they were both placed in essentially a similar state of affairs, namely Bharatas being locked in battle with *Ārya as well as Dāsa* opponents. These opponents are referred to under various names and in various ways: Paṇis (6.61.1), Pārāvatas (which sounds like a nickname meaning “newcomers from a distant land”²⁷) (6.61.2); “Dāsa and Ārya foes”²⁸ (10.69.6) and more interestingly, in the words of 10.69.12, “(enemies) who are unrelated and who are false relations”.²⁹ RV 6.27 refers to the enemies under their tribal as well as family or individual names (Turvaśa, Vṛcīvant, Varaśikha³⁰ and probably Pārthava); hence it is difficult to determine whether several tribal groups are indicated here.

From the point of view of the study of the word *ari*, it is important to recognize that almost from the start Bharata or pro-Bharata groups in Vedic India appear to have been facing hostility from other Aryan groups. The historicity of these hostilities is also

²⁶ *āmantbiṣṭām bhāratā revād agnīm / devāśravā devāvataḥ sudākṣam // 3.23.2 ab.*

²⁷ See Vedic Index, s.v. *Pārāvata* (2).

²⁸ *dāsā vṛtrāṇy āryā* 10.69.6b.

²⁹ *ājāmīmṛ utā vā vijāmīn ... (śardhataḥ)* 10.69.12 cd.

³⁰ 6.27.4-7.

occasionally attested to in later literature³¹; thus, for example, the Vāraśikha clan is considered to be only nominal *kṣatriyas*, in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, because they did not conform to the ideology of the Brahmanistic elite:³² this agrees with the fact that it was the Sṛñjaya(-Bharata) group that is favoured by the ṛṣīs in 6.27, as against the Varaśikhas.

The war between Sṛñjaya (son of Devavāta) and the Turvaśas etc. mentioned in 6.27 took place near Hariyūpiyā and is one of the two best known military events referred to in the RV. The Turvaśas certainly were an Aryan tribe.

At the end of the war, the priests who supported the Sṛñjaya group, namely the Bharadvājas, are richly rewarded, obviously with captured booty as is usual after a battle (cf. 6.47.22). Since we learn from one of the stanzas of the hymn (stz. 5)³³ that only a part of the enemy ranks was destroyed, it is natural to expect that the remaining part would try to regain the captured wealth. That this however was impossible owing to the strength of the Sṛñjayas, or of the precautions adopted by them, seems to be the meaning of the statement: “Inaccessible is this gift to the Pārthavas” (6.27.8).³⁴

This interpretation of RV 6.27.8 has to be emphasized. According to this, the Pārthavas were the enemies, or at least were among the enemies, of the (Bharata-) Sṛñjaya group. The only other persons who may be linked with the name Pārthava in the RV are Pṛthī/Pṛthu Vena and Vena Pṛthavāna. The former is referred to as an *ari* at 10.148.3,³⁵ while the latter is mentioned in 10.93 in association with one who is called Rāma, the *asura*.³⁶

It seems probable then that the opponents of the (Bharata-) Sṛñjayas of 6.27 were

³¹ See Vedic Index, s.v. *Vṛcīvant*, referring to Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, XXI 12.8.

³² Bṛhad Devatā V. 126.

³³ *bān pūrve ārdbe bhiyāsāparo dārt* 6.27.5d.

³⁴ *dūñāśeyām dākṣiṇā pārthavānām* 6.27.8d To translate the line to mean that the gift was of the Pārthavas does not seem to make sense (Cf. Geldner : Kaum zu erreichen ist diese Schenkung der Pārthava's).

³⁵ 10.148.3a refers to the *ari*'s songs (*aryó girah*) and stz. 5, (lines ab), goes on to give a more specific expression to the same. (“Listen, O Indra, to the call of Pṛthi ... you will be lauded with Venya's songs”: *śrudhī hávam indra ... pṛthyāḥ ... stavase venyásyārkaṭḥ*. In treating *aryó gir-*, 10.148.3a = *pṛthyāḥ hava* and *venyásya arká-*, 10.148.5ab, we are in agreement with Geldner).

³⁶ *prá tād ... pṛthavāne vené prá rāmé vocam ásure* 10.93.14 ab. The same Pṛthavāna Vena is referred to as a Pārthava at 10.93.15c: *sadyó didiṣṭa pārthyāḥ*.

Aryans who may be associated with leaders designated as *ari* and *asura* elsewhere in the Saṃhitā, Aryans who for some reason were disagreeable to a strong section of the *ṛṣi* authors of the RV hymns. The adverse reference to Vena in the Manusmṛti³⁷ and other late works is an indication of this early opposition, which is otherwise unrecorded explicitly.

Turning our attention to Vadbryaśva, we note that the hymn which refers to him, RV 6.61, shows that he and his people were living near the river Sarasvatī, but with a noticeable sense of insecurity, owing to the presence of many adversaries.³⁸

(c) Prastoka, Aśvatha and Divodāsa

The Ṛgvedic evidence on Divodāsa clearly establishes the complex nature of the hostilities that prevailed among the various ethnic and tribal groups of this time. On the one hand we have the clear evidence of RV 6.47 (stanzas 21-25) which speaks of the storming and destruction of the Dāsa stronghold of Śambara by Divodāsa, with the aid of Prastoka and Aśvatha. On the other hand, there is also evidence of hostility between Divodāsa and other Aryans.³⁹

A close analysis of RV 6.47 in this respect reveals some interesting facts. 6.47 is the hymn which celebrates Divodāsa's famous victory over Śambara, the Dasyu chief. That the Bharata-s were at this time hard-pressed is obvious from stanza 20: "To a pastureless dwelling have we come, O gods! Constricted has the earth become, wide though she be!"⁴⁰ (And this becomes all the more meaningful when we remember that Divodāsa's father was represented as imploring the Sarasvatī, "killer of them that come from the far distance",⁴¹ not to let the Bharata-s depart from her side to unknown

³⁷ Manu Smṛti VII. 41 and IX. 66-67. This and other later sources regard Vena with disfavour but (his son) Venya with favour. See Manu VII. 42, Viṣṇu Purāṇa 1.13.14. See also Dowson, under PRITHI and VENA and Gonda, Gods, p. 50 and fn. 114.

³⁸ 6.61 is addressed to Sarasvatī, who is said to have granted Divodāsa to Vadhryaśva as a "redeemer of his debts". Sarasvatī helps, or her help is sought, in crushing Paṇis, Pārāvatas, insulters of gods (*devanidaḥ*) and haters (*diviśaḥ*): stz. 1,2,3,10. Stz. 14 says: "May we not depart from thee to unaccustomed lands": *mā tvāt kṣétrāṇy āraṇāni ganma*.

³⁹ 1.53.10, 2.14.7, 6.18.13, 8.53.2: Divodāsa against Tūrvayāṇa; 7.19.8, 9.61.2: Divodāsa against Yadu-Turvaśa. See also Vedic Index, under *Tūrvayāṇa*.

⁴⁰ *agavyūti kṣétram āganma devā / urvī satī bhūmir ambhūraṇābhūt* 6.47.20ab.

⁴¹ *pārāvataḥ* 6.61.2c. It is interesting to note that the Yadu / Turvaśa, whom Divodāsa opposed, arrived from *parāvat*: 6.45.1 ab.

dwellings.⁴² Obviously he too was feeling the threat of new enemies close at hand.) In 6.47, the poet's deep trepidation comes to light when he declares: "May not the *ari*'s wealth overpower us!"⁴³

Can this reference to the *ari* be to Divodāsa's Dasyu opponents? Or was there also an Aryan foe with whom he had to contend in the struggle that 6.47 highlights — as may conceivably be expected in view of Bharata-Ārya hostilities of the previous generation, and also of the succeeding generations, as we shall soon see?

Indeed, one stanza of 6.47 makes this seem extremely likely. This is stanza 19 which asks Indra, the Vedic god of war: "Who will for ever stay on the foeman's side, the more so as (our) heroic princes sit in sacrificial session (to honour the gods)"⁴⁴ — which seems to imply that the god's favours were indeed at one time with the foes of the Bharatas (i.e. they were winning at the latter's expense), but now their sacrificial rites could possibly not be ignored. It is unthinkable that the poet is suggesting here that Indra's favours were won by the Dasyus at any time. To us it appears that the poet in 6.47 is not thinking of a Dāsa opponent when he speaks of the *ari* in stz. 9; rather, he is referring to a specific Aryan foe of one of the tribes the Bharata-s had to reckon with from the moment of their appearance in the region around the Sarasvatī.

The hostility between these Aryan groups and Divodāsa is referred to in even less ambiguous form in other allusions. Thus there are references to Divodāsa's discomfiture at the hands of Tūrvayāṇa. The latter is identified by Macdonell and Keith⁴⁵ (on the basis of RV 10.61.1 f.) as a prince of the Pakthas, whose Aryan identity is not in doubt. Besides this, there is also the important evidence of 7.19.8 which says that Indra, rendering aid to Divodāsa, struck down Yadu and Turvaśa,⁴⁶ tribes of the Āryas as is quite well known. It is no doubt the same tradition of Bharata-Turvaśa hostility that 9.61.1 and 2 reflect when they say that Indra shattered 99 forts when aiding Divodāsa, and that he destroyed Śambara, Turvaśa and Yadu as well⁴⁷. Indeed it is

⁴² See n. 32 above.

⁴³ *mā nas tārīn ... rāyo aryāḥ* 6.47.9d. The best way to render this line seems to us to be: "Let it not prevail over us - - the *ari*'s treasures", being then a case of anacoluthon, as Geldner rightly observes. Contrast Thieme, F p. 57.

⁴⁴ *kó viśvābhā dviṣatāḥ pákṣa āsata / utāśīneṣu sūrīṣu* // 6.47.19cd.

⁴⁵ Vedic Index, under Tūrvayāṇa.

⁴⁶ *ní turvāśam ní yādvaṃ śiśīḥy / atithigvāya sámśyam kariṣyān* 7.19.8cd.

⁴⁷ *avāhan navatīr náva // pūrah ... / divodāsāya śambaram / ... turvāśam yādum* // 9.61.1c and 2.

quite possible to see such statements as references to Dāsa-Ārya collusion against the Bharata-s: this would cause us no surprise if we ponder on what happened in the War of Ten Kings just two generations subsequent to these events. The 3rd and 7th books of the RV clearly indicate the continued harassment of the Bharatas by Dāsa and Ārya foes, so much so that the tribe became decimated and had thinned “like staves that drove kine”⁴⁸, in spite of the victories of Divodāsa.

(d) Somaka and Pijavana

That Divodāsa’s victory over Śambara did not stabilize the Bharatas’ position for a very long time is also proved by the comparative insignificance of the Bharata princes of the generation that immediately followed. The paucity of references to these princes and especially the lack of evidence of their patroncy of celebrated priestly clans gives added significance to what we have already mentioned: the Bharata tribe was steadily growing thin “like staves that drove kine”.

(e) Sudās

And so at the beginning of his career, we find Sudās, the next Bharata prince, as a nomadic plunderer leading a life of incursions and forays aided by an Indra-worshipping ṛ̥ṣi who takes him across rivers far to the west of what was once the favourite habitat of the Bharata tribe⁴⁹. In other words the reference to Sudās’ early wanderings shows that Vadhryaśva’s worst fears for the Bharata tribe had indeed been confirmed: they have been forced out of the hospitable lands around the Sarasvatī.

But Sudās appears to have chosen a new purohita in place of the Indra-worshipping ṛ̥ṣi of far-flung fame. This in itself must have been a crucial decision and its significance is worth pondering over — both to Sudās and to Vasiṣṭha, the new *purohita*. Says the text: “Vasiṣṭha became the (king’s new) *purohita*, and then did the Tṛtsu tribe spread (far and wide).”⁵⁰ The Bharatas, whose movements had so far been obstructed now

Sāyaṇa adds *vaśam ānaya ca* to complete the sense. Geldner’s rendering of 9.61.2 is to be rejected in favour of Sāyaṇa’s. That Turvaśa, when mentioned with Yadu, is always Indra’s protégé (Geldner, note to 9.61.2c) is not correct, as even Geldner’s own translation of 7.19.8 shows.

⁴⁸ *daṇḍā ivéd goḍjanāsa* 7.33.6a.

⁴⁹ 3.33 refers to Viśvāmitra taking the Bharatas across Vipāś-Śutudrī. 3.53.9 shows that the event is to be related to Sudās’ time. So also Geldner, preamble to translation of 3.33. See also Ch. IV 3 below.

⁵⁰ *ābhavac ca puraetā vasiṣṭha ād it tṛtsūnām viśo aprathanta* 7.33. 6cd.

gain “free space”.⁵¹ Obviously the short epics of Vasiṣṭha’s chaplaincy⁵² lay much store on Sudās’ wise decision to use the services of so able a priest (and, as it turned out, of so able a strategist, we may say.) Vasiṣṭha himself has not the slightest doubt that it was his chaplaincy that turned the tide for the Bharata tribe. At 7.18.15 he declares that the tribe, “vitalized by Indra, poured forth like released waters”⁵³ — a simile that draws heavily on the experiences from the Aryans’ riverine life and is suggestive of victorious freedom gained after the frustrations of obstructed living. These descriptions which seem to depict the victory of the Bharatas as an unexpected miracle help us to understand 7.18.17 which says that (in this war) “Indra killed a lioness by means of a ram”.⁵⁴

Let us now turn our attention to some of the important aspects of the Ten Kings’ War in which Sudās emerged as the victor, and which is the highlight of the career of this Bharata prince, one of the few secular chiefs whose fame outlived the Ṛgvedic age.

An important aspect of the War of Ten Kings according to RV 7.18 is the clearly unequal distribution of forces in the war. On one side there is the single Tṛtsu (= Bharata) group, while against them stand on the other side the following: Śimyu, Turvaśa, Yakṣu, Matsyas, Bṛghu, Druhyu, Paktha, Bhalāna, Alina, Viṣānin, Pr̥śnigu, Anu, Pūru, Aja and Śigru. There are also Vaikarna, Kavaśa and Bheda which appear to be personal names. It is indeed impossible to know exactly how many tribal groups are here involved and so there is no way to say who are the major ‘Ten’ on account of whom the war gained its famous name.

Why did so many tribes feel impelled to array themselves on one side in opposition to Sudās and the Bharatas? We must certainly learn the answer to this query if we are to make sense of much that we find obscure in regard to early Vedic tribal life and the struggles that must have prevailed therein.

Whatever that answer is, it is obvious that the Bharata isolation was in great measure due to their violent and plundering habits of which a hint is found in the way they are described in RV 3.33: “cattle-hunters moving in hordes”, “whose source of strength was

⁵¹ *urūm ... ulokām* 7.33.5d.

⁵² i.e. 7.18, 7.33, 7.83.

⁵³ *indreṇa ... véviśānā āpo ná sṛṣṭāh* ... 7.18.15 ab.

⁵⁴ *siṃhyām cit pētvenā jaghāna* 7.18.17b.

Indra”⁵⁵ — expressions which gain in meaning only when we place them in the context of the views of the Indra cult.”⁵⁶

In any case, the Bharata-s found themselves badly “besieged” and “they looked to heaven, like thirsting men, distressed”⁵⁷. Sudās was “obstructed”⁵⁸ and “surrounded”⁵⁹. The chaplain complains: “the ill-will of (other Aryan?) peoples has arisen against me”.⁶⁰

Another significant feature of the war is the characterization of the enemies of the Bharatas as opponents of (the sacrificial) cult or as men whose fidelity to that cult was suspect. One of the best instances of such depictions is 7.83.7 where the enemies of Sudās are called “ten kings who do not perform sacrificial rites”.⁶¹ Another is 7.18.16 where they are described as “the party that is without Indra, that drinks the cooked libation” (i.e. who are not Soma-drinkers = Soma offerers).⁶²

These expressions help us somewhat in understanding the remarkable statement at 7.18.19 which says that (the river) Yamunā and the Tṛtsus (= Bharatas) rendered aid (in this war) to Indra⁶³ — which seems to be an inversion of the usual Ṛgvedic assertion that it is Indra who gives aid and protection to his devotees in war. It looks as though the poet’s feeling was that on this occasion the very worship of Indra was at stake, that the river and the god’s devotees insured the defeat of those at whose hands there was actually a threat to the faith.

These unequivocal indications of non-(or slender) adherence of the foes of Sudās to the Indra cult are supported by several other references in these hymns which depict them

⁵⁵ *gavyān grāma iṣitā indrajūtaḥ* 3.33.11b. As to what “Indra and his devotees” did to their opponents, see below Ch. IV. 6. Other references to Indra’s character (cf. e.g. *paripanthīn* 1.103.6c; *muṣāyān* 10.99.5d, *muṣé* 5.34.7a) throw a flood of light on how his devotees would have treated their adversaries.

⁵⁶ See Ch. IV below.

⁵⁷ *úd dyām ivét tṛṣṇājo nāthitāsaḥ* 7.33.5a.

⁵⁸ *nībādhitam* 7.83.6d

⁵⁹ *pāriyatta-* 7.83.8a.

⁶⁰ *āsthur jānānām úpa mām ārātayaḥ* 7.83.3c.

⁶¹ *dāsa rájānaḥ ... áyajyavaḥ* 7.83.7a.

⁶² *ardhām ... śṛtapām anindrām* 7.18.16a,

⁶³ *āvad indraṃ yamunā tṛtsavaś ca* 7.18.19a.

as distinctly of an unacceptable condition in matters of cult and worship. Thus the Pūru chief at 7.18.13 is described as one “who uses mis-spoken (?) utterances in the *vidatha*”.⁶⁴ It would seem that it is at least this very quality of ritual ineffectiveness that other expressions of a similar nature in 7.18 highlight (e.g. “vain utterances” ... “evil thoughts” ... “futile words” in stanzas 5,8, and 9)⁶⁵. A not insignificant epithet in 7.18, applied to a foe of Sudās, is “measuring out meanly”⁶⁶ in stanza 15 — one that seems to emphasize the enemies’ rejection of the ethic of liberality: always a cherished quality in a true prince who follows the dictates of the cult as portrayed by the Vedic seers.

But it must be emphasized that the hymns in question do not portray the enemies of Sudās as irrevocably outside the boundaries of Vedic worship, in spite of their being called non-sacrificers in 7.83. This subtle distinction seems to us to be of vital significance. The evidence is that this distinction was indeed intended. We get this impression basically through the strange but unequivocal statement found at RV 6.83.6 where Vasiṣṭha says that when the gods aided Sudās who was besieged by the ten kings, “men of both sides” invoked the aid of Indra and Varuṇa.⁶⁷ We view this of course in conjunction with the other statements discussed above. What those other statements say may actually be not that the enemies of Sudās did not perform sacrifice, but that in the eyes of Vasiṣṭha their ritual for some reason was not acceptable as a true form of worship of the gods. These aspects of the minutiae of religious differences discernible in these statements should properly be the subject of a study in themselves. At this juncture they only serve to highlight to us that a large segment of the adversaries of the Bharatas were Aryans of a religious persuasion that was dissimilar yet not wholly different from that which the great *ṛṣi*s espoused: it may be that other factors (political? sociological?) tended to show up these differences in an exaggerated form.

That Sudās’ foes were both Ārya and Dāsa is explicitly declared. RV 7.83.1 says: “Slay the Ārya foes and also the Dāsa; aid Sudās, O Indra, Varuṇa!”⁶⁸ And at 7.18.7 the

⁶⁴ *vidāthe mṛdhrāvācam* 7.18.13d. Patañjali insists that one should pronounce one’s words exactly in ritual acts (Mahābhāṣya, p. 28)., From Śatapatha Br. 3.2.1.13 we learn that the Asuras did not do just this, and Śatapatha 6.8.1.14 calls the Pūrus *asura-rakṣas*.

⁶⁵ *āsātiḥ* 7.18.5d ; *durādbhyaḥ* 8a ; *vādhrivācaḥ* 9d.

⁶⁶ *prakalavīn mīmānāḥ* 7.18.15c, on which of. Geldner’s translation ; “die kleinlich zumessen” and his note thereto: “D.h. die gegen Götter und Sänger geizig sind”.

⁶⁷ *yuvām havanta ubhāyāsaḥ* ... / *yātra* ... *sudāsam āvatam* 7.83.6a-d.

⁶⁸ *dāsā ca vṛtrā hatām āryāṇi ca* / *sudāsam indrāvaruṇāvāsāvataṁ* 7.83.lcd.

treasures the Tr̥tsus (=Bharatas) won are said to be the Ārya's (possessions): "He who is our companion at the Soma draught brought the Ārya's (possessions) of cattle to the Tr̥tsus. With war has he come unto men."⁶⁹

It would seem that it is just such an Ārya foe, an Ārya chief, that is referred to at 7.83.5 under the term *ari*: "The evils of the *ari* torment me — and the malice of his followers"⁷⁰. And in this respect this reference to the *ari* is similar to other such references in 6.16, 6.47 and 9.61: they all refer to Aryan enemies of Bharata or pro-Bharata tribes.

(2) Turvaśa-s

We found that one of the earliest Aryan opponents of the Bharatas was the Turvaśa tribe. It is noteworthy that the Turvaśas in the RV are almost inseparably linked with the Yadus. (Of 25 references to the Turvaśas and Yadus, 17 mention the two groups together.)⁷¹

It is interesting that the earliest parts of the RV have only a few references to the Turvaśa-Yadu tribes. 17 out of 25 references are in the 1st, 8th and 10th books of the Saṃhitā. Conspicuously the opposite was the case in respect of the Bharatas, who figure prominently only in the 3rd, 6th and 7th books. It must be stressed that this is a very noteworthy fact.

We found that the RV connects the Turvaśas with the following events:

- i. Engagement against Sṛñjaya Daivavāta⁷²
- ii. Engagement against Divodāsa Ātithigva⁷³
- iii. Engagement against Sudās Paijavana⁷⁴

It would be useful to find out what other group beside the Yadu the Turvaśas are associated with. RV 1.108.8 refers to Anu, Pūru and Druhyu with the Yadu-Turvaśas,

⁶⁹ *ā yó 'nayat sadhamā āryasya / gavyā tr̥tsubhyo ajagan yudhā n̄n* 7.18.7cd.

⁷⁰ *abhy ā tapanti mā / 'ghāny aryō vanuśām ārātayaḥ* 7.83.5ab.

⁷¹ Turvaśa and Yadus : 1.36.18, 54.6, 108.8, 174.9; 4.30.17; 5.31.8; 6.20.12, 45.1; 7.19.8; 8.4.7, 7.18, 9.14, 10.5, 45.27; 9.61.2; 10.49.8, 62.10. Turvaśas : 1.47.7; 6.27.7; 7.18.6, 8.4.1, 4.19; Yadus : 8.1.31; 6.46, 6.48.

⁷² 6.27.7.

⁷³ 7.19.8, 9.61.2.

⁷⁴ 7.18.6.

8.4.1/2 to Anu and others and 8.10.5 to Anu and Druhyu. In 7.18 we find all of these — Anu, Pūru, Druhyu, Turvaśa and Yadu ranged against the Bharata tribe in the Ten Kings' War.

We have no evidence of any early hostility between the Turvaśas and the Dāsas. The 9.61.2 reference to them must be understood as meaning that Divodāsa defeated them as well as Śambara the Dāsa chief (and not as meaning that Indra defeated Śambara for Divodāsa and aided the Yadu-Turvaśas, as Geldner assumes.)⁷⁵ On the other hand, that the Turvaśas, like the Pūrus and others, collaborated with non-Aryans in the Ten Kings' War is a well-established fact. The description “non-sacrificers” applied to the opponents of Sudās by Vasiṣṭha reflects that *ṛṣi's* attitude towards the Turvaśas as well. But, and this is quite instructive, the later portions of the RV⁷⁶ consistently portray the Turvaśas as regular adherents of the sacrificial cult, often under the guidance of Kaṇva priests. This contrasts so strikingly with the absence of even a single hymn that bears the stamp of having been composed to intercede on behalf of the Turvaśa antagonists of Śṛṅjaya, (Vadhryaśva), Divodāsa and Sudās. It would seem that there lies behind this at least a conversion of attitudes if not of faith.

(3) Pūru-s

Although it looks as if the Turvaśas were the earliest Aryan tribe to come into conflict with the Bharatas, it is the Pūru tribe that really vies with the latter for pre-eminence in Rgvedic India.

The distribution of allusions to the Pūrus⁷⁷ is strikingly like that to the Turvaśas. The earliest books either ignore them or betray no knowledge of them, and the largest number of references to them is in the latest books. It is also interesting, that, as in the case of the Turvaśas, a distinctly hostile attitude to the Pūrus is betrayed in the pro-Bharata references such as 7.8.4 and 7.18.13.

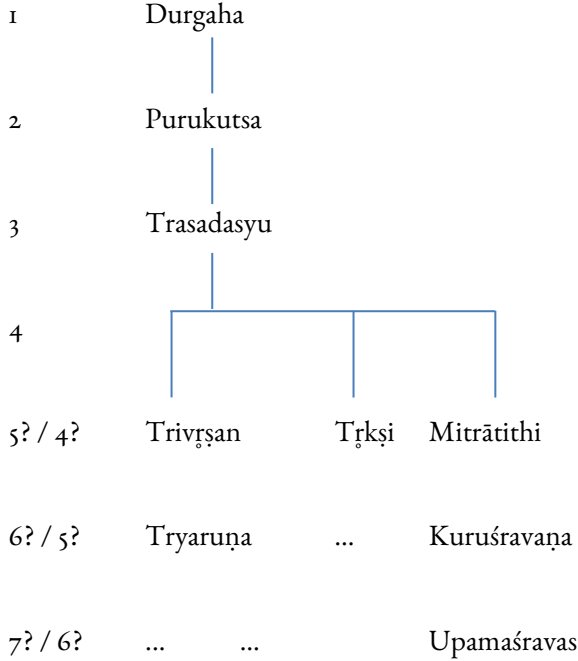
More, however, about individual leaders of the Pūru tribe is known than is the case

⁷⁵ See note 41 above.

⁷⁶ 1.47.7, 108.8; 8.4.1, 9.14, 10.5, 45.27.

⁷⁷ 1.59.6, 63.7, 108.8, 112.7/14, 129.5, 130.7, 131.4, 174.2; 4.21.10, 38.1-3, 39.2, 42.8/9; 5.17.1, 27.1-3, 33.8; 6.20.10, 46.8: 7.5.3, 8.4, 18.13, 19.3, 96.2; 8.8.21, 19.32/36, 22.7, 36.7, 37.7, 49.10, 64.10, 65.12; 10.4.1, 32.9, 33.4/6/7, 48.5, 150.5.

with the Turvaśas. The genealogy of Pūru chiefs of the RV is as follows⁷⁸:—



Significant from our point of view is the Rgvedic treatment of the Pūru chiefs, particularly the unnamed Pūru of the Ten Kings' War, as well as Durgaha, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu. Let us pay some attention to this treatment.

The Pūru chief in the Ten Kings' War is depicted as of unworthy speech (in worship) and, by implication, a non-sacrificer and one not entitled to Indra's aid. He fights against the Bharatas in the company of Dasyus.

Durgaha is almost a veiled and shadowy figure. We can surmise that he existed, only by virtue of the use of his name when referring to his descendants.

There is no evidence of these Pūru chiefs having had the support of any of the Vedic priests of repute.

Coming to Purukutsa, we see that he is not mentioned as a contemporary chief in any

⁷⁸ Cf. CHI 1.74. Ludwig, *Der RV III*, 174, 182.

of the Vedic hymns.⁷⁹ We do not find any hymns that plead to the gods on his behalf. Yet obviously he was not a leader of minor standing. Later hymns⁸⁰ speak of him as a powerful opponent of the Dasyu, a breaker of their forts. In one of the hymns describing the birth of Trasadasyu⁸¹ (his famous son), we are told that Purukutsa's wife prayed to Indra and Varuṇa and obtained from them that heroic son as a very special favour to the Pūru tribe. And Trasadasyu is said to have been born while Purukutsa was in captivity.⁸²

Trasadasyu, unlike these earlier Pūru chiefs, is a favourite with the Vedic *ṛṣis*. He is depicted as an implacable foe of the Dasyu-s and a munificent benefactor of the *ṛṣis* of the Gautama, Atri and Kaṇva clans.⁸³ The *ṛṣis* shower the highest praises on him and speak of him as a man who was known to them at first hand.⁸⁴

Now this treatment of the Pūrus contrasts sharply with that accorded to the Bharata chiefs, all of whom from the start are referred to in contemporary and intercessory hymns, e.g. 3.23 for Devavāta, 6.27 for Śṛṅjaya, 10.69 for Vadhryaśva, 6.47 and 6.61 for Divodāsa and 7.18 for Sudās. (Sudās is also celebrated in 3.33, 7.33, and 7.83). On the other hand the treatment accorded to the Pūrus is (a) hostile or indifferent at the start, (b) ambiguous in the case of Purukutsa and (c) favourable after Purukutsa.

This intriguing treatment of the Pūrus raises several important questions:

- Why did the Pūrus, having fought with the Dāsas against Sudās, turn against them subsequently?
- Why do the *ṛṣis* refer to Purukutsa's role as an opponent of the Dāsas only posthumously?
- How did the attitude of the *ṛṣis* change so profoundly as to allow a descendant of a "non-sacrificer" to be hailed as a demi-god in RV 4.42, as a hero granted by Indra and Varuṇa to the Pūru tribe?

⁷⁹ References to Purukutsa by name: 1.63.7, 112.7, 174.2; 6.20.10. Other allusions to P.: 1.130.7, 131.4; 7.6.3. References to P. as father of Trasadasyu: 4.42.8/9; 5.33.8; 7.19.3; 8.19.36.

⁸⁰ 1.63.7, 174.2.

⁸¹ 4.42.8/9.

⁸² *daurgahé badhyámāne* 4.42.8b.

⁸³ Gautama: 4.38, 4.42; Atri: 5.33; Kaṇva: 8.19.

⁸⁴ Cf. e.g. *sūrés trasádasyor ... / vābantu mā dāsa śyētasaḥ* (5.33.8); *ádān me ... pañcāsātaṃ trasádasyur vadhūnām* (8.19.36ab).

These questions are naturally linked with others no less important: What happened to Sudās after the Ten Kings' War? Was the Pūru participant in that war killed by Sudās? And what was the over-all position of the Aryans in relation to the Dāsas at the end of this war?

The war could well have assumed an internecine character for the Aryans. Many of their tribal chiefs are said to have been drowned or killed. A close scrutiny of the statements made in respect of each person⁸⁵ involved shows however that the Pūru chief was “sought” by the Bharatas “to be subdued”:⁸⁶ it is not said that he was subdued, killed or defeated. And for some strange reason what we hear about him in this war is the last that is known of Sudās the Bharata in the RV Saṃhitā. He apparently ceases to be an effective force, while the Aryan conflict with the Dāsas assumes a new character in that the Pūrus become involved in it against the Dāsas. We may surmise that the Dāsas utilized the weakened position of the Aryans to take on all comers, or that the Pūrus, like all participants in tripartite conflicts turned on their erstwhile collaborators soon after the war.

In any case, the all-important fact is that after the Ten Kings' War, the Bharatas no longer occupy the paramount position that we would have expected them to occupy. In this situation it is easy to understand why the ṛ̥ṣ̥īs proclaim Trasadasyu as a gift of Indra and Varuṇa to the Aryans, a demi-god comparable with Indra himself, as the text portrays.⁸⁷ It looks so like an attempt to rally the Aryans behind him, with no exceptions whatsoever. He justified the Aryans' profoundest hopes and became such a vanquisher of foes that the ṛ̥ṣ̥īs fondly espoused his cause. Certainly he belongs to an age when the Pūrus, and not the Bharatas, were the hope of the Aryans.

But not so Purukutsa. His position in the Saṃhitā is very anomalous. He wears neither the veil that Durgaha does, nor the halo that Trasadasyu does. He is certainly not ignored, but he is also not contemporaneously praised and supported by the ṛ̥ṣ̥īs. It is as a legendary character that his praises are sung. That his wife is shown to have prayed to Indra and Varuṇa and obtained a son while he was held in captivity is clearly an attempt to portray that son in glowing colours. The posthumous glorification of Purukutsa appears to us as a reflection on the one hand of an attempt to glorify

⁸⁵ These are found in 7.18, stzz. 5-6, 7-9, 10-14, 18-19.

⁸⁶ *jé̥sma pūriṃ vidāthe mṛ̥dhrāvācam* 7.18.13d.

⁸⁷ See below, nn. 96,97.

Trasadasyu and on the other of an opposition to Purukutsa on the part of the *ṛyīs* while he was yet alive.

This inclines us to think that Purukutsa himself might have been the Pūru that figured in the Ten Kings' War. The Pūru of that war could definitely not have been Trasadasyu to whom epithets such as “non-sacrificer” and “user of misspoken words” would scarcely apply. Therefore that Pūru should have been either Durgaha or Purukutsa. The strangely anomalous way in which the latter is depicted and the fact of his becoming an opponent of the Dāsas make us think that he fought against Sudās, escaped death and lived to see the demise of the Bharatas and to lead the Aryan forces against the Dāsas, who probably were then trying to take advantage of the weakened position of these new-comers to their land.

If we assume that Purukutsa was the Pūru referred to in 7.18 and that he survived the Ten Kings' War, we may ask ourselves whether the RV offers any evidence howsoever indirect on his subsequent activities.

If we accept Ludwig's suggestion⁸⁸ that the text of RV 1.63.7c is faulty and that *sudāse* there should really read *sudāsam*, it would appear that Purukutsa not only survived the war, but that the victor in that war was himself subsequently conquered by Purukutsa. Translated in accordance with Ludwig's suggestion, RV 1.63.7 should read somewhat as follows:— “You O Indra, then shattered the seven forts, fighting for Purukutsa's sake. When you effortlessly ‘squeezed’ Sudās, like *barhis* grass, then did you bring freedom from confinement to the Pūru (chief).”⁸⁹

This emendation of text raises an important issue. If Sudās fell in this fashion engaged against the Pūru chief, why is the RV silent on this point, except for this isolated stanza, which too yields this sense only with this deliberate change of the traditional text?

That is not so big a problem as appears at first sight. The Vedic priesthood had already taken a strong stand against the Pūru chief in the Ten Kings' War and it was their considered view that his position in matters of cult and worship was quite unacceptable. Of course there must have been more to this than we can as yet understand. Later Vedic singers, however, were patronized by this early Pūru's

⁸⁸ Der RV II, 174; V, 22. See also Vedic Index under Sudās, fn. 6 and Geldner fn. to 1.63.7.

⁸⁹ *tvām ha tyād indra saptā yúdhyan / pūro ... purukútsāya dardah / barbīr ná yāt sudāse vṛthā vārg / ambhó ... vāriṅvaḥ pūrāve kaḥ // 1.63.7 (ambah : “aus Not” - Geldner).*

descendants and they had good reason to please and glorify these patrons by referring to the might of their ancestors. In this way the body of Ṛgvedic poetry may have come to contain several references to the heroic deeds of Purukutsa in respect of the Dāsas and only one to his heroism in respect of his Bharata foe, Sudās. It may be because some strong influences in the circles of Vedic orthodoxy were uneasy at this reference to the overthrow of the prince of the Bharatas that the single stanza that referred to Purukutsa's conquest of Sudās suffered for its outspokenness by the early mutilation of its original text.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the significance of the fact there are no hymns in the RV that mention (leave alone support) any son or descendant of Sudās the Bharata. As far as the evidence of the RV goes, with Sudās the greatness of the Bharatas came to an end. If Sudās died with the tribe at the zenith of its power after the gains in the Ten Kings' War, this would be almost inexplicable.

It is interesting to note that the later Vedic tradition mentions that the descendants of Sudās did not see eye to eye with the Vasiṣṭhas who saved the Bharatas in the War. And a very late, but nevertheless surprising, piece of evidence suggests that Sudās came by an unhappy end. This is Manusmṛti VII. 41 which says that Sudās the son of Pijavana lost restraint and was destroyed in consequence thereof.⁹⁰

All this favours the adoption of the textual emendation proposed by Ludwig. And there is also a further argument in support of a reappraisal of the accuracy of the accepted text in this instance: this is that the text as it stands is almost completely incapable of yielding any coherent sense.

Nor is this all. We must also ponder on the meaning of "confinement" (*aṃbas* = constriction, state of siege etc.) found in RV 1.63.7. A clear instance of the Pūru chief coming by a state of affairs that can be so designated is provided in the situation depicted in the description of the Ten Kings' War. Sudās was looking for the Pūru in order to vanquish him. The result of Sudās thus pursuing the Pūru would easily amount to a state of siege or confinement for the latter. And if, as 1.63.7 seems to say, the Pūru chief obtained release from this state, that could well mean the destruction of Sudās his oppressor. (Is 4.21.10: "You brought freedom to Pūru"⁹¹ a further echo of these events?)

⁹⁰ *vinaṣṭo ... sudāḥ pajavanaḥ*: Manu. VII.41.

⁹¹ *vārivaḥ pūrave kaḥ* 4.21.10b.

It then does not seem very unreasonable to assume with Ludwig that RV 1.63.7. depicts Purukutsa as defeating Sudās — thus pointing at the contemporaneity of the two leaders and the identity of the Pūru mentioned in 7.18.

Trasadasyu

Trasadasyu is not only the first known Pūru king to have patronized the regular Vedic priesthood, he is also the only leader about whom any close personal information is supplied by the RV Saṃhitā. (Cf. 4.42: his parentage and birth; 4.38: his great standing with the Pūrus; his war-horse Dadhikrāvan; 5.33: his gifts to Saṃvaraṇa; 8.19: gifts to Sobhari Kāṇva) His praises are sung by Gautama, Atri, Kaṇva and Vasiṣṭha: a fact which eloquently reflects the high regard in which the ṛ̥ṣis held him.

Trasadasyu's very name implies that it was on account of his subjugation of the Dasyus that he earned his fame. In the consecutive series of leaders figuring in the destruction of the Dasyus, he appears to be the last significant member. Among the later kings whose relative position can be established, the name of Dasyave Vṛka may suggest hostilities with the Dasyus, but he appears to be a leader of comparatively minor stature. References to Dasyus in some of the late Ṛ̥gvedic hymns indicate their peaceful subordination as opposed to their earlier spirit of resistance. In all probability therefore Trasadasyu the Pūru almost completed the Aryans' task of *dāsahatya* and this earned him the acknowledgement of most of the wellknown families of Vedic ṛ̥ṣis .

Of great interest to us is the occurrence of the words *ari* and *arya* in some of the hymns dealing with events of Trasadasyu's time.

Among these hymns is RV 4.38. This hymn bespeaks the tremendous importance that Trasadasyu's war-horse and car implied to the "five peoples" (among whom the Pūrus were a particularly important group and) who according to RV 4.38.10 were brought under the unified rule of Trasadasyu⁹² — an event which must be regarded as a landmark in the history of Vedic tribes. In this hymn the warhorse Dadhikrā earns a special measure of praise. He is a gift of the gods to the Pūrus⁹³, a delight to each and every member of the tribe,⁹⁴ and he is "worthy of the *ari*'s praise as is a heroic prince."⁹⁵

⁹² *ā ... śavasā pāñca kṛ̥ṣṭīḥ ... tatāna* 4.38,10ab. The subject of the verb is *dadhikrāḥ*, as befitting the hymn which is to glorify this renowned war-horse of Trasadasyu.

⁹³ *pūrubhyaḥ ... dadathuḥ* 4.38.1bc.

⁹⁴ *viśvaḥ pūrūr mādati hār̥samāṇaḥ* 4.38.3b.

One wonders if *ari* here refers to Trasadasyu himself, for in this context we can think of him only as having the standing that confers the ability to compliment another prince.

The word *ari* occurs three times in 5.33. It is our belief that the scene which formed the background of this hymn is a festival of ritual contests whose institutor is referred to as *ari*. Trasadasyu appears as one of the contesting princes in this hymn, which is sung on behalf of these contestants.⁹⁶ We would render the relevant passages of 5.33 containing the words *ari/arya* as follows:

5.33.2 Advance, subdue the *ari's* men.⁹⁷

5.33.6 I shall praise the gift of him who is more liberal than the *ari*.⁹⁸

5.33.9 Cyavatāna, the *arya*, giving me thousands, sang the *ānūka* as though for glory's sake.⁹⁹

Apparently, *ari* here refers to a tribal chief of a group closely linked or related to the (Pūru) princes mentioned by name, one of whom appears to be indicated by the derivative form of *ari* viz. *arya*. These statements about the *ari* can become fully comprehensible only with a knowledge of the salient features of the competitive festivals which seem to have occupied a prominent position — in the cultural life of the early Aryan tribes. We shall be dealing with that aspect of our problem at a later stage.

In RV 8.19 *arya* occurs again. It may be that here too Trasadasya appears on the scene as a young prince, rather than as the formal chief of the tribe. In any case, the line which contains the word may be rendered as follows :

⁹⁵ *carkṛtyam aryó nṛpátim ná śúrām* 4.38.2d. ;

⁹⁶ They are referred to in 5.33.5 thus: *vayám té ta indra yé ca náraḥ / śárdho jajñānā yātās ca ráthāḥ / á 'smāñ jagamyāt ...* We, O Indra, and these heroes who, forming into a group, have come (to the ritual festival: *vājasāti*) ... Do you come toward us (i.e. arrive here to aid us win the prizes offered)". These heroes and the gifts they gave after obtaining victory, are individually referred to later in the hymn as Trasadasyu, the *sūri* (stz. 8), Vidatha Mārutāśva (9ab), Cyavatāna (9c) and Dhvaṇya Lakṣmaṇya (10ab).

⁹⁷ *vákṣo abhí prāryāḥ sakṣi jānān* 5.33.2d. On *sakṣi*, cf., Sāyana: *parābhava*; Geldner : "Werde mit ... fertig"; Gonda, Aorist, p 72: "get even with ... "

⁹⁸ *prāryā stuṣe tuvimaghāsya dānam* 5.33.6d.

⁹⁹ *sahāsrā me cyavatāno dādāna / ānūkām aryó vāpuṣe nārcat* 5.33.9cd.

8.19.36 (Trasadasyu) ... the most liberal *arya*, the chief of the (ritual) house ...¹⁰⁰

It is noteworthy that all five references in these three hymns yield a consistently unitary sense when we assume that *ari* and *arya* mentioned therein are (1) a tribal chief and (2) a scion of a family of such a chief. The contexts help us to decide that the families concerned are of the Pūru tribe and/or tribes closely linked to them. And we found above that in the pro-Bharata hymns too, the word *ari* seemed to have been used to refer to the antagonists of the Bharata chiefs who significantly were of Pūru and pro-Pūru tribal groups.

We might observe that the result of the application of Thieme's hypothesis to these passages was conspicuously different.¹⁰¹

Legend of Trasadasyu's Birth

Most interesting to a student of the history of the Vedic tribes are the allusions to the birth of Trasadasyu in RV 4.42. The events mentioned there are as follows:

- (a) Daugaha was in captivity (lit. "being held in bondage").
- (b) The seven great *ṛṣis* won Trasadasyu by sacrifice, a conqueror of *vr̥tras* like Indra, a demigod,¹⁰²
- (c) Purukutsa's wife made offerings to Indra and Varuṇa and then the two gods gave her Trasadasyu, the *rājan*, a killer of *vr̥tras*, a demigod.¹⁰³

We must connect these sayings with what is said in 4.38 about Trasadasyu: "He showered many gifts upon the Pūrus. Indra and Varuṇa had granted (them) (this) striker of the Dasyus."¹⁰⁴ His fierce opposition to the Dasyus is certainly the chief reason for his popularity with the *ṛṣis*, just as it also gave him his name: "the terror of the Dasyus." At the time of his appearance, the Dasyus obviously were the overpowering menace to the Vedic Aryans.

¹⁰⁰ *trasādasyur / māmbhiṣṭho aryāḥ sātpatih* 8.19.36bc.

¹⁰¹ F., pp. 21, 76, 82, 85. Thieme's renderings do not yield a unitary sense and he has almost abandoned the hope of rendering 5.33.2 and 9 in a conclusive way.

¹⁰² *saptā ṛṣayo ... / ... āyajanta trasādasyum ... indraṃ nā vr̥tratūrāṃ ardhadevām* 4.42.8bcd.

¹⁰³ *purukūtsānī hī vām ādāsadd / havyēbhir indrāvaruṇā ... / āthā rājānaṃ trasādasyum asyā / vr̥trahāṇaṃ dadathur ardhadevām* 4.42.9.

¹⁰⁴ *dātrā śānti pūrvā / yā pūrūbhyaḥ trasādasyur nitosé / ... dadathur urvarāśāṃ ghanāṃ dāsyaubhyaḥ* 4.38.1.

We can therefore agree with Norman Brown¹⁰⁵ when he expresses the opinion that it was perhaps the Dasyus that held Trasadasyu's father in captivity. According to him the official (this should mean "sanctioned and proclaimed by the *ṛ̥ṣiṣ*") version of the birth of Trasadasyu during the captivity of Purukutsa was that he was partly of divine parentage — i. e., son of Indra and Varuṇa and of Purukutsa's wife. In keeping with this version, Norman Brown interprets stanza 3 of 4.42 as a "self-praise" by Trasadasyu: "Indra am I, and Varuṇa."¹⁰⁶ This appears to be a very much better interpretation of this stanza than any hitherto offered.

Why was it prudent on the part of the *ṛ̥ṣiṣ* to ascribe partial divinity (cf. *ardha-devam* ... 4.42.8/9) to Trasadasyu and why was he so uniquely likened to Indra ("a *vr̥trahan* like Indra": 4.42.8)? Not merely because his birth had somehow to be explained away, surely? Rather, it must have been to confer a unique position to him, perhaps to rally all the Aryan tribes under his leadership — whence possibly the explanation of his appearance among the Pūrus as a gift of both Indra and Varuṇa, in many respects the two gods who are most distant each from the other in the RV, as generally assumed. Here we should also bear in mind what RV 4.38.10 says: "With his might he *overspread* the five peoples", which we understand as saying that he brought them under a single rulership.

After the events of the Ten King's War, the annihilation of the Dasyus and bringing the various tribes under one rule should have appeared to the *ṛ̥ṣiṣ* as the most difficult and yet most desirable goal for the Aryans to achieve.

Descendants of Trasadasyu

We shall deal with only those descendants of Trasadasyu who are of any significance from the point of view of understanding the *ari* references.

One among such descendants of Trasadasyu is Kuruśravaṇa referred to in 10.32 and 10.33. Both hymns are attributed to Kavaṣa Ailūṣa.

10.33 describes how at Kuruśravaṇa's death his *purohita* fell into neglect. He had been a successful bard, but now (at the death of Kuruśravaṇa) the cry at the court is "An evil speaker has come!"¹⁰⁷ In the lines that follow, the poet describes his patron's

¹⁰⁵ "King Trasadasyu as a Divine Incarnation, a note on RV 4.42" in Kunhan Raja, pp. 38 ff.

¹⁰⁶ *abām indro vāruṇaḥ* ... 4.42.3a.

¹⁰⁷ *duḥśāsura āgād iti ghōṣa āsīt* 10.33.1d. (See Geldner's introductory note to translation of 10.33).

generosity¹⁰⁸ and expresses his profound loyalty to the prince whom he calls his “companion”.¹⁰⁹ The hymn provides us with a glimpse of the extent of patronage the Pūrus extended to their panegyrist and priests and of the intimacy of the relationship between the prince and his court priests.

Kavaṣa, the bard of Kuruśravaṇa cannot be for obvious reasons the same as the “the famous old Kavaṣa” referred to in 7.18.¹¹⁰ If the authorship of a Kavaṣa is right, as it may be, then this Kavaṣa could be a descendant of that old Kavaṣa (from whom the period of this prince is removed by at least 3 generations). It is interesting to note that the original Kavaṣa was among the opponents of the Bharatas. That a priest who probably was a descendant of him is turned away from a latter-day Pūru’s court and is called an “utterer of evil” (reminiscent of derogatory epithets with nuances of cult-hostility such as *mṛdbravāc*, *dūḍhi* etc.) suggests the long-continued nature of the dissensions centred round religious differences that seem to lie concealed in many veiled references in the RV.

Kuruśravaṇa’s name is also important. It means “the glory of Kurus” and is considerably similar to Kuruṅga and Kaurayāṇa in two other late hymns.¹¹¹ These names, which connect several earlier tribal groups with the Kurus, lend support to the view that the latter were an (Aryan) amalgam of Pūrus, Bharatas and others¹¹² that lived and moved around the Sarasvatī and nearby river lands of what came to be known as Kurukṣetra in later times. That such a name came into vogue, rising in importance above the original tribal names such as Bharata and Pūru, is in keeping with the forging of a pan-Aryan ethos after the War of Ten Kings.

Tryaruṇa

Tryaruṇa is mentioned in RV 5.27. However the hymn is not intended to be a panegyric of him or to be intercessory for him. The singer’s real patron is a prince named Aśvamedha.¹¹³ This is a very interesting fact that helps us considerably to

¹⁰⁸ *māmbhiṣṭhaṃ vāghātām* 10.33.4c.

¹⁰⁹ *yuj-* 10.33.9c.

¹¹⁰ *śrutām kavāṣam vṛddhām* 7.18.12a.

¹¹¹ Kuruṅga : 8.4.19b; Kaurayāṇa: 8.3.21b.

¹¹² See Vedic Index under *Kuru*.

¹¹³ Cf. 5.27.4ab: *me ... aśvamedhāya... sūrāye*.

understand the features of a Vedic ritual festival.

Tryaruṇa however is a keen admirer of the Vedic ritual practices. One stanza of 5.27 refers to his appreciation of the ritual song. As a token of his appreciation he seems to make a special donation to the singer of Aśvamedha.¹¹⁴

At the beginning of this hymn, Tryaruṇa is described in a significant manner. He is called “the mighty lord (*asura*), more distinguished than the munificent one.”¹¹⁵ The epithet *asura* is applied to men only in a few other instances in the RV, such as at 1.126.2 and 10.93.14. In 1.126 the person mentioned is also directly called an *ari* (stz.5), while in 10.93 he is closely associated with another who, or a close relative of whom, is called an *ari* in another hymn.¹¹⁶ And so, the fact that Tryaruṇa who is called an *asura* in 5.27 hails from a line of princes of whom certainly several were already indicated by the word *ari* seems to us to be a matter of considerable significance.

¹¹⁴ *yó me gírah ... yukténābhi ... grṇāti* 5.27.3cd. Cf. Geldner’s translation. On the interpretation of 5.27, see discussion in Part II of this work.

¹¹⁵ *cétiṣṭho ásuṛo maghónaḥ* 5.27.1bc.

¹¹⁶ The prince who is called an *asura* at 10.93.14 is Rāma, who is mentioned alongside Pṛthavāna Vena. The latter is surely to be linked with Pṛthī Venya of 10.148.3 who in the same hymn is indicated as an *ari*. See Ch. II, lb. and notes 29, 31 above. See also n. 481.

III. Diversity of Religious Views

(1)

A curious feature in the description of the War of Ten Kings was that the enemies of Sudās the Bharata were called “kings who do not perform sacrificial rites” and “the party that is without Indra”. And yet, almost in the same breath, it was said that the very same kings invoked the aid of Indra in the battles they fought.

Indra in fact is often said to have been invoked by contending forces. RV 4.24.3 insists (as does 4.39.5) that it is (emphatically) he that is so invoked.¹¹⁷ On the face of it, this may indicate nothing more than that

- (a) Indra was the Vedic war-god whose aid every Aryan fighter sought, and
- (b) there were frequent clashes among the ancient Indo-Aryan tribes.

To assume that that is all this kind of statement indicates is an over-simplification. It does not take into account the extraordinary significance of an epithet such as *ayajyu* (not observing sacrificial rites, or, more properly, not observing the true ritual), or of an epithet such as *anindra* (‘not with Indra’ = not worshipping him properly and not eligible for his aid). The overwhelming dedication of the Vedic Aryans to the sacrificial religion is a factor we should never underestimate. Given that factor, to call a man a “non-sacrificer” seems to us to be the ultimate style of repudiating his acceptability.

To revert to the subject of the Ten Kings’ War. Here indeed is no mere tribal clash, but the most crucial event in the whole of the Vedic Aryan prehistory. And here *ṛṣi* Vasiṣṭha refers to the opponents of Sudās, among whom are the Pūru, Turvaśa and Anu tribes, distinctly as though they were cultural inferiors if not cultural aliens. How are we to account for this?

(2)

Let us keep in mind the slight clues the references to the Ten Kings’ War provide.

¹¹⁷ *tām in náro ví hvayante samīké* 4.24.3a (“Nur ihn rufen die Männer in der Schlacht von beiden Seiten” - Geldner): *indram ivéd ubháye ví hvayante* 4.39.5a, referring to the almost mythical Dadhikrā.

“They summon Indra and yet they do not qualify for his aid. They are truly not to be regarded as sacrificers” — Vasiṣṭha seems to say of his adversaries. And of course the adversaries included the Pūrus, the tribe from whom is derived the great Paurava clan of later times.

It certainly is a matter of much importance to be able to identify the group whom the ṛṣi denounces and whom he supports. But in this section let us primarily face the question: Is there any other evidence to support the clues that RV 7.18 and 7.83 provide? Were there in fact any variations of view among the Aryan tribes in regard to sacrifice and the worship of Indra?

Such questions of course immediately remind us of statements in the RV Saṃhitā such as e. g. the following in 8.100: “There is no Indra, so some declare; who has seen him? Whom shall we be praising (in praising him)?”¹¹⁸ It is worth reflecting on the significance of so startling a statement.

What is the idea behind the words? We cannot forget that the poet is thinking in the framework of conceptual categories that were very familiar to him. He is speaking of a particular kind of person who seems to be at least baffled by the cult activities centred around the concept of Indra.

The root *√tu-* which the poet uses here is the same that gives us important cult terms such as *stotra*, *stava* and *stoma*. To eulogize is eminently a cult function, a sacrificial act. So the question means: “In singing a *stoma* for Indra what are we doing? Is this cult-act really meaningful?”

The men who are bewildered thus cannot surely be outsiders? They cannot be non-Aryans, but Aryans who seriously asked questions about the significance of at least this cult-activity associated with Aryan religious life. It seems obvious that the poet is thinking of men of his race holding a different stance from his own in matters of worship and faith.

Let us also consider for a moment a statement like the one in RV 2.12.5. The entire Indra epic of which this stanza is a part addresses itself to the members of an Aryan *jana*. The refrain¹¹⁹ proves that conclusively. Says the stanza in question:

Of whom, the terrible, they ask: where is he?

¹¹⁸ *néndro astīti néma u tva āha ká īm dadarśa kám abhí ṣṭavāma* 8.100.3cd.

¹¹⁹ *sá janāsa indrah* 2.12 refrain.

or of whom they say: he is not ...
have faith in him, he O men is Indra.¹²⁰

An even more telling reference to the kind of situation we are discussing seems to be found in RV 1.4:

“Of Indra, the quick un-conquered one, go ask the wise priest — who is worthier than your friends. And let our detractors say: ‘Depart to another place, you who offer worship pre-eminently to Indra’.”¹²¹

“Or let the *ari* and (his?) people describe us as well-off men. In Indra’s refuge we would (yet) remain.” (1.4.4-6)¹²²

It is hard to subscribe to Thieme’s views¹²³ on the interpretation of this extremely interesting passage, which we have discussed briefly elsewhere.¹²⁴ The difference in his approach is understandable, since he was looking at it in isolation from the tribal and religious situation which we are trying to elucidate.

What does this remarkable passage communicate?

Geldner, who, it seems to us, has interpreted these stanzas more accurately than Thieme, points out the priest of Indra has here in mind the institutor of a sacrificial rite. That, in the opinion of that priest, this patron needed (i.e. lacked) knowledge of the unconquerable Indra and that that priest had to contend with detractors (notice the many R̥gvedic references to *devanidaḥ*, *brahmadviṣaḥ* etc.)¹²⁵ who scoffed at the pre-eminent (if not exclusive) place that was given to this god is the least that this context reveals.

¹²⁰ *yāṃ smā pṛchānti kūha séti ghorām / utēm ābur naiśo astīty enam / ... śrād asmai dhatta sā janāsa indraḥ* 2.12.5.

¹²¹ (The validity of this interpretation is borne out by RV 8.1.1, where we see the *ṛṣi* himself saying to his colleagues: “Do not recite anything else. Friends, do not make blunders. Praise only Indra at the Soma ritual” ... *mā cid anyād vi śamsata / sākhāyo mā riṣanyata / indram it stotā ... sutē... //* See also Geldner’s translation.)

¹²² *pārehi vígram āstrtam indram pṛchā vipaścitam / yās te sākhibhya ā vāram // utā bruvantu no nīdo nīr anyātas cid ārata / dādhanā indra id dūvaḥ // utā naḥ subhāgām arir vocēyur dasma kṛṣṭāyaḥ / syāméd indrasya sārmaṇi //* 1.4.4-6.

¹²³ F. pp. 37-38.

¹²⁴ Añjali, pp. 90-91.

¹²⁵ Añjali, p. 94, nn. 28-30.

Not only does this passage bring up the question of the identity of the *ari* who, along with others, seems to object to the *ṛṣi*'s preponderant worship of Indra and wishes to prevent him from receiving gifts — on the ground of his wealthiness — a viewpoint that could earn for the *ari* such a description as that found in RV 8.51: “a treasure-guarding (niggard)”¹²⁶ — but also it puzzles us by the reference to the *ari*'s friends and his people. In spite of the fact that the whole scene is situated in Aryan ritual environs — and indeed this is the fact not to be overlooked — one is tempted to think that the *ari* and his friends must have been somewhat different in their attitude to Indra-worship than was the *ṛṣi* who composed this hymn.

One is struck by the resemblance of the implication of this reference to that of several other highly interesting passages in the RV.

As an example of this latter we may cite RV 4.24.3 ff. Here it is said of two warring groups that they both call on Indra's aid. But some seek Indra's aid in the very sight of battle (*abhīke*): When locked in battle they pray for the Indra-might (or, following Geldner, make offerings to the Indra-name). And then, we are told further, the cooked (oblation) shall surpass the *purolāśa* (“den Reiskuchen” — Geldner). What the distinction is is not completely clear, but the repetition of the idea in verse 7 makes it obvious that the offerer of “cooked oblation” and of roasted grains is the one that is favoured by Indra with “the stallion's vigour”. And also stanzas 5-7 make it quite clear that it is the Soma-offerer who gains the alliance of Indra (6,7); indeed Soma will clearly set the non-presser apart (stanza 5).¹²⁷ And all of this provides for us the background that is needed for the understanding of the highly interesting stanzas 8-9 which incidentally contain an important reference to the *ari* once again.

We shall not attempt to dwell at length on this reference at this stage as we will be discussing it in another context later on.¹²⁸ It is however pertinent to point out what the two stanzas say in essence: the encounter has been severe, the *ari*'s contest a long affair; when she has seen that, the (*ari*'s) wife invokes the aid of Indra, who, however, by this time has been regaled to a feast of Soma by the offerers of that libation; hearing

¹²⁶ *śevadhipāḥ* 8.61.9b. See note 321 below and the relevant text.

¹²⁷ *tām in náro ví hvayante samīké / ... ād in néma indrayante abhīke // ād id dha néma indriyām yajanta / ād it paktīḥ purolāśam riricyāt / ād it sómo ví paṛṣyād asuṣvīn / ... // yá itthéndrāya sómam sunóti / ... tām it sákhāyaṃ kṛṇute samátsu // yá indrāya sunávat sómam adyá / pácāt paktír utá bhṛjīti dhānāḥ // tásmin dadhad vṛṣāṇam śúsmam índrah // from 4.24.3-7.*

¹²⁸ In Ch. VI of this work.

her call, Indra muses or says: he (the *ari*) has indulged in low trading for a thing of value, but (the other) has relinquished “not a little thing” for a thing of high value.¹²⁹

Obviously then, what the poet says is that Soma is the great thing by which alone one may hope to win the favour of Indra. And he who does not worship Indra in the form, with the substances and at the times that are appropriate to that worship, will not gain that god’s sustaining aid: in other words, they are *anindra* or “without Indra’s aid”. So it seems to us that the order of ideas is not different in RV 4.24 from that in RV 7.18: Aryan divisions having an important religious dimension.

(3)

In a sense, the specific manifestation of the hieratic thought of Vedic India is the concept of Brahmaṇaspati (= Bṛhaspati), even more than Indra. He, the Lord of Brahman, is a creation and reflection of the priestly genius of the Vedic *ṛṣi*s. It is interesting, in view of this, that there are nonetheless traces in the RV Saṃhitā of a prevalence of some kind of unfriendly attitude to the cult of Bṛhaspati-

Evidence for this is found in RV 1.190. Stanza 5 of this hymn charges some “powerful ones” with having considered Bṛhaspati as an *usrika*,¹³⁰ which normally would have to be rendered as a “little calf”. It is a risky thing to try to evaluate the significance of such comparisons, especially when we remember that Indra is often called a *vṛṣan* (bull). But the diminutive form cannot be without significance and, in any case, the rest of the verse makes it quite clear that the poet here has no kindly thoughts about the ritual acceptability of the worship that these “powerful ones” offer to Bṛhaspati. For here they are portrayed as “evil men depending on the noble one for their living”¹³¹ and this is followed by a request to Bṛhaspati not to bestow blessings on “him, of evil intent”¹³² — and we must here remind ourselves of the nuances of the original Vedic term employed in the context, i.e. *dūḍhī*. It is typically a word of denunciation for a man whose priestly functions (*dhī* in fact indicates one paramountly important aspect of these) were unacceptable in the *ṛṣi*’s eyes.

¹²⁹ *yadā samaryāṃ vy āced ŷghāvā / dirghām yād ājīm abhy ākhyad aryāḥ / ācikradad vṛṣaṇam pātny ācbā / duroṇā ā nīṣitaṃ somasūdbbiḥ // bhūyasā vasnām acarat kānīyó / ... sā bhūyasā kānīyo nārīrecīd / 4.24.8 & 9ac.*

¹³⁰ *yé tvā devosrikām mānyamānāḥ* 1.190.5a.

¹³¹ *pāpā bhadrām upajīvanti pajrāḥ* 1.190.5b.

¹³² *dūḍhyè* 1.190.5c.

The prevalence in Vedic society of a divergent attitude towards Bṛhaspati, the arch-deity of Brahmanism, is brought out again in RV 2.23 addressed to this god. This hymn refers in sharp terms to ill-intentioned revilers of gods from whom the singer wishes the highest good to be held away. Particularly instructive is stanza 16:

“Give us not away to thieves who, hanging on to the ‘footprint’ of falsehood, are greedy for victuals, the cheats that they are. In their hearts they reduce the strength of gods. They, O Bṛhaspati, know nothing above the *sāman* (chant).”¹³³

“Know nothing above the *sāman* (chant)” — what does this signify? And, “reduce in their hearts the strength of the gods”? It would be really interesting to understand exactly what these remarkable statements were meant to convey, in this passionate diatribe directed against “revilers of gods” and “haters of *brahman*” and “false reciters”¹³⁴. One is entitled to ask: could they possibly refer to religious approaches other than the Brahmanical one, approaches which in the eyes of this *ṛṣi* were tantamount to insulting the gods? Could the *ṛṣi* be having in mind any tendencies which admitted as active rites no more than the *sāman* chant? To ask this question is not to suggest that the answer should be ‘yes’; but yet it would not do to suppress that question which naturally presents itself.

The question is all the more pertinent when taken in conjunction with what some other Ṛgvedic passages declare. Let us take for example

10.105.8: “Through *ṛc*-recital let us put down the men who do not recite *ṛc*. No sacrifice without *brahman* (ritual eulogy) will succeed or make pleasure in you.”¹³⁵

Or 7.26.1: “No unpressed soma pleases Indra, nor (even) the pressed sap, that (comes) not with *brahman*”.¹³⁶

What do these passages hint at, while laying a very self-conscious emphasis on the active aspects of the ritual, such as the pressing of soma and the recital of *ṛc* verses? A pointer as to what the answer should be, it seems to us, is RV 6.52.1-2. Here a Bhāradvāja priest speaks of a person who purported to perform what was “more than a sacrifice” (*atīyāja* — with perhaps sarcastic overtones). Not only does this man “think himself above us”,

¹³³ *mā na stenébhyo yé abhi druhás padé / nirāmitño ripávó ’nneṣu jāgrdhúḥ / á devānām óhate ví vráyo bhṛdí / bṛhaspate ná paráḥ sámno viduḥ // 2.23.16*

¹³⁴ *brahmadviṣaḥ 2.23.4c; devanidaḥ 8c; duḥśamsaḥ 10c.*

¹³⁵ *ṛcā vanemānīcaḥ / nábrahmā yajñá ṛdhag jóṣati tvé // 10.105.8bc.*

¹³⁶ *ná sóma índram ásuto mamāda / nábrahmāṇo ... sutásāḥ 7.26.1ab.*

but he also would “wish to pour scorn on the ritual that is being expressed in action”¹³⁷. The subsequent stanza asks why the god looks on while his singer and his party are insulted and requests that a burning missile be hurled on (this) hater of *brahman*.¹³⁸ Could these words in some way be an anticipation of the debate between the proponents and opponents of the ‘way of works’ of later time?

Here we are also reminded of RV 4.2.12 which incidentally contains another important reference to the *ari*. Geldner, it seems to us, is basically right in the way he renders this stanza into German and explains its purport in the notes attached to his translation — except for the (not insignificant) error of equating *ari* with *sūri* (a problem which we hope to discuss at length in the pages to follow). From of old, the stanza in effect says, the ritual fire, symbolizing the god Agni, has been entrusted to Āyu, i.e. the Vedic priesthood. From Āyu’s dwelling, Agni could unmistakably see his intentions which are clear by virtue of the visible rites that are done with (? hands and) feet. On the other hand, the *ari*’s secret intentions the god could see only through his active dispositions.¹³⁹ The visible rites of Āyu and the hidden intentions of the *ari*: this is not an insignificant contrast when taken in conjunction with the other things that are repeatedly said in the RV about the *ari*’s cultural distance from the ideals of Vedic *ṛsis*.

In any case, it seems clear that in the RV there already are some signs of the prevalence, among the Aryans themselves, of religious trends that did not emphasize those aspects of their worship that the *ṛsis* usually emphasized.

(4)

Statements that seem to be out of step with the main R̥gvedic line of thinking are rather exceptional in the Saṃhitā, but a few are occasionally met with, particularly in its later portions. Such an unusual statement is found in RV 10.82. The 7th stanza of this hymn says: “Covered in mist and prattle do the utterers of hymns wander, delighting in (the taking of) life”¹⁴⁰ — which, as Geldner rightly observes, is an obvious objection to the slaughter of animals in sacrifice.

¹³⁷ *atīyājāśya yaṣṭā // atī vā yó ... mānyate no / bráhma vā yáḥ kriyámāṇaṃ nínitsāt / 6.52.1d 2ab.*

¹³⁸ *kím aṅgá naḥ paśyasi nidyamānān / brahmadviṣe tāpuṣiṃ hetim asya // 6.52.3cd.*

¹³⁹ (*kaviṃ śaśāsuh kaváyó ’dabdhā / nidhārayanto dūryāsv āyóḥ /*) *átas tvám dṛśyām agna etān padbhīḥ paśyer ádbhutām aryá évaiḥ 4.2.12.* On the interpretation of this stz. see Geldner’s notes to his translation of it.

¹⁴⁰ *nīhāreṇa právṛtā jālpyā cā / ’sutṛpa ukthaśāśaś caranti 10.82.7cd.*

Ritual slaughter and the offering of soma were practices that were predominantly associated with the cult of Indra, the god of war. This is particularly well illustrated by RV 10.27. Here the singer, in his part of a *saṃvāda* dialogue, makes a promise to Indra of cooking a vigorous bullock for him and pouring a sharp libation of Soma for 15 days.¹⁴¹ And Indra replies that he knows of no one who speaks thus after victory has been achieved; it is on perceiving the fierce impending battle that they promise him a pair of bulls!¹⁴² (It is interesting to note that the idea of the right offerings¹⁴³ is an important element in 10.27 as well: ritual offerings of beef and Soma in stanza 2;¹⁴⁴ condemnatory allusion to “those without Indra, the drinkers of *śṛta*”¹⁴⁵ as opposed to Soma, hence those who do not offer Soma, who “insult the ally”¹⁴⁶ (stanza 6). These references clearly follow the same order of ideas as in 7.18 and 4.24 which we discussed above).

It does seem then (a) that there was some criticism of the ritual slaughter of animals on the one hand and (b) that on the other there was explicit voicing of the idea that to obtain Indra’s aid as the god of war one necessarily had to offer Soma and the animal sacrifice and that not merely when war was at hand. Not to do so was an insult to him and a departure from the cult. What was deplorable was that some sought his aid while rejecting these rites or performing them only at the sight of war (4.24 and 10.27).

(5)

Let us reflect a little more on the significance of Soma offering and Soma drinking in the Ṛgvedic period — a time that was marked by the dominance of the Indra cult, by a conscious advocacy of it by the elite of the Vedic *ṛṣi*s whose compositions have come down to us in the RV Saṃhitā.

¹⁴¹ *amā te tūmraṃ vṛṣabhām paçāni / tīvrām sutām pañcadaśāṃ nī śiñcam // 10.27.2cd.*

¹⁴² *nābhām tāṃ veda yā iti brāvīty / ādevayūn samāraṇe jaghanvān / yadā ’vākhyat samāraṇam ṛghāvad / ād idd ha me vṛṣabhā prā bruvanti // 10.27.3.*

¹⁴³ Perhaps more accurately, right offerings made at the right time. That some are reminded of Indra and think of offering him “bull-sacrifice” *only when* the din of war is heard is what the *ṛṣi* scornfully says in 4.24 (at 4d, 5a, 5b and 5c) and in 8.21 (14d) and 10.27 (3d). In all six cases the temporal phrase used is *ad it* whose actual force would be best brought out if we translate it as “and only after that”.

¹⁴⁴ *tūmraṃ vṛṣabhām ... tīvrām sutām of 10.27.2cd.*

¹⁴⁵ *śṛtapām anindrān 10.27.6a.*

¹⁴⁶ *yé ninidūḥ sakhāyam 10.27.6c.*

We may consider a reference like the one in 8.21 which informs us of men who preferred *surā* (a strong drink other than Soma) and scoffed at Indra but who felt impelled to seek his aid when plunged into war, like little ones longing for fatherly support:

“Never a rich man will you find fit for alliance (with you). They, sharpened by *surā*, scoff at you. (But) when you raise the cry of war and bring (contenders) into confrontation, then are you invoked like a father.” (8.21.14)¹⁴⁷

Why the reference to *surā*?

It is extremely doubtful if the high priests of Indraism regarded *surā* as a respectable drink or a fit substitute for Soma. It is true that RV 1.116.7 refers to the Aśvins’ gift of 1000 jars of *surā* to the singer Kakṣivant¹⁴⁸ as if it were a valued gift¹⁴⁹ — but there is some reason to think Kakṣivant did not enjoy a very great respect among the priesthood we are here thinking of. The¹⁵⁰ Aśvins themselves do not originally seem to have belonged to the circle of gods who were honoured with the Soma libation. The Yajurveda describes them as not entitled to the Soma drink.¹⁵¹ The later Vedic literature preserves some valuable evidence which suggests that the followers of the Indra cult viewed the worship of the Aśvins with disfavour.¹⁵²

In the later ritual of the *sautrāmaṇi*,¹⁵³ *surā* is mingled with Soma but this very ritual seems to reflect the original unacceptability of *surā*. In the old story connected with this ritual, it seems that Indra appears as poisoned by Namuci (Vṛtra) by means of a mixture of Soma and *surā*. The mingled Soma could be made drinkable by means of a *vipāna* (“drinking separately” — dexterously extracting the desired component of the

¹⁴⁷ *nākī revāntaṃ sakhyāya vindase / pīyanti te surāśvāḥ / yadā kṛṇōṣi nadanīm sām ūhasy / ād it pītēva hūyase //* 8.21.14.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Hillebrandt, VM I pp. 244ff. esp.p. 250: *surā* as the drink of Aryans living unbrahmanistically; and p. 253: opposition between drinkers of *soma* and *surā*. See also Vedic Index: *surā*.

¹⁴⁹ *śatām kumbhām asiñcataṃ sūrāyāḥ* 1.116.7d. However, 1.117.6 refers to the gift as *śatām kumbhām ... mādhūnām*.

¹⁵⁰ Cf the statement of 1.190.5 *pāpā ... pajrāḥ* which Geldner regards as a reference to the “Rivalität zwischen den Māniden und den Pajra’s”. Pajra was “the name of the family from which Kakṣivant sprang”: Vedic Index, under Pajra (referring to 1.117.10, 1.122.7-8, 1.126.4-5).

¹⁵¹ Aśvins were originally *asomapa*: MS IV.6.1.

¹⁵² Jaim.Br. iii. 121-128. See also Vedic index under Cyavana.

¹⁵³ Hillebrandt, RL p.159 f. ; Geldner on 10.131.4a ; Vedic Index, fn. 72 under Soma.

mixture). The original *sautrāmaṇi* was a purificatory ritual instituted in memory of this. Therefore it was to be particularly celebrated by an enthroned king and by one with whom the Soma drink did not agree. The whole point that emerges from this is that although in course of time the priesthood changed its position with regard to the ritual acceptability of *surā*, originally only the Soma was regarded as fit and acceptable and respectable for the *sūri* to consume. The evidence of RV 10.89.5 is a valuable pointer in this direction:

“Soma (is) the draught of wrath, whose first fresh drink is sharp (?), (the stuff) that shakes, the impetuous holder of darts, prepared from *ṛjīṣa*. All substitute shrubs and plants deceive not Indra hitherward.”¹⁵⁴

It was a part of the early Vedic ritual that both the *yajamāna* and the priest partook of the sacred sap. At RV 10.167.4, (Indra as) the first *sūri* speaks of coming after a victorious contest to his (*purohita*) priests Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni and taking a (ritual) drink of Soma¹⁵⁵. From other references, we gather that Indra here speaks of the typical conduct of a *sūri* and that the privilege of the draught extended to the *yajamāna* as well. Thus 9.99.3 says “We cleanse this gladdening drink of his, that which kine took into their mouths of old, and princes take it now.”¹⁵⁶

The hymn 9.98 also gives definite evidence on this point. Stanza 8 of this hymn addresses the Soma drinkers and says that the sap is “a means to strength” and that it “gives high renown to *sūris*”. Stanza 10 describes the sap as being extracted in order to be drunk by Indra as well as the “man that offers the *dakṣiṇā*”.¹⁵⁷

In 8.68 stanza 14 refers to princes Indrota Śrutarvan and Pūtakratu approaching (their *purohita*) priest “in the stimulation of Soma”.¹⁵⁸

As to priests drinking the Soma draught the RV provides ample testimony. To quote just a few instances:

¹⁵⁴ *āpāntamanyus tṛpālprabharmā / dhūniḥ śīmivāñ chārumām ṛjīṣī / sómo viśvāny atasā vānāni / nārvāg indram pratimānāni debbhūḥ // 10.89.5.*

¹⁵⁵ See n. 284 below and relevant text.

¹⁵⁶ *tām asya marjayāmasi / ... yām gāva āsābbir dadbhūḥ / purā nūnam ca sūrāyaḥ // 9.99.3acd.* Translation quoted is Griffith's.

¹⁵⁷ *pāntaḥ*: soma-drinkers; *dakṣasādhanam* (9.98.8b); *yāḥ sūriṣu śrāvo bṛhād dadhé ...* (8cd); *indrāya ... pātave ... nāre ca dākṣiṇāvate* (9.98.10ac).

¹⁵⁸ *sómasya hārsyāḥ* 8.68.14b.

3.53.10: “Ye Kuśikas, drink up the Soma’s savoury meath.”¹⁵⁹

8.32.1: “Kaṇvas tell forth with song (the deeds) of Indra..., wrought in Soma’s wild delight.”¹⁶⁰

8.48.3: “The Soma we have drunk, immortal have become, to the light gone, the gods discovered.”¹⁶¹

When we appreciate this ancient ritual significance attached to the Soma draught, by prince and priest alike, it is easy to understand the harsh characterization by the Vedic priests of all those who rejected the Soma rite and also who apparently took objection to its use among themselves. (Cf. “drinkers of *śṛta*” in 7.18 and 10.27).¹⁶²

So he who did not conform to the Soma ritual was roundly condemned in the Ṛgveda and the commonest way of doing this was to call such a person a “non-presser” (*asunvant*). The term has been coupled with others like “*brahma*-hating”, “not given to generosity” and “unapproachable”, which are all words that describe those who did not comply with the life-style favoured by the *ṛsis*.¹⁶³

Not to be a Soma offerer: this was a high offence in the eyes of the Vedic *ṛsis*. Not only that, it was also a high offence not to be a Soma-drinker.

Thus the over-riding position of the Soma ceremonial in the early Indra cult is an unquestionable fact. Yet signs are not wanting in the RV itself that circumstances had tended to weaken the power of this ritual (either the presence of Aryan groups who had adopted other practices, or the growing irrelevance of the ritualistic modes of a

¹⁵⁹ *vī pibadhvaṃ kuśikāḥ somyām mādhu* // 3 53.10.

¹⁶⁰ *kāṇvā indrasya gāthayā / māde sōmasya vocata* // 8.32.1.

¹⁶¹ *āpāma sōmam anīṭā abhūma aḡanma jyōtir āvidāma devān* 8.48.3ab, cf. also 9.8.9 *tvā ... indrapītaṃ ... bhakṣīmāhi*.

¹⁶² Geldner commenting on *śṛtapām anindrān* of 10.27.6 notes the similarity of phraseology with 7.18.16ab: *ardhām ... śṛtapām*. (We have noted above other points of similarity between 7.18 and 10.27). Geldner says *śṛta* here means cooked milk, as part of the Soma brew and asks whether *śṛtapā* could mean “drinker of (only) milk” as opposed to the Soma-drinker. But clearly *śṛta* as a constituent of the Soma brew makes no sense in this reference to men who are *anindra* and who even deride the great Indra (*nid* — 10.27.6c). Falling off from Soma rites was a necessary accompaniment of going outside Indra-worship. Hence *śṛtapā* as an epithet of the party of *anindra* men must mean something more than what Geldner thinks is the case.

¹⁶³ Cf. *nā sunōti sōmam ...* and *brahmadviṣaḥ*: 10.160.4bd; *āsuṣvīn ... aprṇataḥ*: 6.44.11d; *asunvantam ... dūṇāśam* 1.176.4ab.

militaristic cult; the two may in fact be not unrelated to each other). Thus e.g. RV 1.122.9 refers to the dishonest man who cunningly prepares the Soma sap (as thin) as water¹⁶⁴ and 2.30.7 voices the priest's desire that he (even he!) should not tire of the Soma rites: "Let it not exhaust me nor tire me. Let us not say, 'press no Soma'."¹⁶⁵

(6)

Is this situation of conflicting positions on matters of cult a characteristic of Vedic India only, or do we also have any comparable features in ancient Iran?

The question about Iran is inevitable since we know that in later times Zarathustra denounced certain aspects of earlier Iranian religious life which cultivated the very practices that the protagonists of the Indra cult seem at times (defensively?) to advocate.

Let us in this connection read what R.C. Zaehner says in "The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism":

"Yima's crime would seem to have been not so much that he had introduced meat eating among his people as that he had slaughtered cattle in sacrifice to the ancient gods. This sacrifice would appear to have been associated ... with ritual intoxication ... it would seem clear that Zoroaster is attacking a traditional cult in which a bull was slaughtered ... in honour of the *daēvas*: this rite was accompanied by another in which the juice of the Haoma plant was extracted and ritually consumed."¹⁶⁶

Zaehner observes elsewhere in the same work:

"The Haoma cult goes back to Indo-Iranian times ... We cannot ... avoid the conclusion that originally the Haoma rite must have been more typical of the *daēvas* than it was of the *aburas*. In all probability no clear distinction was made between the two until shortly before the birth of the prophet ... we can only say that the Haoma cult was practised both by the followers of the *daēvas* and by those of the *aburas* at the time the prophet saw the light of day."¹⁶⁷

If this was the case, it might appear intriguing why the prophet was regarded as taking any stand at all in regard to this cult: In answer to this Zaehner continues:

¹⁶⁴ *jānaḥ ... abhidbrūg apó ná ... sunóty akṣṇayādbrúk* 1.122.9.

¹⁶⁵ *ná mā taman ná śraman nótá tandran / ná vocāma má sunotéti sómam //* 2.30.7ab.

¹⁶⁶ Zaehner, p. 38.

¹⁶⁷ Op. cit. pp. 88-89.

“The daēvic cult was no doubt orgiastic, violent and cruel ... Whatever Zoroaster himself may have thought, the later tradition did not interpret his words as meaning that he condemned anything but drunkenness in connection with the Haoma rite or that he condemned animal sacrifices as such, but only the cruelty associated with it and the lack of moderation in the use that was made of it.”¹⁶⁸

The least that the Iranian evidence boils down to is then this: that the ahuric view of the cult tended to be less in favour of the orgiastic and more in favour of the non-violent; the daēvic tendency on the other hand was more impetuous and aggressive: corresponding roughly to the two ends of the spectrum of religious practice widely evident almost everywhere. In short the two cults seem to express and typify the dichotomy of men’s attitudes: dynamic and orgiastic at times and austere and non-violent at others. But it is impossible to speak of the two in terms of mutual exclusion.

The similarity of the religious situation in R̥gvedic India to what Zaehner surmises as the position in pre-Zoroastrian Iran is indeed remarkable. In India, to all appearances, the *deva* par excellence was Indra, while Varuṇa seems to have been rather more typical of the asuric trend. But those whom the *ṛsis* would describe as “without Indra”, as men who scoff at Indra, and as “(kings) who do not sacrifice” to the *devas*, nevertheless call on his aid when face to face with war. “Insulters” call a Viśvāmitra singer an extremist devotee of Indra, but the Viśvāmitras have obviously acknowledged the divinity of Varuṇa (although they have not devoted entire hymns to eulogize him in their *mandala* of the RV Saṃhitā). In other words, there is no question of an exclusive *asura* (or Varuṇa) religion or of an exclusive *deva* (or Indra) religion in India, any more than in Iran. It was perhaps because the early Aryans in India had to encounter stiff and prolonged resistance to their advance in the new land that early Vedism tended to remain an Indra-centred cult with a predilection for the “orgiastic, violent and cruel” traits that Zaehner ascribes to early daēvism in Iran. And it was, we would surmise, because of the evidence of a softer attitude emerging among some Aryans towards the non-Aryan “resisters” (*vr̥tras*), that the Indra-centred elements reviled them as if they were also foes and aliens — thus throwing a smoke-screen through which it is rather hard to see the outlines of the tribal and religious situation that seems to have prevailed in early Indo-Aryan times.

¹⁶⁸ Op. cit. pp. 89-90.

(7)

When on the subject the *deva - asura* distinction, a very instructive hymn of the RV is 10.124. We read it in the light of the ideas expressed by Lüders and others on Ṛgvedic cosmology. The hymn appears to be in line with the late Ṛgvedic representation of the celestial waters, the sources of light and fire and the heavenly Soma, as having their abode and resting place in the highest heaven. The creative powers of the universe according to this view have to constantly maintain these celestial waters (and all the treasures contained therein) free from the grip of Vṛtra. What is especially interesting about RV 10.124 is that it seems to portray Vṛtra as Father Asura, and to refer to his enclosing or inclusion of Agni, Varuṇa and Soma within his domain. Vṛtra's imprisonment of these powers cannot be regarded as an unusual idea in view of their close association with the heavenly waters, but what is remarkable is the suggestion of their asuric extraction: the hymn seems to reflect a view that there was a time when Agni, Varuṇa and Soma were asuric. It says that in this condition Agni was not fit to receive the sacrifice. Indra as the dynamic, creative force now appears and calls Agni out of the dark, to come to the immortal, the sacrificial. Agni follows, but with an aching conscience ("without friendliness, I leave him who was friendly ... choosing Indra, I abandon the Father" ... 10.124.2/4). Varuṇa and Soma follow suit. With this the lordship of the Asuras comes to an end. And then Indra offers Varuṇa co-rulership in the new kingdom and enlists Soma's support to kill Vṛtra. The hymn ends showing the world re-established and the waters freed. They stand away with disgust from the fallen power (Vṛtra), like tribesmen opting for a *rājan*. (See translation of RV 10.124 attached to the end of this chapter).

An echo of these important ideas is found in another hymn, i.e., RV 6.59. Here, stanza 1 addresses Indra-Agni and declares:

"Killed are your elders (literally, fathers), the god-foes. You two, Indra, Agni are alive"¹⁶⁹.

Apparently, some at least among the *ṛsis* were keen on spreading the notion that the chief gods had, at some point in the history of the celestial powers, rebelled against their elders (the elders came to have the gods as foes: *devāśatravaḥ*) and done them to their death — or something of that sort. Says 4.18.12, addressing Indra:

"Who has made your mother a widow? Who sought to kill you, as you were lying (still), (or) as you were moving (about)? What god was gracious toward you when you seized the

¹⁶⁹ *batāso vām pitāro devāśatrava / indrāgnī jīvatho yuvām // 6.59.1cd.*

father by (his) feet and destroyed (him)?”¹⁷⁰

To us these sayings appear to be informative not only on aspects of a continuing development of religious views, but also of social institutions and practices and on the passing of tribal authority from elderly chiefs to a ‘chosen’ (ritually installed) ruler, the *rājan*, the *kṣatriya*.

(8)

On the basis of what we discussed above, we may justifiably say that in Vedic worship the shift from the *asura* to the *deva* trend seems to be reflected differently in three detectable conditions of the cult:

- a) Cult regards Indra as fit for invocation (in the way characteristically associated with this god) in times of war, but not pre-eminently in any other sense.
- b) Cult rejects orgiastic and violent traits and is sceptical about the very existence of Indra.
- c) Cult gives unvarying emphasis to Indra and rejects *asuras* altogether, but assimilates Varuṇa.

It would seem that what ultimately came to occupy the position of the ‘official’ cult of the Ṛgvedic Aryans was a version of (c) which gave a clear and unambiguous position to powers that at first sight might seem to be asuric in character. In other words, the RV Saṃhitā represents to a great extent a conscious development of a religious viewpoint and a cult system paying due regard to a variety of preexisting aspects of a common worship which can be subsumed in the single concept *yajña*: sacrifice. In social terms the RV reveals the participatory role of an elite priesthood consciously advancing the thrust of an ethnic-cultural expansion, emphasizing and synthesizing the various items of this ‘variety of aspects’ as and when that expansion required.

If the Saṃhitā represents the synthesizing of a variety of pre-existing aspects of a common worship (as viewed from our distance from the document), it becomes clear that the story of Vedic cultural and political development cannot be reconstructed as a ‘historical’ narration unless we succeed in unravelling a tangled skein: the lines of demarcation that must have at one time existed between those various aspects of the sacrificial cult. This is well nigh a hopeless task, but a slender prospect of arriving at

¹⁷⁰ *kás te mātāraṃ vidbhāvāṃ acakrac / chayūṃ kás tvām ajighāṃsac cārantam / kás te devó ádhi mārḍiká āsīd / yát prākṣiṇāḥ pitāram pādagr̥hya //* 4.18.12.

some reasonable hypothesis seems to exist. And that is to investigate the *deva* cult as possibly enshrining a vision with implications of a distinctively political and social kind.

RV 10.124: Appendix to Ch. III¹⁷¹

Indra: Come to this sacrifice of ours O Agni. You will be the carrier of oblation and the chief of ritual. Too long already have you lain in darkness (1)

Agni: Secretly departing from the *adeva*, as (a) *deva* do I come forth, the (prospect of) immortality seeing. When I, without friendliness, leave him who was friendly, I go from my own friendly realm for an unknown lineage. (2)

... I speak a kindly word to Father Asura: “Exclusion from the sacrifice I leave, to participation therein.” (3)

Many a year was I active within him. (Now) choosing Indra, I abandon the Father. They, Agni, Soma, Varuṇa leave. Rulership has changed. Coming, I favour it. (4)

Indra: The Asuras have lost their *māyā* power. If you would like me, O Varuṇa, (then) to the sovereignty of my kingdom come, distinguishing *ṛta* from what is not *ṛta*. (5)

Come out, O Soma, let us two destroy Vṛtra ... (6)

The *kavi* with his *kavi*-like quality has fixed his form in the sky.

Devoid of might, Varuṇa released the waters. (7)

They (the waters) follow his loftiest Indra-might. They linger by him, revelling in their inherent strength. Abhorring, they stood apart from Vṛtra, like folks (when) choosing the *rājan*. (8)

¹⁷¹ RV 10.124 : *imāṃ no agna úpa yajñám éhi / ... áso havyavāḥ utá nah purogá / jyóg evá dirghám táma áśayisṭhāḥ // (1) ádevád deváh pracátā gúhā yán / prapásyamāno amṛtatvám emi / śívám yát sántam áśivo jábhāmi / svát sakhyád áraṇim nábbhim emi // (2) ... sámśāmi pitré ásurāya sévam / ayajñiyád yajñítiam bhāgám emi // (3) bahvīḥ sámā akaram antár asminn / índram vṛṇānāḥ pitáram jábhāmi / agniḥ sómo váruṇas té cyavante / paryávard rāṣṭrám tád avāmy áyan // (4) nirmāyā u tyé ásurā abhūvan / tvám ca mā varuṇa kāmāyāse / ṛténa rājann áṅṛtaṃ viviñcān / máma rāṣṭrásyádhipatyam éhi // (5) ... hánāva vṛtrám niréhi soma / ... (6) kavīḥ kavitvá diví rūpám áśajad / áprabhūti váruṇo nír apáh sṛjat / ... (7) tá áśya jyéṣṭham indriyám sacante / tá im á kṣeti svadbhāya mádantiḥ / tá im víśo ná rājānam vṛṇāná / bíbhatsúvo ápa vṛtrád atisṭhan (8).*

IV. Significance of Indra Cult: An Impetus to Power

(1)

It is but apt that this chapter should commence with some words in explanation of its title.

The depiction of Indra in the RV has a character of its own. At the same time we have no evidence to think that there was a distinct “Indra Religion.” The Indra cult is part of the larger religion of the *yajña* that we find depicted in all the scriptures of the Veda. Within the confines of that larger system however, Indraism carries with it an element of self-consciousness, certain individual features which seem to us to be deliberate and not merely incidental or accidental. This historically interesting aspect of the Indra cult seems to us to reflect a well-thought out response to actual earthly realities on the part of a segment of the *ṛṣi* elite of the Vedic age, or perhaps a response whose origins may well go beyond the Vedic age.

A word of caution however has to be added, mainly to set the limits of the view which we seek to expound. It is not being argued that the Vedic religiousness is merely a response to a given challenge, that it is, so to say, a creature of circumstance. The Vedic religiousness, as every form of human religiousness, is emphatically a more profound phenomenon on whose nature no new opinion is here expressed. On the other hand, it appears that the developed Indra cult is quite a distinctive phenomenon whose purpose seems to have been to direct the energies of a culture that was nurtured on this religiousness to a particular goal, a goal which today we would visualize as an expansion of power. In that sense the Indra cult has distinct political overtones, though in an idiom that may sound strange as a political expression.

(2)

Let us examine some prominent delineations of this trend in the hymns of the RV *Samhitā*.

In the first place this kind of motivation of the cult is most often expressed mythologically. Thus it is part of the Indra myth that he aided Manu (= the Aryan) against the *Dāsa*, and in the contest in which he characteristically figures as the hero, he slays an opponent who is all too obviously *Dāsa*-like.

Before we go to examine some striking expressions of this legendary material, let us

remind ourselves that myth and legend in the Vedic system as elsewhere were never merely narrative in purpose. A myth or a legend about those whom one venerated and worshipped is always a commendation of a given course of conduct and a recommendation of it to the worshipper. In short it is an emphatic call to those of the present age to do what the gods and heroes did of old.

In the Manu legend, Manu clearly represents the Aryan standing in opposition to the Dāsa. Let us quote some examples of this characterization.

- 1.130.8: Indra helped the sacrificing Aryan in battleshe made the dark skin subject to Manu.¹⁷²
- 2.20.6/7: (Indra) rose for Manu's sake, carried away ... the head of Dāsa Arśāsāna; he shatters the Dāsa (strongholds) open, with the dark men in their wombs.¹⁷³
- 8.98.6: Indra is the breaker of forts, a slayer of the Dasyu, favourer of Manu.¹⁷⁴
- 10.43.8: (Indra), who makes the waters to have an Ārya lord, finds light for Manu, the presser (of Soma), the offerer of oblations.¹⁷⁵

What is stated here of Indra (and in numerous other passages of the same type) is said about other gods in some other contexts, but this appears to us to be not so much a part of the *deva* depiction as such, but a projection to other gods of a function that is strictly ascribed to Indra among those Aryans in whose cult-practices Indra occupied a paramount place.

Thus in the sixth book of the RV (ascribed to the Bhāradvāja family) the gods are characterized as “they who made Manu superior to the Dāsa”¹⁷⁶ and in the tenth it is said that the gods brought up Purūravas in order that the Dasyu-s be destroyed.¹⁷⁷

In the tenth book again, it is said of the divinized Soma drops that “their countenance, shining with might, found for Manu the sun, the Aryan light”.¹⁷⁸ “Winning the sun”

¹⁷² *indraḥ samātsu yajamānam āryam / prāvad ... mānave ... tvācam kṛṣṇām arandhayat* 1.130.8.

¹⁷³ *ūrdhvó bhuvan mānuṣe ... arśāsānāsya ... śīro bharad dāsāsya ... kṛṣṇāyonīḥ ... dāsīr airayad vi ...* - from 2.20.6-7.

¹⁷⁴ *indra darta purām ... hantā dasyor mānor vṛdhāḥ* / 8.98.6.

¹⁷⁵ *yó aryāpatnīr ākṛṇod imā apāḥ / sá sunvaté ... / avindaj jyótir mānave haviṣmate* 10.43.8 bcd.

¹⁷⁶ *yé mānuḥ cakrūr úparam dāsāya* 6.21.11 d.

¹⁷⁷ *tvā purūravo ... vardhayan dasyubātāya* 10.95.7.

¹⁷⁸ *praiṣām ānikam śāvāsā dávidyutad / vidát svār mānave jyótir āryam //* 10.43.4 cd

in the RV is a characteristic term for sacrifice as well as war; and, when what is won in the course of that is described as the Aryan light gained for Manu's sake, the statement simply means that Soma wins for the Aryan his light: Manu here as elsewhere in the RV stands for the Aryan as opposed to the Dāsa.

In several references to Indra's fight against the Dragon or Vṛtra, the latter is depicted as a Dāsa or as symbolizing Dāsa power. Thus 1.32.11 says the serpent (= Vṛtra) guarded the waters and so the latter are "in Dāsa subjugation"; Indra slays Vṛtra and uncovers the waterhole.¹⁷⁹ In this context, as Sāyaṇa the commentator observes, it is Vṛtra that is depicted as the Dāsa. Our point is that such a depiction is extraordinarily meaningful.

Indra is said to have been born to slay Vṛtra¹⁸⁰: this notion illumines the context of such a saying as the following: "At his very birth, he conquered all the waters that were under Dāsa subjection".¹⁸¹ Here too it is all too clear that Vṛtra = Dāsa.

Another of the famous exploits of Indra is his subjugation of Śuṣṇa. It is important to note that in many references to this myth Śuṣṇa is described in identical terms as are applied to the Dāsa -Dasyu. Thus Śuṣṇa is the Dāsa for whom Indra "will make the earth a pillow"¹⁸²; he is the Dasyu "full of evil power" and "devoid of the sacred word"¹⁸³, "the Dasyu" on whom Indra's bolt is to be hurled,¹⁸⁴ "who does not practise sacrificial rites and is devoted to other practices."¹⁸⁵

Elsewhere, Śuṣṇa as well as his supporters are characterized as Dasyu-s (plural).¹⁸⁶ They are further described approximately as "Dasyu-s of improper speech, that are not in possession of (the sacred) word" (*anāso dasyūn mṛdhravācaḥ*)¹⁸⁷ — a typical description of the Dasyu-s as the characteristic cult-opponents of the Vedic Aryans.

¹⁷⁹ *dāsāpatnīr ābigopā atiṣṭhan / ... āpaḥ ... / ... apām bilam ... / vṛtrām jaghanvām āpa tād vavāra // 1.32.11. Cf. with this the co-occurrence of Śuṣṇa, Pipru, Śambara and Vṛtra- as in 1.103.8: śuṣṇam pīprum kūyavaṃ vṛtrām indra / yadāvadhīr vī pūrah śambarasya /.*

¹⁸⁰ *jāyathā ... vṛtrahātyāya 8.89.5ab = 1.51.6 (n. 201).*

¹⁸¹ *yāt ... ājāniṣṭhāḥ ... / vīsvā apó ajayad dāsāpatnīḥ // 5.30.5 (Cf. tvām apó ajayo dāsāpatnīḥ 8.96.18d).*

¹⁸² *kṣām dāsāyopabārhanīṃ kaḥ 1.174.7b. See Geldner's comments on 1.174.7ab.*

¹⁸³ *māyāvān ābrahmā dāsyaṃ // 4.16.9d. See Geldner on 4.16.9.*

¹⁸⁴ *śuṣṇe ... / vājraṃ jaghantha dāsyaṃ // 8.6.14ab.*

¹⁸⁵ *akarmā dāsyaṃ ... (amantūr) anyāvrataḥ ... 10.22.8ab. See Geldner on 10.22.7-10.*

¹⁸⁶ *dāsyaṃ : 4.16.12c, 5.29.10c, 5.31.7d.*

¹⁸⁷ *5.29.10cd.*

(*anās* — occurring only here is analysed by Sāyaṇa as *an-ās*, lit. “mouthless”, which Geldner would render as approximating to dumb. To us it appears surprisingly close to *abrahman*, *amantu* and *avāc* appearing at 4.16.9 and 10.22.8 respectively).

Śuṣṇa’s hideouts again are referred to exactly in the same terms as are the strongholds of the Dasyu-s (fortifications, forts etc.),¹⁸⁸ and Śuṣṇa is characteristically mentioned alongside such well-known Dāsa chiefs whom Indra is said to have slain as Śambara, Pipru and Ilībiṣa.¹⁸⁹

In statements such as these which refer to legendary figures like Manu, Vṛtra and Śuṣṇa, Indra is depicted as the real maker of Dāsa defeat (or the defeat of the Dāsa-like). But the notion of Indra’s initiative in subjugating Dāsa power and extending Aryan sovereignty also finds numerous other expressions, in which he is the bringer of Aryan triumph and the model for the Aryan warlords to emulate.

(3)

An interesting idea expressed in the hymns to Indra is that it is he who personally leads (or should lead) the fighting hosts of the Aryan chiefs. He “leads troops and stands at the head of the heroic men”;¹⁹⁰ he is “the wide shield and the pioneer fighter”¹⁹¹ and the one that will “stand at the forefront.”¹⁹² “In his command are the horses and cattle, the mobile groups and all the cars.”¹⁹³

This last quotation seems to refer to the separate constituents involved in early Aryan fighting. It reminds us of RV 1.100.10a which describes Indra as gaining triumph by means of *grāma*-s (= mobile hosts) and (battle-)cars.¹⁹⁴ Wilhelm Rau has clearly shown the significance of the reference to ‘mobile groups’ or *grāma*-s in the later Vedic texts.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁸ e.g. *śuṣṇasya dymbitāḥ* 1.51.11d; *śuṣṇasya pūrah* 4.30.13ac; *vṛṇák ... śuṣṇam indrah purāṃ cyautnāya śayāthāya ...* 6.18.8cd.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. e.g. 1.33.12 (Ilībiṣa and Śambara) 1.101.2 (Śambara, Pipru and Śuṣṇa); 1.103.8 (Śus., Pip. and Śamb.); 2.14.5 (Śus. and Pip.); 2.19.6 (Śuṣ., Kuyava, Śamb.); 6.18.8 (Śuṣ., Pip., Śamb.).

¹⁹⁰ Cf. 7.20.5c: *prá yáḥ senānīr ádha nṛbhyo asti /*

¹⁹¹ *tvám vārmāsi sapráthah / puroyodhás ca vṛtrahan /* 7.31.6ab.

¹⁹² *sá no vāḷeṣv ... purasthātá / maḡhāvā vṛtrahá bhuvat //* 8.46.13.

¹⁹³ *yásyáśvāsah pradiśi yásya gávo / yásya grāmā yásya víśve ráthāsah /* 2.12.7ab.

¹⁹⁴ *sá grāmebbih śánitā sá ráthebhir* 1.100.10a.

¹⁹⁵ Rau 36 (pp. 51 ff.).

As in those texts, here too *grāma*-s certainly do not mean “villages” (the standard meaning in Classical Sanskrit). Another clear example is RV 3.33 which refers to the Bharata hordes crossing the Vipāś and Śutudrī as “a *grāma* looking out for cattle”.¹⁹⁶ In the light of what Rau has said, we assume that here a whole tribe was on the move and in this mobile state they were liable to come into conflict with others whom they met and whose goods they would attempt forcibly to take. Our interpretation of the condition of the Bharata-s as reflected in RV 3.33 was based on this assumption (above, Ch II.1.e).

It is interesting to note that another word by which the “commoners” of such a group were indicated is *sajātāḥ*. They would form the bulk of the fighters of the tribe.¹⁹⁷

It is in the strident call to the *sajāta*-s to “be heroes in the style of Indra” found in RV 10.103 that one can perhaps find the best example of the *ṛṣi*-s depicting Indra with what can be regarded as deliberate “political-militaristic motivation”. The song addresses Br̥haspati and Indra first and then these “kinsmen of the clan” (= *sajātāḥ*, following the etymology of the word; in reality it meant “commoners”). We quote the relevant part of this battle-song:

“Br̥haspati, fly round with your car, killing the *rakṣas*, driving foes away, breaking up armies, crushing, winning through battle. Be the helper of our cars. Indra — to be known through strength, hero pre-eminent, powerful, triumphant, exercising might, above every hero, above every fighter, born in might — mount the winning car, finding cows! Him, cleaving cow-pens open, finding cattle with bolt in arm, winning the race and rushing forth with vigour — be heroes like him, O kinsmen of the clan! Hold fast to him, O comrades! Plunging with prowess into cowpens, Indra the uncompromising hero, of wrath hundredfold, subduer of troops, hard to be fought with — may he in battles be our aid!”¹⁹⁸

And it is worthy of note that here Indra in person is called upon to mount the battle

¹⁹⁶ *gavyān grāmāḥ* 3.33.11.

¹⁹⁷ Rau 37 (p.54f).

¹⁹⁸ 10.103.4-7: *bṛhaspate pari dīyā rāthena / rakṣohāmitrām apabādhmānaḥ / prabhañjān sēnāḥ pramṛṇó yudhā jāyann / asmākam edhy avitā rāthānām // balavijñāyā sthāviraḥ pravīraḥ / sāhasvān vājī sāhamāna ugrāḥ / abhivīro abhisatvā sahojā / jāitram indra rātham ā tiṣṭha govit // gotrabhīdam govidam vājrabāhuḥ / jāyantam ājma pramṛṇāntam ojasā / imām sajātā ānu vīrayadvam / indram sakbhāyo ānu sām rabhadhvam // abhi gotrāṇi sāhasā gāhamāno / 'dayo vīraḥ satāmānyur indraḥ / duścāvanāḥ pṛtanāṣāḥ ayudhyo / 'smākam sēnā avatu prā yutsu //*

cars of these troops as they set out in their campaigns for booty and for power.

The image of Indra's physical 'participation' in the martial undertakings of the Aryan warlord is conceived of in many ways. The feeling of Indra's divine alliance with him is often expressed by words like *yuj-* and *sakhya* ("participation, comradeship"). "Through alliance with India we will crush the foe" (7.48.2).¹⁹⁹ "For alliance" the priests would invoke Indra (1.101.1-7).²⁰⁰ As Schmidt observes, "Indra and his comrades in war are friends".²⁰¹

(4)

What all this amounts to obviously is this: that in vanquishing the Dāsa-s and other resisters (*vrtra-s*) the Aryan warlords execute Indra's work. In other words, the *ṛṣi-s* represent the *sūri* (= the Aryan hero) as the instrument of Indra's divine might.

In fact this is quite explicitly stated. Thus in one instance, whose background is clearly an impending raid or contest or military engagement, it is hoped that Indra "would win the sun by means of our heroes"²⁰². "Win the sun" would no doubt sound queer to modern ears. It certainly is an unusual way of expressing the idea of gaining victory. In the Ṛgvedic setting, it emphasizes the ritual significance of war. Indra triumphs over the Dāsa-like Vṛtra and ensures the freedom of the heavenly waters and the powers of light: so his triumph is a winning of those waters and the sun. On earth the warlord's triumph over his foes is not only a ritual re-enactment of Indra's feat, it is actually a performance of one of his tasks.

A later stanza of the hymn from which we quoted the above line makes it clear that Indra's 'winning the sun' there means an earthly triumph: Indra

"shall slay the Dasyu-s and the Śimyu-s and with spear stretch them upon the earth. With his fair(-skinned) companions, he shall win the land, shall win the sun and win the waters".²⁰³

¹⁹⁹ *indreṇa yujā taruṣema vrtrām* 7.48.2d. Note the word *vrtrām* which probably might have been better translated as "register".

²⁰⁰ (*marúvantam*) *sakhyāya* (*havāmabe*): the refrain in 1.101.1-7.

²⁰¹ Schmidt, p. 148.

²⁰² *asmākebbhir nṛbbiḥ sūryam sanat* 1.100.6.

²⁰³ *dāsyañ chimyūmś ca ... / hatvā pṛthivyām śarvā nī barbhit / sanat kṣétram sākhibbiḥ svitnyēbbiḥ / sanat sūryam sanad apāḥ suvājraḥ* // 1.100.18. Cfalso 1.100.6cd : May Indra be this day our succour:

The same idea one finds expressed elsewhere too. Thus

“through fighters and heroes of ours”²⁰⁴ Indra will achieve his heroic deeds, “through our men win the sun”.²⁰⁵ “His sovereign might would he extend; through kings he slays the foes”.²⁰⁶

Indra thus is the real *dasyu-bhan* (“killer of Dasyu-s”) and “it is for the killing of them that he is born”.²⁰⁷ He subjugates them that have deviated from (Aryan) vows and crushes opponents “through the agency of followers”²⁰⁸.

In one interesting stanza Indra is depicted as claiming credit for a victory which elsewhere is simply stated to be the triumph of a Bharata prince: “I have invigorated Atithigva for the benefit of the Guṅgu-s. I stablished (that) slayer of foes among (his) people — their strength as it were — as I spread (my?) fame on the occasion of the killing of Parṇaya, or in the great battle, the destruction of Karañja”.²⁰⁹

(5)

If the earthly warrior’s battle is a re-enactment of the heavenly contest of Indra, we should expect to see a similarity of depiction of the two. This is indeed the case.

The classic battles of Indra in heaven are those against Vṛtra and Vala. It has been shown that *vṛtram* (neuter) means “resistance” or “obstruction”.²¹⁰ “Vṛtra is the arch demon of the *RV* and he and his cohorts represent evil”;²¹¹ he is the very opposite of the divine and it is Indra’s task to resist the emergence of his power. “When the *adeva* (“anti-god” =Vṛtra) raised himself above the gods, then did they choose Indra, in (the

asmínn áhan ... no bhavatu índra ūtí.

²⁰⁴ 2.30.10 : See n. 263 below.

²⁰⁵ 8.15.12 : See n. 262 below.

²⁰⁶ *úpa kṣatráṃ prñcítá bhánti rájabbir* / 1.40.8a.

²⁰⁷ 8.89.5 (see n. 174 above); *dasyubhátýāya jajñíṣe*: 1.51.6. Indra is *dasyubhan* at 1.100.12, 1.103.4, 6.45.24, 8.76.11, 8.77.3 etc.

²⁰⁸ ... *randsbháyann ápavratān ábhúbbhir ... śnatháyann (ánābhuvah)* 1.51.9ab.

²⁰⁹ *ahám guṅgúbhoyo atithigvám iṣkaram / iṣam ná vṛtraturam vikṣú dhārayam / yát parṇayaghná utá vā karañjahé / prábhám mahé vṛtrabátýe áśúsravi* // 10.48.8.

²¹⁰ Benveniste and Renou, p.6.

²¹¹ W. Norman Brown, *Mythology of India*, in Kramer, p. 282.

contest of) winning the sun.”²¹²

The two (Indra and Vṛtra) then are locked in contest to win this treasure, the sun. (Often the object is represented as the sun and/or the waters. The sun is in any case involved, as the heavenly waters are said to contain the sun.) “As long as Vṛtra ruled, the world was dark, and it was Indra’s triumph that brought the light.”²¹³ And the objective is the same in the Vala myth, which has been shown to be a priestly version of the more popular Vṛtra myth.

“The two myths bear features so similar to each other ... that the singers occasionally mix up the two.”²¹⁴

The cosmological meanings attached to these myths have been well explained by Lüders in his monumental work on Varuṇa. Says he:

“For the Vedic Indians, or at least the Vedic poets, the point of issue of rain is not the cloud ... in the aerial spaces, but the flood of waters in the heavens ...²¹⁵ which (flood) is more often called the *samudra*²¹⁶ ... It is from the heavens the gods send rain²¹⁷. The heavenly sea in which are found the waters, Soma and the celestial luminaries is enclosed in a rock, a stony container. So Indra in the Vṛtra myth always struggles against ‘the rock’. It is the stony enclosure of heavenly waters that Vṛtra has devoured. The very same rock is the Vala out of which the dawns are released ...²¹⁸ Several times the waters are called *svarvatīḥ*, “consisting of the sun”. Everywhere the reference is to the winning of these waters ... The *svarvatī* waters are everywhere the waters in which the sun sojourns and whose winning is striven for even by human beings, because in the last analysis the rain issues out of them.”²¹⁹

The goal of Indra’s contests, an enclosure full of valued objects guarded by a hostile power, is the exact likeness of the target of a Vedic warlord’s attack: the *enclosure* of

²¹² *ādevo yād abhy aūhiṣṭa devān svārṣātā vṛṇata indram ātra // 6.17.8cd.*

²¹³ Geldner, note on 1.51.4d.

²¹⁴ Lüders, p.193.

²¹⁵ Lüders, p.116.

²¹⁶ Lüders, p.118.

²¹⁷ Lüders, p.118.

²¹⁸ Lüders, p.174.

²¹⁹ Lüders, p. 295.

cows and horses²²⁰ in the protection of another chief and his men. (Instructive in this regard is Rau's disclosure of how a Vedic *grāma* encamped when it reached a hospitable area: the tents pitched round a central enclosure giving it protection all round. They would live there as long as the district provided grass and water for the animals.)²²¹

As the goal, so the mode of setting about the onslaught. Indra goes to war secure in the knowledge that he as a warrior is not a solitary force. His might is his leadership, but such a struggle essentially requires the cooperation of other forces:²²² the spiritual power which the (heavenly) *ṛṣi*-s and Bṛhaspati, their chief, represent, as well as the sheer physical force which the common fighters (i.e in this case the Maruts) bring. It is with such co-operation of forces that Indra triumphs.

It is with the aid of sacred power that Indra breaks up the Vala rock (2.24.3)²²³; the Aṅgiras (representing priestly power) help him with sacred songs, with their (mighty) "roar" (1.71.2),²²⁴ the Uśījs with ritual and incantation (2.21.5).²²⁵ It is with Bṛhaspati as ally that Indra overpowers the "godless tribes" that come up against him (8.96.15)²²⁶ — where clearly Indra represents the *rājan* and Bṛhaspati the *purohita*, the priestly counsellor and strategist.²²⁷ And, more emphatically,

"it is the sacrifice that protects Indra's thunderbolt in the destruction of the dragon"
(3.32.12).²²⁸

This last sentence needs to be emphasized. Indra as the chief in the celestial war needs the sacrifice, needs his *purohita* and his priests. And the celestial priests obtain their

²²⁰ Cf. e.g. 8.32.5: (addressing Indra) *gór ásvasya ví vrajám / ... píraṃ ná ... darṣasi //* "You will break open, like a fortress, the cattle-and -horse enclosure"; 3.43.7d : *ápa gotrá vavártha*; 4.20.8c: *vrajám apavartási gónām*; 6.45.24: *vrajám gómantaṃ ... ápa ... varat*; With these may be compared 6.66.8. said of *sūri* aided by Maruts : *sá vrajám dārtā*.

²²¹ Rau, 36 (p.54).

²²² Cf. 2.21.5, 3.34.4, etc...: Uśījs render priestly aid to Indra; 1.71.2, 1.62:5: The Aṅgiras aid Indra; 2.24.3/9, 6.73.3, 10.67.5, 10.68.9: Bṛhaspati plays a major role in Indra's triumphs. See also note 221 below. 3.47.4, 5.30.6 : Maruts help Indra; 6.20.2: Viṣṇu allies himself with Indra.

²²³ 2.24.3c *ábbinad bráhmaṇā valám*.

²²⁴ *ukthaiḥ... ráveṇa* 1.71.2.

²²⁵ 2.21.5: See n. 273 below.

²²⁶ *viśo ádevīr abhy ácarantīr / bṛhaspátinā yujéndraḥ sasāhe //* 8.96.15cd.

²²⁷ Bṛhaspati as Indra's *purohita* accompanies him to war: Geldner, in note to 10.103.4.

²²⁸ 3.32.12 : *yajñas te vajram abihatyā āvat*.

ritual rewards no less than the terrestrial. The Uśij-s obtain “treasures and cows” under Indra (2.21.5).²²⁹ It is when (Bṛhaspati) the divine *purohita* carries away the booty that Indra’s victory is complete and the sun is able to shine (2.24.9).²³⁰ So Indra’s functions are to be “the slayer of Vṛtra, the winner of booty and the giver of gifts”, in that order (4.17.8).²³¹

The whole position is neatly expressed in one memorable stanza:

“The chief of *vīpra*-s (i.e. Bṛhaspati), came offering his alliance. The rock yielded in ripeness its ‘foetus’ to the great actor (i.e. Indra). The youthful hero won, with the young (warriors’) aid, demonstrating the quality of his leadership (or of his generosity). Forthwith the Aṅgiras became the singer of praise.” (3.31.7)²³²

Here the god’s mythical act is an exact replica of the tribal warlord’s conquest of booty with a *purohita*’s ritual aid, and the common warriors’ physical aid. And the act is rounded off with the chief’s show of liberality and the priests’ celebration in song of the warlord’s might and munificence (*dāna-stuti*).

In passing we must not fail to notice the extremely significant stress that we find laid here on Indra’s youthfulness. That emphasis can also be detected elsewhere, as for example at 4.19.2 which says that as Indra assumed control (in anticipation of the war with Vṛtra), the other gods fell back “like old men”.²³³ We must bear in mind the possibility that Indra’s protegés (: the *sūri*-s), like Indra himself, may be youthful heroes contrasted with old tribal chiefs.

(6)

Let us now turn our attention to another fact of the nature of the depiction of Indra in the RV Saṃhitā which we discussed above. This is the fact that most of the time the opponent that Indra is beseeched to fight against, or is indicated to be fighting against, is portrayed as a “cultural alien”. Hence these opponents are quite often characterized

²²⁹ 2.21.5 : See n. 273 below.

²³⁰ *sā purohitah ... yād vājam bhārate ... ād it sūryas tapati* 2.24.9.

²³¹ *bāntā ... vṛtrām sānitā ... vājam dātā maghāni* 4.17.8.

²³² *āgachad u vīpratamaḥ sakhīyānn / āsūdayat sukṛte gārbham ādriḥ / sasāna mārīyo yūvabhir makhasyānn / āthābhavad āngirāḥ sadyo ārcan //* 3.31.7.

²³³ *āvāsṛjanta jīvrayo ná devā* 4.19.2a. — Indra as a youth also at 1.11.4a, 2.20.3a, 3.46.1b, 6.45.1c, 7.20.1c, 8.21.2b, 8.45.1-3c 8.46.7a etc. (In these references as *yuvan*). Indra’s associates, the Maruts, as a *yūvā gaṇāḥ* at 1.87.4a, 5.61.13 etc.

as “godless”, “not sacrificing”, “not pressing Soma”, “not being liberal” and so forth; and in contrast those who receive his support are portrayed as devout sacrificers and offerers of the Soma libation. The alienness of the opponent is somehow or other stressed, positively with (the above or other similar) offending epithets or negatively by instantly underlining the *sūri-s’* own devotion to the Indra and Soma cults.

Such statements are extremely numerous:

“He forcibly collects the Paṇis’s (means of) sustenance, that he may plunder it, and he bestows splendid treasure upon the worshipper.”²³⁴ The Paṇi is “the rich irreverent man who makes no offerings” to Indra, “who neglects the practice of generosity”.²³⁵ “With the Paṇi who presses no Soma Indra makes no alliance. He takes away his property and strikes him nude. Solely for the presser of Soma is he available, for him who cooks offerings (to him)”.²³⁶ “He is (the gatherer) of the property of the irreverent (man), and the giver of wealth to him who makes a splendid libation of Soma.”²³⁷

So goes the strident call to Indra in the RV hymns.

“Destroy the non-pressers and root out the non-givers!”²³⁸ “Strike him at once, (him) who presses no Soma, the unapproachable one that is not to you a pleasure; and on us bestow his wealth!”²³⁹ “Be a refuge to the generous donors ... when you put the overbearing ones to rout. May we divide (among us) the wealth of him who is slain by you. Bring us the property of the unapproachable one!”²⁴⁰

Clearly thus

“he who honours the gods shall prevail over the godless; he who is zealous shall battle (even) him that is hard to subdue. The sacrificer shall appropriate the non-sacrificer’s sustenance.”²⁴¹ And Indra, “like a bold plunderer on the highways, goes deliberately

²³⁴ *sám im paṇér ajati bhójanam muṣé / ví dāśúṣe bhajati sūnāraṃ vāsu / 5.34.7ab.*

²³⁵ *yás te revám ádāsurih / pramamárṣa maghāttaye / 8.45.15ab.*

²³⁶ *ná revātā paṇinā sakhyám índró / ’sunvatā ... sám grṇīte / áśya védaḥ khidāti hánti nagnám / ví súṣvaye paktāye kévalo bhūt // 4.25.7.*

²³⁷ *ádāśuṣo gáyasya / prayantāsi súṣvitarāya védaḥ // 7.19.1cd.*

²³⁸ *jahy ásuṣvīn prá vrhāprñataḥ // 6.44.1ud.*

²³⁹ 1.176.4; see n. 407 below.

²⁴⁰ *bhāvā várūtham ... maghónām / yát samájāsi sárdhataḥ / ví tvāhatasya védanam bhajemahy á dūñāśo bharā gáyam // 7.32.7.*

²⁴¹ *devayānn id ádevayantam abhy ásat / supravír id vanavat prtsú duṣṭāraṃ yájvéd áyajyor ví bhajāti bhójanam // 2.26.1bcd.*

distributing the property of the man who sacrifices not.”²⁴²

And if Indra himself is not always the actual killer of all such cult opponents, he is at least to invigorate his devotees to perform that task themselves:

“Stimulate the generous patrons in the conquest of foes (*vr̥tra*-s), (patrons) who offer gifts that please!”²⁴³

It seems reasonable to conclude that in the usage of *vr̥tra* in such contexts as this, it means not merely “enemy” but essentially also “cult opponent”. The noteworthy statement that Indra with heroes destroys these resisters in (i.e. through) the sacrifice (7.19.4)²⁴⁴ suggests that the *vr̥tra*-s are of necessity inimical to the sacrificial system, or, more accurately, to the particular development of that system — the Indra cult.

(7)

Indra’s function as the symbol most characteristically invoked for promoting Aryan aggrandizement at the expense of the Dasyus is sometimes pithily expressed in the form of a straightforward request to him, as for example in RV 1.103.3cd:

“Throw (your) missile on the Dasyu, augment Aryan authority and glory!”²⁴⁵

That Indra was the god to whom it was most apt to make such a request is the best evidence for this chapter’s theme: the cult of Indra signifies an impetus to power. Depicting the *sūris* as the instrument of Indra’s might, as they whom the divine warrior in person aids, the *ṛṣis* surely have attempted to represent Aryan expansion as a divine mission, as a religious undertaking. This is clearly an attempt to provide what must be called an ideological basis for Aryan expansion: and of course it was the only ideological basis possible in terms of the thinking of those times.

It would indeed be hard to find a cult more closely oriented to the aggrandizement of temporal power than is the Vedic Indra cult. Yet in fairness to the *ṛṣis* we must emphasize that it was for them a genuinely divine imperative that the power of the devotees of Indra must assert itself and not go under Dasyu onslaught or be debased by adulteration with other cults.

²⁴² *yá ādṛtyā pariṣanthīva sūró ’yajvano vibhájann éti védaḥ* / 1.103.6cd.

²⁴³ *maghónaḥ sma vr̥trabátयेsu codaya / yé dádati priyá vásu* / 7.32.15ab.

²⁴⁴ *tvám nṛ̥bbhir ... devávitau / bhúr̥iṇi vr̥trá ... hamsi* / 7.19.4ab.

²⁴⁵ *dásyave hetim asyáryam sáho vardhayā dyumnám ...* // 1.103. 3cd.

(8)

Before we conclude this chapter we must also pay attention to a significant statement often made about Indra in the RV — a statement which seems to us to be revelatory in regard to the shift of authoritative power in the Vedic tribes. The statement in question, worded in diverse ways, is to the effect that Indra's supremacy among the gods is the result of a deliberate transfer of sovereignty or lordship or power or might to him by the other gods when they were confronted by a 'military situation' i.e. when they had to fight against the Dragon or Vṛtra. It is said that he was accepted as their head by the other gods, that the right to the Soma draught was conceded to him or the *vajra* was committed to his hands. The *vajra* was the "most essential symbol of kingship and delegated power".²⁴⁶

Let us briefly note some instances of this noteworthy idea:

kṣatra conceded to Indra: 4.17.1; 7.21.7; 6.25.8 (The last says that it was absolute power that was granted to Indra). 4.19.1 and 6.25.8 say that this was when the gods had to destroy Vṛtra.²⁴⁷

asurya conceded: 6.20.2, 7.21.7. cf. also 6.36.1. According to the last two, as Indra bore this power among the gods, he became the distributor of booty.²⁴⁸

vīrya / *tavasya* conceded: 1.80.7; 2.20.8; 3.31.13 (Dhiṣaṇā ordained him to pierce him who waxed strong, and all powers were conceded to him.)²⁴⁹

Indra placed at head of gods: 1.131.1; 6.17.8 (in order to fight, when the *adeva* raised himself above the *deva*-s) 8.12.22/25 (to kill Vṛtra, in the battle)²⁵⁰

Indra chosen as sole chief: 4.19.1 (All gods ... chose solely the exalted Indra ... in the killing

²⁴⁶ Coomaraswamy p.3.

²⁴⁷ *túbhyaṃ .. ānu kṣatrām ... manyata* 4.17.1; *devās cit te asuryāya pūrvé / 'nu kṣatrāya mamire sáhāmsi* 7.21.7ab; *ānu te dāyi mahā indriyāya / satrā te vísvam ānu vṛtrabátye / ānu kṣatrām ānu sáho yajatrendra devébbhir ānu te nṛśábye //* 6.25.8; *tvám devásah ékam id vṛnate vṛtrabátye //* 4.19.1.

²⁴⁸ *túbhyam ānu ... asuryāṃ devébbhir dhāyi vísvam ... yád vṛtrám han* 6.20.2; *vājānām abhavo vibhaktá yád devéṣu dhārāyathā asuryām //* 6.36.1; *índro magháni dayate víśáhya /* 7.21.7c.

²⁴⁹ *túbhyam ... anuttam ... vīryām /* 1.80.7; *tásmāi tavasyām ānu dāyi ... devébbhir* 2.20.8; *vísvā índrāya táviśir ánuttāh //* 3.31.13.

²⁵⁰ *índram víśve ... deváso dadbhire puráh* 1.131.1; *víśve puráh ... devá / ékam tavasam dadbhire bhārāya / ádevo yád abhy aúhíṣṭa devān / ... vṛnata índram átra //* 6.17.8; *índram vṛtrāya hántave* 8.12.22a.

of Vṛtra.)²⁵¹

Right to Soma conceded: 5.29.5²⁵²

vajra entrusted to Indra: 2.11.4; 2.20.8; 10.52.5²⁵³

In the last mentioned reference, Agni as the divine *viśpati* and *purohita* declares: “I have placed the *vajra* in Indra’s hands. Now shall he win these battles at all”. So this is a depiction and an exaltation of the (ritual) confirmation by the priestly class of the warlord’s right to head people, over and above other (tribal) authorities: a concept of conferred power as opposed to other forms of authority.

²⁵¹ See n. 241 above.

²⁵² *túbhyaṃ devā ānu viśve adaduḥ somapéyam / 5.29.5.*

²⁵³ *vájram bāhvór dádhānāḥ 2.11.4b; asya vájram bāhvór dhúr 2.20.8; á bāhvór vájram índrasya dbeyām / áthemá vísvāḥ pṛtanā jayāti // 10.52.5cd.*

V. Indra Cult (Contd.): Links Forged Between Priest and Prince

(1)

In classical India the Brahmanical counsellor of the king (i.e. the *purohita*) was the most influential minister in his employ. The institution has its roots in Ṛgvedic times. So intimate was the relationship between the *brahman* and the *rājan* that it has been compared to the ‘marriage bond’.²⁵⁴

If we go by the genealogical evidence of the RV, the first *purohitas* who assisted the *rājan*-s in battles should have been those of the Bhāradvāja stock, (6.27 and 6.47) and in one of the hymns of the family book of the Bhāradvāja-s the praises are sung of “our manly *sūri*-s who have placed us ahead (of themselves)”.²⁵⁵ The other celebrated *purohiti* service in war in the RV was that of Vasiṣṭha to Sudās (7.18, 7.33, 7.83).

In other contexts too, the priest who aided the *sūri* (a term for the secular lord that pre-eminently reflects priestly admiration and intimacy) had undoubtedly a *purohita*-like function. The theory of the fundamental need of a *purohita* to a *rājan* is lucidly expressed already in the RV. Thus

4.50.8 says: “The king under whom the *brahman* has precedence — he dwells, in peace and comfort in his house; to him for ever holy food flows freely and to him do people in free will pay homage.”²⁵⁶

As usual this is a reflection *in embryonis* of the overall (political) structure that was eventually to emerge in Aryan India. The classic strategem of the *brahman* class to make the limbs of that structure cohere with mandatory effectiveness was to portray its celestial parallel with vivid emphasis.

We saw how Indra’s wars had all the common aspects of a *rājan*’s military encounters. One of these aspects was Indra’s indebtedness to the celestial counterpart of the *ṛṣi* — now Brahaspati, now Agni, now the Angiras. The whole position is forcefully stated at

²⁵⁴ Heesterman, p. 56. Cf. also op. cit., p. 75. f. and Gonda, Numen, 3, 2 pp. 150 ff.

²⁵⁵ 6.25,7cd : See n. 301 below.

²⁵⁶ *sá it kṣeti súbhīta ókasi své / tásmā ilā pinvate viśvadānīm / tásmāi viśaḥ svayám evá namante / yásmin brahmá rájani púrva éti // 4.50.8.*

RV 8.100.1 where Agni as priest says to Indra:

“I in person go before thee ... and if thou givest me (my) share, then shalt thou through me perform heroic deeds”²⁵⁷.

And we have already referred to 10.52.5 where again Agni says, in a succinct statement of the link that was desired to be forged between these two groups of the Vedic elite: “I have placed the *vajra* in Indra’s hands. Now shall he win these battles all!”²⁵⁸

(2)

The intimacy of the *sūris* and the priests is indeed remarkable. Let us consider, for example, such statements as the following:

Mighty beings who give us the sun
— with cattle, horses, wealth and gold —
Ever may the *sūris* win in wars, O Indra, Vāyu,
with fast steeds and with heroic sons! (7.90.6)²⁵⁹

Or the following:

Bring, O Uṣas, generous one,
brilliance and lofty fame,
for them who made us share
their gifts of horses, cows
— the *sūris* (here). (5.79.7)²⁶⁰

At once we see the earnest wish of the priest to foster the success of the *sūris*; and we see that the *sūri* is clearly the priest’s benefactor.

And how does the *sūri* profit from this relationship? Let us look at the text for the answer:

Augment their living treasure, nutriment,
O Agni, of our *sūris* here!

²⁵⁷ *ayāṃ ta emi tanvā purástād / ... máhyaṃ dādharo bhāgām / indrád in máyā kṛṇavo víryāṇi //* 8.100.1 (Translation after Coomaraswamy).

²⁵⁸ See n. 247 above.

²⁵⁹ *iśānāso yé dādhatē svār ṇo / góbbhir áśvebbhir vásubbbhir híraṇyāiḥ / indravāyū sūrāyo víśvam áyur / árvadbhir víraiḥ pṛtanāsu sahyuḥ //* 7.90.6.

²⁶⁰ *tébbhyo dyumnám bṛhád yásā / úṣo maghony á vaha / yé no rádbhāmsy áśvyā / gavyā bhájanta sūrāyaḥ ... //* 5.79.7 (Almost the same notion in 5.79.6).

Through song have they, the heroic men
come by their bounteous wealth. (5.10.3)²⁶¹

Thus they do not triumph singly: for this they need the singer's song, the priest's ritual act. Their victories are really shared achievements.

Come now to us, O Agni,
praised, do bring us treasured gift.
We here, and the *sūris*,
together we'd good luck gain.
So be with us in contests — that we may thrive! (5.16.5)²⁶²

So the priests and the *sūri* are comrades in war and contest:

We (here) and you, the *sūris*,
as comrades let us win
that fore-effulgent (wealth),
which brings a chariot-load of gain,
a houseful of gain! (9.98.12)²⁶³

It is in one single achievement that the two parties win their hearts' desire:

To the *sūris* immortal fame and wellbeing,
and to us — winnings rich with cattle! (7.81.6)²⁶⁴

On occasion the singer seems to betray a different inner sentiment, that he really is the dominant actor, that it is his rivals that the prince has to subjugate, as though the whole exercise is for his sake (and won through his intervention):

We with our heroic lords
shall dare our challengers,

²⁶¹ *tvam no agna eṣām / gáyam puṣṭim ca vardhaya / yé stómebbih prá sūrāyo / náro maghāny ānāsūh*
// 5.10.3.

²⁶² *nū na ébi vāryam / ágne grñāná á bhara / yé vayám yé ca sūrāyah / svastí dhāmāhe sāco / 'taidhi*
pr̥tsú no vrdhé // 5.16.5.

²⁶³ *tām sakhāyah purorúcam / yūyām vayām ca sūrāyah / aśyāma vājagandhyam / sanéma vājapastyam*
// 9.98.12. Cf. also 6.44.18: "Provide us in these battles with great free space, a handsome path: and make the *sūris* a party to the winning of waters" *āsú śmā nah ... pr̥tsv / āsmābhyam māhi vāriṅ*
sugām kaḥ / apām ... jeṣé ... sūrīn kṛṇubí smā no ardhām //.

²⁶⁴ *śrávaḥ sūrībhyo amītam vasutvanām / vājām asmābhyam gómataḥ / 7.81.6ab.*

vanquish our assailants! (8.40.7)²⁶⁵

Naturally the poets' words reveal that they regard the *sūris*' triumph not only as a means for their own welfare, but also as an achievement of power over men and over tribes :

O Agni, well invited, dear be to you the *sūris*
— who dominate men —
and many a cow-pen have they given
— the generous ones! (7.16.7)²⁶⁶

One may detect the same idea in such a verse as the following:

Even the tribe that thinks
itself as blessed with power,
deliver even that tribe
to these heroic men
among whom I am,
O wielder of the bolt! (6.19.12)²⁶⁷

The *sūris*' search for power and wealth aided by the priests is well expressed when the singers implore the war-god to “win the sun by means of our heroic men” :

When, Indra, each after his thoughts
men diversely seek your aid,
then win the sun
here with *our* heroic men ! (8.15.12)²⁶⁸

And again the same idea in the following lines:

With our valiant heroes, Hero great,
achieve those heroic tasks that are thine to be done! (2.30.10)²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ *asmākebbhir nṛbhir vayāṃ / sāśahyāma pṛtanyatō / vanuyāma vanuṣyatāḥ ... / 8.40.7cde.*

²⁶⁶ *tvē agne svābhuta / priyāsah santu sūrāyah / yantāro yē maghāvāno jānānām / ūrvān dāyanta gōnām / 7.16.7.*

²⁶⁷ *jānam vajrin māhi cin mānyamānam / ebhyō nṛbhyo randhayā yēṣv āsmi / 6.19.12ab.*

²⁶⁸ *yād indra manmasās tvā / nānā bhāvanta utāye / asmākebbhir nṛbhir / ātrā svār jaya // 8.15.12. “Sun” and “wealth” are associated notions, as e.g., at 5.79.8: utā no gōmatīr īṣa / ā vahā ... / sākām sūryasya raśmibhiḥ ...*

²⁶⁹ *asmākebbhiḥ sātvabhiḥ sūra śūrair / vīryā kṛdhi yāni te kārtvāni 2.30.10ab.*

(3)

Let us inquire briefly into some of the qualities of the *sūri*, the prince that the RV idealizes. We may see these qualities mentioned in the verses which speak of the ideal prince as a gift of the gods. Such an instance is RV 5.6.2-3:

As excellent who is praised — that is Agni —
 around him the cows gather,
 around him the swift-running steeds,
 around him the *sūris*, nobly born ...
 A victor Agni grants the tribe ...
 dextrous for winning wealth ...
 For choice treasure he gladly runs ...²⁷⁰

“The nobles gather round Agni”: so though the prince is above all a warrior, eager for any opportunity to capture booty, that is but one of his many desirable qualities.

Says 6.14.4: “Agni grants a hero, lord of the *sadas*, one who wins waters, who withstands attack triumphantly and in whose sight foes tremble with fear for his might”: A military hero, violent in his very looks, and also a *satpati* (“lord of the *sadas*”).²⁷¹

This last description calls for some comments.

Satpati occurs many times, as for instance at

5.25.6: “Agni grants a lord of the *sadas*, who by war gains triumph through his men; Agni a swift running horse, a winner unconquered”.²⁷²

“Lord of the session”, like many epithets applied to the hero, is pre-eminently expressive of a function or position ascribed to Indra the god of war. Of 45 uses of this term cited by Grassmann, 26 are clearly applied to him (2 being to Indra and Agni together).²⁷³

²⁷⁰ *só agnir yó vásur grṇé / sám yám āyānti dhenávaḥ / sám árvanto ragbudrívah / sám sujātásah sūrāyah ... // agnir hí vājīnam viśé dādāti ... / ... rāyē svābhúvaṃ / sá prītó yāti vāryam ...* 5.6.2-3.

²⁷¹ *agnir apsām ṛtīśāham / vīrāṃ dadāti sátpatim / yásya trāsanti śávasah / saṃcákṣi śátravo bhīyá //* 6.14.4.

²⁷² *agnir dadāti sátpatim / sāsāha yó yudhā nṛbhīḥ / agnir átyam ragbusyádam / jétāram áparājitam //* 5.25.6.

²⁷³ The breakdown is as follows: Indra: 24 times; Indra and Agni: 2; Agni: 4; Mitra / Varuṇa, Soma, Ādityas, Rudra, Savitar: once each (i.e. 5 times); unspecified per sons: 6; Kings named (i.e. Trasadasyu, Tryaruṇa, Asamāti): 3; Sutambhara (Indra?): 1. See Grassmann, Wtb s.v. *satpati*.

Roots meaning “to sit” are used repeatedly in the RV to indicate a variety of cult occasions. Thus the nobles are described as sitting round the ritual fire ²⁷⁴ and in an atmosphere associated with war they are depicted as sitting at the ritual for the purpose of winning over the gods. ²⁷⁵ Indra is to sit on the sacred grass at the Soma sacrifice “like a prince”. ²⁷⁶ The nobles light the sacred fire at “the ritual session of great men” (i.e. princes and priests). ²⁷⁷ Indra arrives at the sacrifice, “the ritual session of (great) men” “of heaven and earth.” ²⁷⁸ “By means of sacrificial session and ritual song” the Uśij priests have won treasures and cows under Indra. ²⁷⁹

It thus seems that in calling the hero a “lord of the session”, the R̥gvedic poet ascribes to him a characteristic (which is also otherwise projected of him) ²⁸⁰ that indicates his unswerving loyalty to cult practices, to patronage of the Vedic priests. No priest can be a successful officiant unless he has his counterpart and supporter in a ‘sun winning’ prince — which is what is explicitly said when describing Agni (the prince-like cum priest-like god par excellence) at 1.18.6. Here we are told that the ṛ̥ṣi “has come to the marvellous ‘lord of the session’, the dear friend of Indra, but for whom the ritual succeeds not, not even of a master well-versed in conjuration”. ²⁸¹ Here Agni has indeed an Indra-like quality — and Agni himself in any case is a ‘lordly’ god, being a *viśpati* and a *gr̥hapati*.

Indra’s own characteristic of being a “lord of the session” makes him distinctly comparable with the prince. A notable depiction of this is found at

1.130.1: Come to us from the far distance ... as a ‘lord of the session’ to the *vidathas*, as a king comes to the *vidathas*, a king who is a ‘lord of the session’ ²⁸²

The *vidatha* was decidedly an occasion with ritual associations and also an occasion

²⁷⁴ 7.1.4 : See 508 below.

²⁷⁵ 6.47.19 : See n. 38 above.

²⁷⁶ *r̥ājeva dasma ní śadó ’dhi barb̥h̥iṣy* 10.43.2.

²⁷⁷ *ṛ̥ṣádane ... árbantaś cid yám indbaté* 5.7.2.

²⁷⁸ *yajñé divó ṛ̥ṣádane p̥ṛ̥thivyá* // 7.97.1a.

²⁷⁹ *abh̥isvárā niśádā g̥áḥ ... índre ... dr̥áviṇāny āsata* // 2.21.5cd.

²⁸⁰ The *sūri*’s alternate designation, *yajamāna*, is itself the most striking testimony to this fact.

²⁸¹ *sádasas p̥átim ádbbutam / priyám índrasya k̥ámyam / ... ayāṣiṣam // yásmād ṛ̥té ná sídhyati yajñó vip̥ás̥c̥itáś caná / ...* 1.18.6-7. See Coomaraswamy p. 5f.

²⁸² *á ... yāhy úpa nah̥ parāvátó / ... vidáthb̥ānīva sátpatir / ... r̥ājeva sátpatir* / 1.130.1abc.

where a king or a prince had a characteristic part to play.²⁸³

We thus see that the prince, like India, is emphatically portrayed as a patron of the cult, of ritual occasions. That is clearly what the epithet *satpati* indicates.

The *sūri* above all is a man conscious of his duty and obligation, that is to say, his *vrata*. And wherein lies his *vrata*, and in relation to whom?

“Let the *sūri* satisfy, and hasten like the wind. He takes the booty to give away, like one truthful to (his) *vrata*”²⁸⁴ says 1.180.6. So the prince’s generosity was not something that depended on his whims and fancies. It was his ‘bond’, his obligation, duty. Hence one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the *sūri* devoted to his *vrata* is that he is a lavish giver. Thus according to 1.125.7 “the *sūris* ... who freely give” are “devoted to the *vrata*”²⁸⁵; contrastively, 5.42.9 speaks of “them that do not give ... that are without the *vrata*”.²⁸⁶ How characteristic it was thought to be for the prince loyal to the *vrata* to patronize the Vedic ritual is forcefully brought out by another verse: “You have entered into the (ritual) songs, like a king well devoted to the *vrata*” (9.20.5).²⁸⁷

So it is the *vrata* to be lavish to priests and to observe the practices of the cult. The portrayal of Indra serves to emphasize, and to render mandatory, the relationship between *sūri* and priest which this implies.

Thus, it was Indra “who first found cows for the *brahman*” (1.101.5)²⁸⁸; he “opened the cow-pen to aid the Aṅgiras (priests)” (1.51.3).²⁸⁹ (In the Soma rites), “at each

²⁸³ Cf the following:/ (a) *vidátha* closely associated with hero/leader/king: 1.130.1; see n. 276 above; 3.1.18b: *rājā sasāda vidáthāni sādhan;* 3.55.7/3.56.5: *vidátheṣu samrāt;* 3.38.5: *vidáthasya dhībhiḥ / kṣatráṃ rājānā pradīvo dadhāthe /;* 4.21.2cd: *yásya krátur vidáthyò ná samrāt ... abhy ásti kṣṣṭh;* 7.36.8: *vidáthyām ná vírám.* (b) *vidátha* an occasion when eulogies are sung: 1.159.1: *stuse vidátheṣu;* 1.162.1: *devájātasya ... pravakṣyāmo vidáthe víryāni;* 1.166.7: *vidátheṣu sṣṣtutāḥ ...;* 2.27.12: *vasudāvā vidátheṣu prasastāḥ;* 6.24.2: *vājí stutó vidáthe dāti vājam.* (c) *vidátha* = a sacrificial occasion: 2.4.8: *trītye vidáthe;* 2.39.1: *brahmāneva vidátha ukthasāsā.* A notable contribution to the understanding of the word *vidátha* is in Thieme’s *Untersuchungen ...* pp. 35-49.

²⁸⁴ *préṣad véṣad váto ná sūrír / á mahé dade suvrató ná vājam* 1.180.6cd.

²⁸⁵ *prṇántaḥ ... sūrāyaḥ ... suvratásāḥ /* 1.125.7ab.

²⁸⁶ *áprṇantaḥ ... ápavratān* 5.42.9bc.

²⁸⁷ *tvām rájeva suvrató / girāḥ somá vivesītha /* 9.20.5ab.

²⁸⁸ *yó brahmāne prathamó gā ávindat /* 1.101.5b.

²⁸⁹ *gotrám ángirobhyo vṛṇor ápa /* 1.51.3.

exhilaration” he, “bestows herds of cattle on us” (1.81.7).²⁹⁰ He gains triumphs and then distributes rewards (7.21.7).²⁹¹ He sets the priests’ gift in motion; he is “the most active among donors” (6.37.4).²⁹² “He has shattered the slanderers” (i.e., the detractors of the *ṛsis*) “setting munificence in action” (5.30.7)²⁹³. He is “the victor, the unique distributor of rewards” (7.26.4)²⁹⁴. It was through his acts of generosity that he earned the name *maghavan* and became the slayer of adversaries (10.23.2)²⁹⁵. Indeed, as Dandekar observes, “Indra almost monopolized the proud epithet *maghavan* in the RV”²⁹⁶. This was his most *sūri*-like quality and this was to be the *sūris*’ most Indra-like quality, namely that they win with priestly aid and in turn follow the duty of rewarding the priests in ample measure.

(4)

The myths of Vṛtra and Vala are narratives that highlight a specific aspect of Indra’s activities as the celestial war-lord. As we saw he first found cows for *brahman* (1.101.5) in this legendary exploit, and opened the cowpen for the benefit of the Aṅgiras, the priests of the ancient sacred times. (1.51.3, 1.132.4).

This operation is depicted true to style: a Soma sacrifice with hero and followers partaking; the actual onslaught; return to ritual point of commencement with (the trophies of ?) the victory won; a ritual draught and an eulogy for the victor (in honour of his munificence).

“When I have returned to you with winnings, in the (ritual) house at the Soma session, and (am) (ritually) quickened, I have done the partaking (of the ritual draught) in the vessel (set before me); then as the foremost *sūri* this eulogy I receive.” (10.167.4).²⁹⁷

This in our opinion is the model the *ṛsis* set before their beloved patrons the *sūris* to

²⁹⁰ *māde-made hí no dadír / yūthá gāvām ...* 1.81.7ab.

²⁹¹ 7.21.7c : See n. 242 above.

²⁹² *dākṣiṇām iyarti ... maghónām tuwikūrmítamaḥ* 6.37.4ab.

²⁹³ *ví śú mṛdho ... dānam invan* 5.30.7a. See Geldner’s translation of this stanza.

²⁹⁴ *éko vibhaktá taráṇir maghánām* 7.26.4b.

²⁹⁵ *índro magháir maghávā vṛtrahá bhuvat* 10.23.2b.

²⁹⁶ “vṛtrahā Indra”, ABORI, XXXI (1950), p.24.

²⁹⁷ *prásūto bhakṣám akaram caráḥ ápi / stómaṃ cemám prathamáḥ sūrír ún mṛje / suté sāténa yády ágamaṃ vām / práti ... dāme //* 10.167.4.

follow in all their contests. It spells out for them the nature of the prince's *vrata*. And their praise of the *sūris* gift (*dānastuti*, *praśasti* etc.) was a regular desideratum for the prince's glory: this is but a repetition of what the first priests did for the first *sūri*.

“That deed of yours, O Indra, have the *āyus* extolled — they who fain would burst the stall of cows open, who fain would milk the lofty one ... (the cow) of a thousand streams” (10.74.4)²⁹⁸

(5)

It is as *āyus* that RV 10.74.4 refers to the priests.

Many are the names and epithets by which the princes and priests are introduced in the RV.

sūris, *maghavans* (generous ones), heroes, heroic men, devotees of gods, Soma sacrificers — these are some of the commonest words used to designate or characterize the princes. And the priests are commonly referred to as *ṛṣis*, *vipras*, *vipaścits*, *brahmanas*, *stotṛs*, (eulogists), *kārus* (bards), *āyus* etc.

Some confusion can be caused by *āyu*, because Āyu is also in early Indian mythology the name of a famous ancestor of the Aryans. Geldner notes this fact in a comment on RV 1.31.5: “Ayu is a pre-eminent Aryan stock as well as its ancestor, and the word appears used so as to be almost synonymous with »the Aryans«”.²⁹⁹

And yet, the word is also very frequently used to denote the Vedic priests — which Geldner too has noted under 5.43.14. In fact it is emphatically in this usage that the word is generally found in the RV Saṃhitā. This fact deserves special attention as one of the key contexts for the elucidation of the significance of the word *ari* refers to Vedic priests as “the Āyus”. The reference is found at 6.14.3 which depicts the Āyus as “competing for the *ari*'s wealth”.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ *ā tát ta indrāyavaḥ panantābhī yá ūrvam gómantaṃ tītṛtsān / ... sahásradhārām bṛhatīm dúdukṣan* // 10.74.4abd.

²⁹⁹ Geldner, note to 1.31.5.

³⁰⁰ *spārdhante ráyo aryáḥ ... āyavaḥ* 6.14.3. In translating this sentence, we take *ráyah* as standing for *rāyé*. It seems to us that the nom. plur. form has been substituted here by “attraction” of the plur. verb *spārdhante*. It was clearly the *ari*'s wealth for which many a contest was held. Cf. e.g. 1.73.5: *sanéma vājam samithésv aryáḥ*; 1.81.9: *aryó védaḥ ... nah ... á bhara*; 1.121.15c: *á no bhaja ... gósv aryó*; 6.20.1: *... aryáḥ ... rayih ... tám nah ... daddhí*; 6.47.9: *má nas tārīt ... ráyo aryáḥ* (see n. 37 above),

(6)

The *sūri*-s, the priests and the *ari* are referred to conjointly in a number of highly interesting allusions in the Saṃhitā. The references to the priests in these may be explicit, but often it is only implicit.

Compare, for example, statements such as the following:

“Coming from the *ari* to (these) chants (of ours), may the Dawns rejoice in us both (*sūris* and priests) (1.122.14cd).³⁰¹

“Today (and also) the next day, we would invoke you two, as Dawn illumines — I as *hotar* with eulogies, wherever you be, O Nāsatyas, sons of heaven, for the benefit of him who is a greater giver than the *ari*” (1.184.1).³⁰²

“With these generous valiant men devoted to you, O Indra, *Maghavan*, (I invoke) you in every contest. Becoming pre-eminent with the *ari*’s splendours, we shall, like the heavens, revel through many a night and many an autumn.” (4.16.19).³⁰³

Crushing the *ari*’s obstructors,
with *sūris* would we fain be;
with heroes subduing foes by war
— (*sūris*) who to *Vāyu* (offerings make?)
and who to Indra are a joy,
the lavish ones, devout to gods! (7.92.4)³⁰⁴

Such statements quite often emphasize the *sūri*-s’ role as givers of *dakṣiṇā* or as respecters of the institution of priestly *purohiti*, as we may see vividly in numerous examples.

“May the generous donors partake of nourishing wealth, the *sūri*-s who for ever give (us gifts). In contests may we win the prize from the *ari*, offering before the gods their share

and above all 7.34.18: *prā rāyē yantu śārdhbanto aryāḥ* (Grassmann, übers., has translated *rāyah* of 6.14.3 as “nach Schätzen”). On *āyu*, see appendix at end of Part II of this work.

³⁰¹ *aryo girāḥ sadyā ā jagmūṣīr ōsrās cākantūbhāyeṣv asmé // 1.122.14cd.*

³⁰² *tā vām adyā tāv aparāṃ huvemochāntyām uśási vāhnir ukthaiḥ / nāsatyā kūha cit sāntāv aryō / divo nāpātā sudāstarāya // 1.184.1.*

³⁰³ *ebhīr nṛbhīr indra tvāyūbhiḥ tvā / maghāvadbhīr maghavan viśva ājau / dyāvo nā dyumnair abhī sānto aryāḥ / kṣapō madema śarādaś ca pūrviḥ // 4.16.19.* See also n. 334.

³⁰⁴ *yē vāyāva indramādanāsa / ādevāso nitōsanāso aryāḥ / ghnānto vṛtrāṇi sūribhiḥ syāma / sāsahvāmso yudhā nṛbhīr amitṛān // 7.92.4.*

for sake of fame!” 1.73.5³⁰⁵

“Let all, at the *ari*’s, (hear) this (word) of ours: the bards ever praise Bṛbu, the noblest giver of thousands, the *sūri* who is the noblest winner of thousands.” 6.45.33³⁰⁶

“Then when your peoples would start moving, O Indra, be the helper and protector (of these) *sūris* of ours, who are more heroic than the *ari*, and who have put us at (their) fore-front”. 6.25.7³⁰⁷

On the face of it, it would appear that all these allusions refer to some kind of military engagements and the word *ari* indicates the foe against whom the *sūris* fight. The priests would then figure in these allusions as the men who invoke divine blessings on the princes they support. In some cases it may well be that there is nothing beyond this in these references. But the triangular reference to prince, priest and *ari* cannot always be easily explained away.

Let us consider, for example, the following:

“Gaining precedence, with agreeable mind do I laud Agni, your dear guest (O gods), with eulogies, — so that Varuṇa may remain in great glory among us and the *sūri*, praised by the *ari*, may grant (us) vivifying riches! (1.186.3)³⁰⁸

Or the following:

“Glorified by all, praised by the *ari* (as well), to the Soma-presser (i.e. the *sūri*) he gives gifts, and to the eulogist.” (8.1.22)³⁰⁹

Surely the *ari* here cannot mean an adversary or a foe?

It surprises us very much that the clear and unvarying distinction between *ari* and *sūri* in the RV has not gained due recognition. It seems to us that an adequate appreciation of this distinction is vitally necessary for the proper interpretation of the *ari* references.

³⁰⁵ *vī pṛkṣo agne maghāvāno aśyur / vī sūrāyo dādato viśvam āyuh / sanēma vājam samithēsu aryó / bhāgām devēsu śrāvase dādhanāḥ // 1.73.5.*

³⁰⁶ *tāt sū no viśve aryá ā / sādā grṇanti kārāvaḥ / bṛbūm sahasradātamaḥ / sūrīm sahasrasātamaḥ // 6.45.33.*

³⁰⁷ *ādha smā te carṣaṇāyo yád éjān / indra trātótā bhavā varūtā / asmākāso yé nṛtamāso aryá / indra sūrāyo dadbhīre puró naḥ // 6.25.7.*

³⁰⁸ *préṣṭham vo átithim grñīse / ḡnīm śastibhis turvāniḥ sajósāḥ / ásad yáthā no váruṇaḥ sukīrtir / iśas ca paṛśad arigūrtāḥ sūrīḥ // 1.186.3.*

³⁰⁹ *sá sunvaté ca stuvaté ca rāsate / viśvágūrto ariṣṭutāḥ // 8.1.22cd.*

And in every case where this distinction is made explicit, it is the *sūri* that the priests support.

But we must hasten to add a much needed word of caution. The distinction drawn between *ari* and *sūri* is not the only factor to be taken into account. The *ari* tangle does not indeed admit of any such easy solution.

Another significant fact is, as even the above quotations would have revealed, it is not in every instance that the *ari* is portrayed as an implacable opponent. In the last two references, for example, we can see him praising the *sūri* and also praising Indra. In other words, whereas in some allusions the *ari* is distinct from the *sūri* and appears as an adversary, in others he appears to be distinct from the *sūri* by virtue of a special role that he seems to have played, perhaps as the owner or protector of wealth. In the pages to follow, it is our hope to explore the evidence bearing on these two kinds of distinction which we visualize as

- a) cultural, religious and political and
- b) functional.

But straightway let us draw attention to a basic fact: in either of the above two cases, the *ari* almost always appears to be portrayed as “some one for the *sūri* to contend with” aided by the Vedic priests as elite counsellors or *purohitas* and as practitioners of a pervasive cult.

VI. Ari and Sūri — The Cultural Distinction

(1)

“They have lapsed from the pressing (of Soma), they have not revered Indra as a god — there where ... Vṛṣākapi found enjoyment in the *ari*’s nourishing riches”, says 10.86.1³¹⁰.

To put the idea expressed in this verse in another way, Vṛṣākapi, in the process of seeking refuge in the *ari*, has become a person who is “averse to Soma” and “averse to Indra” — a condition that elsewhere in the RV is indicated by the pejorative adjectives *asunvant* and *anindra*.

³¹⁰ *ví hí sótor aśr̥kṣata / néndram devám amaṃsata / yátrāmadad vṛṣākāpir / aryāḥ puṣṭéṣu (mātsakhā)*
10.86.1.

It seems to us that this is in line with the accusations often brought against the man called the *ari* in the RV.

Take for example RV 4.24 which we discussed in Ch. III. In the opening verses of the hymn, i.e. verses 1-7, Indra is depicted as the god to be invoked in martial contests³¹¹. And yet it is made obvious here that he is not treated alike by every one. There is on the one hand the man who zealously offers Soma and also cooked and roasted foods³¹². On the other there is the “non-presser” and the offerer of *puroḷāśa* (rice cake)³¹³.

These opening verses provide a prologue which is an organic part of RV 4.24, essential to the proper understanding of the second part of the hymn. In this second part we are told how the *ari*'s wife, when she sees that the contest has become long and severe, invokes the manly Indra, who by this time has been ‘sharpened’ by copious draughts of Soma by those who offer that libation to him (i.e. by the opponents of the *ari*)³¹⁴. Then Indra is pictured as speaking or thinking to himself about the conduct of the two parties, the *ari*'s and the Soma offerer's:

- a) He has indulged in low trading for a thing of (high) value.
- b) It is not a little thing that he has exchanged for a thing of high value.³¹⁵

To us this appears as a direct continuation of the ideas earlier expressed: that calling for Indra's aid in the thick of battle only and not offering him Soma and *pakti* (“the cooked offering”) do not pay. It is by the Soma libation and the right kind of cooked offerings that the *sūris* gain Indra's alliance which is obviously the thing of high value the verses refer to. In other words the *ṛṣi* here pictures Indra as saying: They have not succeeded in winning me over because they offered the wrong offerings and at the wrong time. The offerer of Soma it is that has gained my alliance — a result already forecast in the first part of the hymn.

Thus 4.24 can, it seems to us, be regarded as supplying a very important clue — a clue which was less directly supplied by 10.86 — namely, that in the particular sense in which the words are used in the RV, the *ari*'s party could be described as *anindra* and

³¹¹ *sá vytrahátye hávyaḥ* 4.24.2a.

³¹² *paktīḥ* and *sómaḥ* of 4.24.5bc.

³¹³ *puroḷāśam* and *ásuṣvīn* of 4.24.5bc.

³¹⁴ 4.24.8 : See n. 121.

³¹⁵ 4.24.9ac : See n. 121.

asunvant.

Yet another context that supports this conclusion is RV 10.42. The same sequence of ideas as in 4.24 obtains here, though less colourfully expressed. The prime target is made explicit right at the start: “Subdue with song the *ari*’s song, O *vipras*!” Thus the contest is with the *ari* who also seeks the aid of the powers above. But only he who sacrifices rightly can aspire to triumph: “Men call on you diversely for aid ... (but) it is the giver of *haviṣ* who gains the (divine) ally. Not with the *asunvant* does the valiant one wish to ally himself” (stz. 4). The grounds on which the *ṛṣi*’s party (of *sūris*, called *rājans* in stz. 10 of the hymn) hopes to gain triumph are that they sacrifice the right way, in their contest with the *ari*: the opponent is *asunvant*, ipso facto *anindra*, and cannot win. Thus here too the epithet *asunvant* (and automatically the epithet *anindra*) is applicable to, or at least associable with, the *ari*.³¹⁶

Another important hymn of the RV that helps us understand the depiction of *ari* is 2.23. This hymn denounces without any mincing of words the “hater of *brahman*” (stz.4)³¹⁷, the “reviler of gods” (8)³¹⁸, the “evil reciter” (10),³¹⁹ etc., etc. These preliminary references prepare our minds to receive the *ṛṣi*’s final verbal onslaught in which he alludes to the *ari*’s wrath and his wealth and power (which he does not deserve):

“Who with ungodly mind seeks to inflict harm and seeks to slay, regarding himself as mighty among overlords — let not his deadly blow reach us, O *Ṛhaspati*! May we nullify the wrath of the ill-intentioned presumptuous man ... Like (battle-) cars has *Ṛhaspati* torn asunder all the deceitful wiles of the *ari*.”³²⁰ (2.23.12-13)

“Burn up the *rakṣas* with fiercely flaming brand — they who have scorned (even) you whose power is patent ... Set at nought the speakers of evil. That wealth which shines with might among the tribes and which our *sūri* shall deserve more than the *ari* ... give us that

³¹⁶ The relevant portions of 10.42 are as follows: *vācā viprās tarata vācam aryó* (1c); *tvāṃ jānā mamasatyésv indra / samtasthānā ví hvayante samiké / átrā yújam kṛṇute yó haviṣmān / nāsunvatā sakhyāṃ vaṣṭi śūrah //* (4); *vayāṃ rájabhiḥ prathamā dhānāny / asmākena vṛjánēnā jayema //* (10cd).

³¹⁷ *brahmadviṣ* 2.23.4c.

³¹⁸ *devanídaḥ* 2.23.8c.

³¹⁹ *duḥśāms* 2.23.10c.

³²⁰ *ádevena mānasā yó riṣaṇyāti / śāsām ugró mānyamāno jighāṃsati / bṛhaspate mā prānak tāsya no vadhó / ní karma manyūṃ durévasya sárdhataḥ // ... víśvā íd aryó abhidípso mṛdho / bṛhaspátir ví vavarbhā ráthām iva //* 2.23.12-13.

effulgent wealth!” (2.23.14-15)³²¹

So here again the *ari* is associated, without ambiguity, with the taint of being “averse to gods”, “averse to the cult and its practitioners”.

(2)

In a few instances in the RV Saṃhitā we come across unequivocal references, in the body of the same verse, to the distinction between the *ari* and the *sūri* in matters of allegiance to the cult (or, that form of it that seems to have been favoured by the *ṛṣi*s).

Let us take RV 1.81 for example. This hymn contains two references to the *ari*. The first part of the hymn describes Indra’s character as god of war. He is the sacrificer’s helper in battles. Stanza 6 goes on:

“May Indra help us — Indra who takes away the *ari*’s man-sustaining food for (his) devotee’s sake. Distribute, for much wealth is yours! I would gladly partake of your gift.”³²²

Stanza 9 refers again to the *ari* as contrasted with the men who are devoted to Indra. The latter cause all that is desirable to thrive. Having said this, the verse goes on:

“You have closely seen the *ari*’s possessions and (those) of the irreverent men (the *ari*’s men). Bring their wealth for us!”³²³

In these two verses we see the positive qualification applied to the sacrificers and the negative to the *ari*’s party. Both serve the same purpose: they give a strong reason for Indra’s intervention in the capture of the *ari*’s wealth.

Comparable, though not exactly of the same type, is the statement at RV 2.8.2, where too the *ari* stands contrasted with the devotee. Here the poet describes Agni thus: “unageing, he brings decay to the *ari*, to the devotee gives an excellent lead”³²⁴ (-incidentally, a reference to the inadequacy of the leadership of the *ari*, who apparently was usually well past his youth?) While here the *ari* stands contrasted with

³²¹ *tējīṣṭhaya tāpanī rakṣāśas tapa / yé tvā nidé dadbhíré dṛṣṭāvīryam / ... ví parirāpo ardaya // ... āti yád aryó árbhād / dyumád vibhāti krátumaj jáneṣu / ... tād asmāsu dráviṇaṃ dbehi citrám // 2.23.14-15.*

³²² *yó aryó martabhójanam / parādádāti dāsúṣe / indro asmábhyaṃ śikṣatu / ví bhajā bhūri te vásu / bhakṣīyá táva rádhasaḥ // 1.81.6.*

³²³ *antár hí khyó jánānām / aryó védo ádāsusām / tésām no véda á bhara // 1.81.9cde.*

³²⁴ *yáḥ sunūthó dadāsúṣe / ’juryó jaráyann arim // 2.8.2ab.*

the devout followers of the gods (which we take as really a partisan way of depicting the *ari*'s position religiously), at 9.23.3 a similar effect is achieved by characterizing the *ari* as himself lacking in devoutness: “Bring us, O Soma, the possessions of the irreverent *ari*” is about roughly what this stanza says.³²⁵

At 8.24.22 too this contrast seems to be brought out quite clearly: Indra bestows the *ari*'s property to the devotee of his cult.³²⁶

Viewed against the background of this depiction of the *ari* as somehow lacking in devoutness, as being less worthy than Indra's devotees (i.e. the *sūris*), it is easy to understand the reference at 8.21.16 which calls on Indra to “grasp and fetch even the firmly enclosed (treasures) of the *ari*, for Indra's gifts are not to be set at nought”.³²⁷ The implication seems to be that the singer's party may win the *ari*'s wealth — i.e. be the recipient of Indra's aid — but yet the *ari* can be expected to attempt to negate this god-given luck.

The usefulness of RV 8.21 to the elucidation of the meaning of *ari* does not end here.

The reference to the *ari* in 8.21.16 is preceded by the interesting statement in stanza 14 which is as follows:

“No wealthy man will you find fit to be your friend. They scorn you, quickened by *surā*. But when you raise the cry of war and bring (contenders into) confrontation, then are you invoked like a father”.³²⁸

We have discussed some aspects of the significance of this statement in another context: only ‘true adherence’ entitles one to Indra's aid (Ch. III).

The immediacy of this statement to the emphatic denunciation of the *ari* in stanza 16 makes us think that here too the *ari*'s party is depicted not only as prosperous but also as *anindra* and *asunvant* (i.e. averse to Indra and the offering of Soma in the sense understood by the *ṛsis*). That the *ari* in contrast to the *sūri* is constantly viewed with disfavour for his insufficient commitment to cult seems in view of these statements to be the actual position in the RV Saṃhitā. One may then ask, was he less prone to rush

³²⁵ *ā pavamāna no bharāryó ādāśuṣo gāyam // 9.23.3ab.*

³²⁶ *aryó gāyam māmhamānaṃ ví dāśúṣe // 8.24.22c.*

³²⁷ *dṛḷhā cid aryāḥ prá mṛśābhy ā bhara ná te dāmāna ādābhe // 8.21.16cd.*

³²⁸ *nākī revāntaṃ sakhyāya vindase / pīyanti te surāśvāḥ / yadā kṛṇōṣi nadanūṃ sám ūbasy / ād it pītēva bhūyase // 8.21.14.*

to attack the Aryans' foes and so was lukewarm in his ardour for the god of Aryan triumph?

(3)

A fact of considerable significance is that several foes or obstructors (*vṛtras*) that Indra is said to have defeated are not Dasyus but Aryans. We are familiar with the call to Indra to vanquish the enemies of Sudās — among whom were many Aryans. RV 7.83.1 mentions all these foes together as “Dāsa *vṛtras* and Ārya *vṛtras*”.³²⁹ But this is not the only place where this kind of statement is found. The same turn of phrase occurs at 6.22.10, 6.33.3, 6.60.6 and 10.69.6.³³⁰

And even this is not all.

10.83.1 wishes that ‘Wrath’ would extend its assistance to the sacrificers so that they may subjugate the Dāsa as well as the Aryan.³³¹ 10.102.3 wishes that Indra would hold aloof the Dāsa’s weapon, and also the Aryan’s.³³² In these cases, however, the powerful epithet of cultural rejection, *vṛtra*, has not been employed.

That theme, viz. the idea that the Aryans whom the singers condemn are culturally despicable, appears with undisguised emphasis at 10.38.3 and 8.51.9.

Says the former: “Whatever *godless* man intends to fight us, O Indra, ... whether he is a Dāsa or an Aryan — may (all) such foes be easily subdued by you through us. With you let us suppress them in the contest!” So an Aryan could not only be bracketed with the Dāsas, he could also be labelled as *adeva*: godless or “averse to the *devas*”.³³³

And in just that kind of light is the *ari* seen in 8.51.9, bracketed with the Dāsa and shown as culturally unacceptable for breaking an important *vṛata* of the Vedic system of notions, the duty of being lavishly generous to the priests. We would render this important reference to the *ari* as follows:

³²⁹ *dāsā ca vṛtrā hatām āryāni ca* / 7.83.1c. (That the reference is to events of the *dāsa-rājña* period is indicated by line d: *sudāsam indrāvaruṇāvāsāvataṁ*).

³³⁰ *dāsāny āryāni vṛtrā* 6.22.10c; *ubhāyām amitṛān / dāsā vṛtrāny āryā ca* 6.33.3ab; *vṛtrāny āryā ... dāsāni* 6.60.6ab; *dāsā vṛtrāny āryā* 10.69.6b.

³³¹ *sāhyāma dāsam āryaṁ tvāyā yujā* 10.83.1c.

³³² *dāsasya vā maghāvann āryasya vā / ... yavayā vadhām* 10.102.3cd.

³³³ *yó no dāsa āryo vā ... / ādeva indra yudbhāye ciketati / asmābhiḥ ṛe suśābhāḥ santu sátravas / tvāyā vayāṁ tām vanuyāma saṁgamé //* 10.38.3.

“This every one of his (is) Aryan; (but) a Dāsa (is) the wealth-guarding *ari*”.³³⁴

It is not necessary to contort so simple a statement, as almost every translator has done upto now. When we understand the true significance of the *anindra* association with which the *ari* often appears tainted, we immediately see what is meant: It is the Indra-like person that is truly Aryan, not the one who has departed from Indra-like ways and ‘hoards’ cattle and grain. The latter has adopted a Dāsa-like conduct. There is here no implication whereby *ari* has to be taken as referring to the Dāsa ethnically, i.e. as meaning a foe in the ethnic sense. It is probably not even meant that every *ari* is to be condemned. Most of the *ari* chiefs, like the Dāsas, do not favour the Indra-style, the exuberant lavishness. But, as *maghavan* par excellence, it is of the earthly *maghavans* that Indra is a friend, not of niggardly chiefs; the hoarding of wealth is not the style to be favoured by him.

We take it then that 8.51.9 reflects the view that in conserving wealth, the *ari* has adopted a Dāsa-like quality, a view which seems to us also to be evident in the references to “foes related and unrelated”. There are several references of this kind, but two of them interest us particularly because they are embedded in contexts which reflect the attitude of cultural hostility which we discussed above. These two allusions are in the hymns 6.44 and 4.4 of the RV Saṃhitā.

“Hero, slay our foemen” says 6.44.17 to Indra and goes on to specify these men: “the unfriendly, be they related or unrelated”³³⁵ ... The objectionable elements of the conduct of “the unfriendly” were more specifically spelled out earlier in the hymn where the singer requests Indra to “destroy the nongivers, root out those averse to Soma”.³³⁶ (Interesting to note is the fact that the original for “the unfriendly” in this context is the same as that by which the Nirukta defines *ari*).³³⁷

6.44 thus is also an instance where the *ṛṣi* stresses the un-*vrata*-like conduct of “the unfriendly” (relations), namely niggardliness and aversion to a traditional form of worship. And also, in their entirety 6.44.17 and 11 are very similar to 7.83.1 and 7: “Dāsa foes and Aryan ... kings who do not observe sacrificial rites”.

³³⁴ *yasyāyām viśva āryo / dāsah sevadhipā ariḥ / 8.51.9ab.*

³³⁵ *jahi sūra sātrūñ / jāmitm ājāmim ... amitrān 6.44.17ab.*

³³⁶ 6.44.11 : See n. 232 above.

³³⁷ *ari = īśvarā / amitra.* See n. 2 above.

Basically similar, yet even more interesting, are the references to unfriendly relatives in RV 4.4.5-6. Here again, the early stanzas (3 and 4) reveal the singer's strong animus when he speaks of the "evil speaker" and the "unfriendly men"³³⁸ (using the same word as in 6.44.17). Then he urges Agni to rise and display his celestial power and "slacken the taut (weapons) of them that are spurred by *yātu* (i.e. magical practices outside the sacrificial system); shatter the foemen be they related or unrelated!"³³⁹

This most interesting reference to 'relatives' who are said to have depended on *yātu* rather than *yajña* (sacrifice) captures our attention all the more when the singer follows it up with strikingly contrastive allusions to the *sūri* in relation to an *ari*:

"He knows your favourable disposition (O Agni), who has set the way for a ritual-song such as this. To him may you illumine the bright days, the treasures and the splendours of the *ari*" (4.4.6)³⁴⁰ — this, of course, is the singer's way of imploring that the *ari*'s wealth be made available to the *sūri* who utilizes the singer's priestly services. Whereas the *ari* (the unfriendly relation) was spurred on by *yātu* magic, the *sūri* "set the way" for a sacred song.

Almost identical is the situation that 10.116 depicts. Here stanza 5 urges Indra to "make their sharp pikes blunt" and "slacken the taut (weapons) of the men that are spurred on by *yātu*".³⁴¹ And again, we are provided with a clue as to these men in the subsequent part of the hymn. It is the *ari* (and his men): "scatter the *ari*'s fame away (and) his might, like the firm onslaughts of (his) bow." (10.116.6)³⁴²

The same kind of revealing contrasts is reflected in 7.21.5. Here the first two lines are emphatic in the assertion that "no *yātu* men have spurred us on".³⁴³ This seems to mean that the *yātu* magic which the Vedic priests despised (whatever it was), was not the spiritual aid on which the singer's men would ever depend. A forceful word indeed is "spurred on" in this context. (Here the source from which the "spurring on" comes is said to be emphatically not the powers of *yātu*; elsewhere it is said to be Indra, Agni,

³³⁸ *aghāsaṃs-, amitra-, ājāmim:* 4.4.3-5.

³³⁹ *āva sthirā tanuhi yātujūnām // jāmim ājāmim prā mṛṇūhi sātrūn // 4.4.5.*

³⁴⁰ *sā te jānāti sumatīṃ yaviṣṭha / yā ivate brāhmaṇe gātīm airat / viśvāny asmai sudīnāni rāyó / dyumnāny aryó ví dūro abhī dyaut // 4.4.6. aryāḥ ... dymnā-* above at 9.61.11, 4.16.19 (n. 297).

³⁴¹ *nī tigmāni bhrāśāyan bhrāśyāny / āva sthirā tanuhi yātujūnām / 10.116.5ab.*

³⁴² *vy aryā indra tanuhi śrāvāmsy ója sthiréva dhānvano 'bhīmātīḥ / 10.116.6ab.*

³⁴³ *nā yātāva indra jūjuvur naḥ / 7.21.5a.*

brahma, *vipra* and *damṣu*³⁴⁴). This emphatic denial is followed by the following contrastive reference to the *ari*: “May this one triumph over the *ari* of the adverse *jantu* (people, folk or tribe). May no *śiśnadevas* (who follow unacceptable forms of worship) approach our sacred work!”³⁴⁵

What does the singer mean, packing as he does many loaded words into this verse?

It seems to us that first the singer disclaims connections with any kind of cult that could have been held in disregard by the high priests of the *deva* worship. In the sequel he requests Indra not to allow the *ari* and his people who are adverse (to the cult as spelled out by the *ṛṣis*) ever to prevail. In the end he desires that practitioners of despised cults be kept far away from his sacred rites.

The singer of course is the *sūri*'s man. But who are the *ari*'s men and who are the practitioners of low cults that should not be allowed to vitiate the singer's rites? And what does this last request in its entirety imply?

These queries take us deeper into the question of the cults and men that “spurred on” the *ari*, the “unfriendly relative” and so on.

That strong men there were, who sought magical and spiritual support (“spurring on”) from various quarters seems quite likely. We have seen the allusions to *yātu* cults above. And there are also allusions to men who looked even to the Dasyus for this kind of support. The best example of this kind of reference is RV 6.24.8, along with which we should also take into account 6.24.5.

Indra, says 6.24.8, does not bend (even) to the strong man who is “(magically) spurred on by the Dasyu”.³⁴⁶

The word Dasyu in the RV essentially carries connotations of cult hostility, of being non-Vedic culturally and religiously (as opposed to Dāsa which carries connotations more ethnic and more ‘political’). The word is often associated with other words denotative of differences of religious views and practices (e.g. *avrata*, *āsraddha*, *akratu*,

³⁴⁴ Cf. *indrajūta*: 1.118.9, 3.33.11; *yam agne pṛtsu māryam ... junāḥ* / (= *āgnijūtaḥ*) *sā yāntā śāsvatīr iṣaḥ* / 1.27.7; *brāhmajūta*: 3.34.1, 7.19.11; *dāmsujūta*: 1.122.10; *vīprajūta*: 1.3.5.

³⁴⁵ *sā śardhad aryó viṣuṇasya jantōr mā śiśnadevā āpi gur ṛtām naḥ* // 7.21.5cd.

³⁴⁶ *nā vīlāve nāmāte nā sthirāya / nā śardhate dāsuyūtāya ...* / 6.24.8ab.

ayajyu, adevayu, akarma, amantu, anyavrata etc.)³⁴⁷

To us the phrase “strong man who is spurred on by the Dasyu” does not seem to refer to one Dasyu supported by another. It appears more likely that the reference is to an Aryan chief. In this view we are fortified by the reference to an *ari* in stanza 5 of the hymn. This says that Mitra, Varuṇa and Pūṣan act as “a subjugator of the *ari*’s will”³⁴⁸. Thus RV 7.83, 6.44, 4.4, 7.21, 10.116 and 6.24 are basically alike. They refer to chiefs who had to some extent turned away from the spirit of the sacrificial cult (as understood by the elite priesthood who gained an authoritative position in the RV period), and moved towards a position of dialogue with other cults including that (or those) of the Dasyus. In five of these hymns an *ari* is specifically referred to. In each too there is some clue that suggests that the condemned chief must be an Aryan. Thus

7.83: Dāsa and Ārya foes ... *ari*, ... kings averse to sacrifice

6.44: Related and unrelated foes, ... non-givers, ... averse to Soma

4.4: Related and unrelated foes, ... spurred by *yātu* ... *ari*

7.21: *ari* and his adverse *jantus* ... spurred by *yātu*

10.116: *ari* ... spurred by *yātu*

6.24: *ari* ... spurred by the Dasyu.

Thieme has referred to the association of the *ari* with an attitude which the RV denotes as *arāti*³⁴⁹ We can agree with him that *arāti* certainly is a term with a very negative sense. We would also add that the term is at the same time connotative of hostility to Vedism in that it implies departure from the *vrata*, in this case denial of what is due to Vedic priests.

Thus at 1.43.8 the *arāti*-natured men are the opponents of the Soma cult.³⁵⁰ In the hymn 2.23, where incidentally all opponents are cult opponents, they are “double dealers”.³⁵¹ At 8.11.3 they are described as “godless foes”³⁵² and at 1.47.4 the

³⁴⁷ See appendix 2 at the end of this work.

³⁴⁸ *mitró no átra várūṇas ca pūṣáryó vásasya paryetásti* // 6.24.5cd.

³⁴⁹ F. pp. 43ff.

³⁵⁰ *má nah somaparibádho mārātayo juburanta* / 1.43.8ab.

³⁵¹ *ná tám ... árātayas titirur ná dvayāvínah* 2.23.5 (*tám* = *bṛhaspatim*).

³⁵² *sá tvám asmád ápa dvīṣo / yuyodhí jātavedah / ádevīr agne árātīḥ* // 8.11.3.

arāti-natured one is “the non-giver who harms us with duplicity.”³⁵³

8.39.2 contains a request to strike down all forms of *arāti*, of the *ari* and of the *arāvan*.³⁵⁴ It is interesting to note the way the untranslated word of this context, which appears here in association with *ari*, is defined in the Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa (6.10.7): the *arāvans* are those who praise that which is not (or that which is opposed to) the *ṛta*.³⁵⁵ The *ṛta* is of course the truth, the sacrifice as well as the cult in a broad sense. Thus the reference at 8.39.2 distinctly associates the *ari* with the religiously unacceptable. The abusive and *arāvan*-like speech of the *ari* of 7.31.5 must in view of all this be regarded as signifying ritual unfitness³⁵⁶ (much as the *vidāthe mṛdbrāvācam* reference to the Pūru in the Ten Kings’ War signifies ritual unacceptability in RV 7.18.13).

At 4.50.11 (which is repeated at 7.97.9) and also at 7.83.5, the singer mentions the *arāti* of (the *ari* or) the *ari*’s men.³⁵⁷ The *ari*’s own unambiguous *arāti* is mentioned at 6.16.27, 6.48.16, 6.59.8, 8.39.2 and 9.79.3.³⁵⁸

The last mentioned reference is especially worthy of attention:

“And (give us protection in the face) of our own *arāti*; that is the *ari*; and (also in the face) of the external *arāti*: that is the wolf.”³⁵⁹

To Thieme the significance of the mention of “one’s own” and “external” is that in their entirety they convey the significance of ‘all’.³⁶⁰ But the more one thinks of the statement at 9.79.3, the more it becomes hard to believe that *ari* means “stranger”. On the contrary this seems to make it so much more likely that the *ari* is one whose blood relationship to the Aryan priest is beyond doubt.

³⁵³ *yó no agne árarivāṃ / aghāyúr arātīvā marcáyati dvayéna /* 1.147.4ab.

³⁵⁴ *ny árātīr árāvṇāṃ / víśvā aryó árātīr / itó yuchantu ...* 8.39.2cde.

³⁵⁵ *arāvno ye’nytam abhisāṃsanti* Tāṇḍya Mahā Br. 6.10.7. On *ṛta* cf. Śatapatha Br. 1.3.4.16., Tait. Br. 3.8.3.4.etc.

³⁵⁶ *mā no nidé ca váktave / ’ryó randhīr árāvṇe /* 7.31.5ab.

³⁵⁷ *jajastām aryó vanísāṃ árātīḥ /* 4.50.11d / 7.97.9d 7.83.5; see n. 64 above.

³⁵⁸ *táranto aryó árātīr / vanvánto aryó árātīḥ* 6.16.27; *aghā aryó árātayaḥ //* 6.48.16c, 6.59.8, 8.39.2 (above n. 348); 9.79.3 (below, n. 353).

³⁵⁹ *utá svásyā árātyā / arír hí śá / utānyasyā árātyā / vṛko hí śāḥ /* 9.79.3.

³⁶⁰ F. p. 45.

The precise quality of the *arāti* that was feared of the *ari* is, according to this reference, comparable with the harm that came from the wolf: it threatened the priests' possessions of cattle, more particularly the cows won as the priestly fee for services to the *sūris* which for some reason seem to have been endangered by the *ari*'s conduct and attitudes. If the *ari* was one's own and yet this was the case, we could visualize the situation as one in which the *ari* was the original possessor of these cows. Though won by the *sūri* and given to the priests, the *ari* seems to be entertaining the idea of denying them to their new possessors: obviously a cardinal sin from the point of view of the Vedic ethic.

It must have been galling to the *ṛṣis* that Aryan tribal chiefs should have behaved in such a way, for to tamper with the *dakṣiṇā*, or to deny it at all should be what a chief ought never to do. The (possibly later) coinages *kavāri* (the mean *ari*) and *kadarya* (miserliness — the quality of a mean *ari*) reflect this deep concern and indeed it is pithily expressed at 10.107.3: "A divine fulfillment is the *dakṣiṇā*, a thing that is (part) of the sacrifice to gods. It is not (to be hoped for) from the *kavāris*; they indeed do not give ..." ³⁶¹

And the divine giver Indra, is specifically the opposite of the *kavāri*.

Says 3.47.5 (= 6.19.11): "No mean *ari* (is) the divine ordainer!" ³⁶²

³⁶¹ *daivī pūrtir dākṣiṇā devayajyā / nā kavāribhyo nahi té pṛṇānti / 10.107.3ab.*

³⁶² *ākavāriṃ divyāṃ śāsām indram 3.47.5b, 6.19.11b.*

PART TWO

VII. More about the *ari* - *sūri* Distinction

(1)

RV 6.24 creates the impression that the *ari* referred to in one of its stanzas may be “the strong haughty one who is spurred on by the Dasyu” mentioned in a subsequent verse.³⁶³ But could this be possible? Could it be possible that *ari* in this stanza refers to an Aryan chief?

What makes one think that such an interpretation is far-fetched is that we have hitherto not appreciated the weight of evidence that exists in the RV on a peculiar situation: that of many *sūris* contending for the wealth of an *ari*. Is the situation here one of actual war or one of some other type of contest?

First of all, we become confused on the true assessment of this evidence by not appreciating the clear distinction always drawn in the RV between the *ari* and the *sūri*. We have discussed that point and it is no longer necessary to go back to it.

Secondly, we should always bear in mind that in any Vedic contest of an earnest kind the actual contestants were bound to have a second flank of supporters of a different order: the priests who aid the warriors with ‘divine support’.

Let us straightway state the conclusion which our evidence leads us toward. While in some references in the RV *ari* indicates an Aryan chief opposed in war by another Vedic chief (hence an Aryan foe, as in the Ten Kings’ War), in others the *ari* appears rather as an Aryan chief whose wealth (i.e. mainly cows) the *sūris* tried to win in some kind of contests that do not seem to be actual wars. But they were certainly contests of an earnest kind buttressed with priestly support.

Now, how does the Dasyu come into all this? Let us seek light on this point by reflecting on what now we may regard as our clearest and least controvertible evidence:

³⁶³ 6.24.5/8. See nn. 340, 342 above.

the references to the Ten Kings' War. Here Sudās was opposed by combined Ārya and Dāsa forces and both alike were, in the *ṛṣi*'s view, kings who were “without sacrifice and without Indra”. But when we are also told that they nevertheless called on Indra's aid, we realize that there is here a partisan point of view expressed. We understand the text to suggest that these Aryan chiefs were not supporting a certain (extreme) form of Indraism which rejected them as much as it rejected the Dasyus. In any case, these Aryans “without Indra” had friendly contact with the Dasyus during the period of Sudās Pajjavana, and perhaps also that of Vadhryaśva and Divodāsa.³⁶⁴

We do not know very much about this friendly contact, but 6.24 impresses us as a bit of very useful information — which suggests that the Dasyu may have performed a priestly role comparable to what a *ṛṣi-purohita* performed for Vedic princes under normal circumstances. (Compare with *dāsyujūta* of this context the parallel epithets *vīprajūta*, *brāhmajūta* and *dāmsujūta* in other R̥gvedic allusions).³⁶⁵ A statement such as 6.14.3 becomes especially significant in the light of such a view:

Separately (they call), O Agni,
for aid (from you) - the *āyus*.
For *ari*'s wealth they compete
the Dasyu crushing, hoping to foil,
with *vratas* those
that are to *vrata* averse.³⁶⁶

Let us examine the contents of this verse in the light of what we know about the *āyus* — namely, that they are Vedic priests —³⁶⁷ and about the general stance that the priests adopted in relation to the *sūris* as against the *ari*.

To win the *ari*'s wealth (for the *sūris*) the priests have to crush the Dasyu. Thus with *vratas* they triumph over the men averse to *vrata*. And they do this competitively, each party for its own gain. It would look as if the *ari*'s wealth was open to be won in a contest, but in the process a Dasyu had to be defeated with *vratas*, i.e. sacrificially, or, following the norms of the cult. The winning of *ari*'s wealth is depicted as a triumph of

³⁶⁴ See Ch. II (1 b, c and e) above.

³⁶⁵ See above, n. 338.

³⁶⁶ *nānā by āgné 'vase /spārdhante rāyo aryāḥ / tūrvanto dāsyum āyāvo / vrataiḥ śikṣanto avratām //* 6.14.3 See n. 294, above.

³⁶⁷ See appendix 1, below.

the *Āyus*' sacrificial acts, just as any victory is depicted as a triumph of the cult. And the situation seems to be (in RV 6.14):

- (1) *Sūris* aided by *āyus* competing for wealth, to be won from
- (2) an *ari*, aided by a Dasyu.

(2)

If in order to win the *ari*'s wealth for the *sūris*, Vedic priests sacrificially prevailed over a Dasyu performing a priestly service for the *ari*, and yet this probably was not exactly a military encounter, what kind of a contest was this and how could the contenders have confronted one another? Could we legitimately think of a tribal occasion in which it was customary to compete for some one's wealth with priestly aid and also it was customary on that one's part to defend that wealth with priestly aid? Not nearly a battle, but a kind of tribal ritual occasion?

Let us examine two of the most important stanzas that seem to allude to such sacrificial events. These stanzas contain uncomplimentary references to other practitioners of ritual whose very participation seems to be denounced with a degree of violent emphasis. The two passages in question are RV 5.42.9 and 7.21.5.

We have already referred to 7.21.5 in a different context,³⁶⁸ but here one point has to be particularly emphasized. "May *śisnadevas* not come close to our sacred work"³⁶⁹ says the singer, after asserting his immunity from *yātu* influence, and after desiring that Indra should triumph over the *ari* of the adverse *jantu*.

Such references seem to point to one fact: that it was not only the protagonists of the Indra cult that had access to certain ritualized occasions. In other words, such occasions were not closed affairs restricted to the observance of an exclusive form of the ritual. What we have is more like evidence of a community event with a strong ritualistic basis allowing in its physical precincts the worship of gods in a variety of forms.

This is even more evident in RV 5.42. Here the stanzas 8-10 are centred round a single key idea, the supremacy or the sacredness of the *ṛṣis*' observances. It is a protest against a state that exists, in favour of an ideal state that the *ṛṣis* seem to wish to bring into being.

"United with your aid, O Bṛhaspati, are the *maghavans* free from harm, rich in heroic

³⁶⁸ See n. 337 above

³⁶⁹ See n. 339 above.

men. They who give cows and clothes, among them (may) wealth (there be), that gets fair allocation!” (stz. 8)

“(But) they who secure enjoyment by virtue of our songs, (and yet) do not adhere to (the duty of) giving — cause their wealth to melt away. Remove from them the (light of the) sun, who find prosperity in the *prasava* (but) do not observe (its) vows, the haters of *brahman!*” (9)

“He who glorifies the *rakṣas* in the divine feast, come down upon him with your wheelless (cars), O Maruts! Whoso shall deride the service to you of (the priest) that labours (thereon) — vain wishes will he, (though) toiling, entertain!” (10)³⁷⁰

Schmidt seems to us to have understood the situation depicted in these stanzas somewhat correctly when he observes that the reference here (stz. 9) is to “those persons who in deceitful ways come by the enjoyment of the success of the ritual although they adore the Rakṣas and not the gods”.³⁷¹

Of course the background of activity 5.42 alludes to is a sacrificial session of some kind or other. Stanza 3 of the hymn refers to “the treasures that are set”³⁷² which obviously are the same as what is elsewhere called “the wealth that is set” (i.e. the wealth made available for contestants to win). In the stanzas translated above reference seems to be made to 3 kinds of persons:

stz. 8: The generous patrons who divide their wealth (i.e. winnings). These *maghāvans* are the persons who are elsewhere called *sūris*.

stz. 9: Those who are ill-disposed to Brahmanical practices and priests. They profit by the ritual though they do not offer rewards: thus they have departed from the *vratas*.

stz. 10: “He who esteems the *rakṣas* in the divine feast.” The reference here is in the singular. This man derides the labours of the devotee. He has his own brand of ritual acts, which are performed in the *devavīti* itself.

Thus 5.42.8-10 depicts a situation strikingly comparable with what 7.21.5 seems to

³⁷⁰ *tāvotibhiḥ śacamānā ariṣṭā / bhāspate maghāvānaḥ suvīrāḥ / ye āvadā utā vā śanti godā / ye vastradāḥ subhāgās tēsu rāyaḥ // visarmānaṃ kṛṇuhi vittam eṣāṃ / ye bhuñjāte aprṇanto na ukthaiḥ / āpavratān prasavē vāvṛdhānān / brahmadviṣaḥ sūryād yāvayasva // yā ōhate rakṣāso devāvūtāv / acakrēbhis tām maruto nī yāta / yō vaḥ sāmīṃ śasamānāsya nindāt / tuchyān kāmān karate siṣvidānāḥ* 5.42.8-10.

³⁷¹ Schmidt, p. 94.

³⁷² *vāsūni ...hitāni* 5.42.3, Cf. *bitām dhānam* of 6.45.2 etc. etc.

allude to. It seems to us that the picture of the ritual event that emerges from these stanzas is of a gathering consisting of (a) Brahman priests with their practices, (b) their patrons, the *sūris* as well as (c) another participant (*ari* in 7.21.5; “he who esteems the *rakṣas*” in 5.42.10) who did not comply with the standards set by the brahman priests altogether and was allied with or supported by (d) other practitioners following different forms of ritual observance.

(3)

We mentioned above the 5.42.3 reference to “the treasures that are set”. Who possibly could be the one from whom these treasures came?

Without exception the RV depicts the *ari* as a rich and powerful personage. Reference is made to the *ari*'s cows, his wealth or riches, his splendour, his manly power and his renown.³⁷³

That this wealth was available for brave heroes to win is indicated in the RV in diverse ways, some quite unambiguous. Compare for example verses such as the following:

The *ari*'s many (treasures) / with song shall we win // (1.70.1)³⁷⁴

In *ari*'s contests / may we the prize win // (1.73.5)³⁷⁵

(The *sūris*) they'll the strengthening (treasures) choose; /
(so) make us the *ari*'s cattle share, O generous lord! // (1.121.15)³⁷⁶

Like a winning gambler / with you (for aid), for gain of wealth
would we the *ari*'s contest win // (4.20.3)³⁷⁷

Like a winning gambler / has he the stakes taken /
the *ari*'s nourishing wealth // (2.12.4)³⁷⁸

Like stakes, he reduces / the *ari*'s nourishing wealth // (2.12.5)³⁷⁹

³⁷³ See Añjali, p. 93, note.

³⁷⁴ *vanéna pūrvīr aryō manīṣā* / 1.70.1. (*pūrvīr* as epithet of an implied word like *iṣah*; *manīṣā* inst. sg. as e.g. is *matī* in a context like 2.24.9: *vājam bhārate matī*)

³⁷⁵ 1.73.5: See n. 299 above.

³⁷⁶ ... *sām iṣo varanta* / *ā no bhaja maghavan gōṣv aryāḥ* 1.121.15bc.

³⁷⁷ *śvaghnīva ... sanāye dhānānām* / *tvayā vayām aryā ājīm jayema* // 4.20.3cd.

³⁷⁸ *śvaghnīva yō jigīvām lakṣām ādad* / *aryāḥ puṣṭāni* 2.12.4cd.

³⁷⁹ *sō aryāḥ puṣṭīr vīja ivā mināti* 2.12.5c.

And 10.76.2, speaking of the ritual draught, the Soma sap, says that (for the *sūris*) it

shall find that manly strength / which supersedes the *ari*'s (strength) /
which fast coursers overtake / for gain of mighty wealth. // ³⁸⁰

— so to put down the *ari*'s strength is to win mighty wealth. And how is it won? With strength that helps one to overtake fast horses — in other words with triumphs in contests of horsemanship.

Just how much the wealth that was to be won from the *ari* meant to the *sūris* is forcefully brought out by 6.20.1:

The *ari*'s wealth, O Indra, / which subdues men, by might, in battles /
as heaven does earth, / and which a thousand booties brings, /
wins fertile land and conquers foes /
that give unto us, O Son of Force! // ³⁸¹

That it was the youthful heroes that far more deserved that wealth which the *ari*, old and languishing, is allowed to gather (or hold), seems to us to be the import of 6.13.5:

O Agni, Son of Might / for our manly heroes bring those (states) /
in fine glory abounding — and excellent sons — /
that (they) may thrive /
what time you in your might / the herd's life-strength magnify /
the wolf to benefit, and the languishing *ari*! // ³⁸²

Might we not ask: Is the *ṛṣi* impatient at the staid and hoarding tendencies of the older *ari* which stand against his wealth being utilized to further the expansion of Aryan power?

A reference like 7.60.11 fortifies such conjecture. Here the singer speaks of the *sūris*, the fury of the *ari* which they must confront, as well as the role of the *ṛṣi* in the process of winning wealth, and in the same breath he refers to the notion of securing expansive dwelling-sites:

Who (in sacred act) will seek

³⁸⁰ *vidād dhy āryó abhibhūti pañmsyam mahó rāyē cit tarute yād ārvataḥ* // 10.76.2cd.

³⁸¹ *dyaúr ná yá indrābhí bhūmāryás / tasthaú rayiḥ śavasā pṛtsú jánān / táṃ naḥ sabāsrabharam urvarāsām / daddhí sūno sabaso vṛtratīram* // 6.20.1.

³⁸² *tá ṛṣbhya á sausravasā suvīrāgne sūno sabasaḥ puṣyāse dhāḥ / kṛṇōṣi yác chāvasā bhūri paśvó / váyo vṛkāyārāye jásuraye* // 6.13.5.

the pleasure (of gods) for his holy word
 in the winning of *vāja*, lofty wealth,
 (with him) let the generous ones
 the *ari*'s wrath to vanquish wish.
 (For them) to dwell (secure) they have made
 a wide well-founded (site).³⁸³

And this a statement from Vasiṣṭha, the architect of Bharata victory in the Ten Kings' War, the hero of which he explicitly mentions in stz. 9 of the same song.

(4)

It is of course not our view that the *ari*'s occasional association with Dasyus etc. amounts to a total repudiation of the old religious tradition which for want of a better term we would designate the tradition of the *yajña*. Our evidence only indicates that the *ari* was generally less enthusiastic for Indra, not that he was an out and out rejector of Vedism. If the *ari* needed the Dasyus for some purposes in which they were considerably more adept than the heroic but still predominantly 'barbarian' Aryans, it is reasonable to surmise that he would have had to accommodate himself to the Dasyus' own ritual practices associated with those purposes. In our view the *ari*'s occasional friendly relations with the Dasyus explain both his lesser enthusiasm for the cult of the Aryan god of war as well as the considerably more frequent opposition of the protagonists of that cult to him.

However, we must note that that opposition to the *ari* has another dimension. He is one from whom something is to be won and is therefore depicted in the role of a 'defendant' in contests. And just as the competing *sūris* operate with cult support, so does the defending *ari*, who depends on the services sometimes of a Dasyu, but by no means always so. For clearly the *ari* is represented as being ritually strengthened in various ways: by *yātu* magic (4.4 and 7.21 discussed above), and also by priests of an undefined type. Such e.g. is the case at 8.1.4:

The *vipaścits*' conjuring-word / and those of the *ari*'s men /
 compete, O generous one! ... //³⁸⁴

The *vipaścīt* of course is here the *sūri*'s supporter, while the *ari*'s supporters are simply

³⁸³ *yó bráhmanaṃ sumatīm āyājāte / vājasya sātaú paramásya rāyāḥ / śikṣanta manyúṃ maghāvāno aryá / urú kṣáyāya cakrīre sudhātu // 7.60.11.*

³⁸⁴ *ví tartūryante maghavan vipaścīto / aryó vípo jánānām / 8.1.4ab.*

called his men. But at times it looks as if the *ari*'s priests too were *vipaścits*, as one can see from 8.65.9:

All the *vipaścits* of the *ari* / overlook, and swiftly come! /
To us give lofty fame! //³⁸⁵

It would appear that this request calls on Indra to 'overlook' all other *vipaścits*, including the *ari*'s, although the text is not quite explicit on that point here. In any case, why *overlook*?

(5)

This brings us to a very interesting aspect of the events which were the background for these statements. Let us go into the evidence itself.

Subdue with song / the *ari*'s song, O *vipras*! / And do retain,
O Singer, / Indra at (our) libation // (10.42.1)³⁸⁶

So the success of "our song" ensures that Indra is 'retained' on our side, that none will win but us. It is pertinent to reflect on the particular significance of the notion of 'retaining Indra' that we see in such a context.

There are several statements in the RV which indicate that the occasion they refer to was one of competition — with many priests and many *yajamānas* participating. This is particularly significant, because it shows that we have here to visualize a scene of competing *sūris* rather than of several priests competing for one patron's favour. This is very clearly brought out in RV 2.18, where stanza 3, after referring to the singer's act of magically causing the car of Indra to be harnessed that he may visit the ritual scene, goes on to make the following statement: "May not the other *yajamānas* halt you (attract you to their rites) — for there are many *vipras* here!"³⁸⁷

After thus signifying that the atmosphere is one of many priests and many patrons, the hymn alludes to the fact that Indra has been (on that occasion) invoked competitively at many a place. That these many places are close to each other (forming a complex of competitive rites all seeking the attention of Indra) is what appears to us to be the meaning of *here* (: *atra*) in stanza 3 of the hymn.

³⁸⁵ *viśvān aryó vipaścító / 'ti khyas túyam á gahi / asmé dhehi śrávo brhát // 8.65.9.*

³⁸⁶ *vācā viprās tarata vācam aryó / ní rāmaya jaritaḥ sóma indram 10.42.1ab.*

³⁸⁷ *mó śu tvām átra bahávo hí viprā / ní rīraman yajamānāso anyé // 2.18.3cd.*

With this clear delineation of the situation in mind, we may consider other such references as the following:

3.35.5: May not the other *yajamānas* hold up your bay horses!³⁸⁸

1.131.2: In all the Soma pressings, they of impetuous spirit urge you singly and urge you in common, each for himself, hoping to win the sun.³⁸⁹

5.75.2: Come, O Aśvins, passing all (other libations) (so that) I may win!³⁹⁰

7.69.6: Come to our libations today. They invoke you two at many a place. May not the other devotees of gods hold you up, O Aśvins!³⁹¹

8.5.16: Competitively do singers invoke you two at many a place!³⁹²

10.160.1: May not the other *yajamānas* halt you, O Indra; for you are these (Soma draughts) pressed out.³⁹³

Further light on the role of priests in these ceremonial occasions is thrown by the hymn RV 6.45 in which the expression *hitam dhanam* (“the prize that is set” i.e. offered as stakes) occurs 5 times.³⁹⁴ The statement “with your aid, spur on our car!” (stz. 14)³⁹⁵ suggests that chariot racing formed one of the features of the event, as also does stanza 12: “With songs and with fast steeds we shall win the (other) horses swift, and winnings that (to us) bring fame, and with you, O Indra, the prize that is set”.³⁹⁶ In stanzas 28-29 occurs the important phrase “the competition of eulogists”: “These songs reach you at every (Soma) pressing ... in the competition of eulogists who by trophies seek the gain of quickening wealth”.³⁹⁷

³⁸⁸ *mā te hārī ... nī rīraman yajamānāso anyé / 3.35.5ab.*

³⁸⁹ *viśveṣu hí tvā sāvaneṣu tuñjáte / samānām ékaṃ vṛṣamanyavaḥ pṛthak / svāḥ sanīṣyávaḥ pṛthak / 1.131.2abc.*

³⁹⁰ *atyáyātam aśvinā tiró viśvā abāṃ sánā / 5.75.2ab.*

³⁹¹ *asmākam adyā sávanópa yātam / purutrā hí vām matibhir hávante / mā vām anyé nī yaman devayántaḥ // 7.69.6bcd.*

³⁹² *purutrā cid dbí vām narā / vibváyante manīṣīṇaḥ / 8.5.16ab.*

³⁹³ *indra mā tvā yajamānāso anyé / nī rīraman túbhyam imé sutásāḥ // 10.160.1cd.*

³⁹⁴ 6.45.2c, 11b, 12c, 13b, 15c.

³⁹⁵ *ta útír ... / táyā no hinubī rátham // 6.45.14.*

³⁹⁶ *dhībhir árvadbhir árvato / vājām indra śraváyyān / tváyā jeṣma hitam dhanam // 6.45.12.*

³⁹⁷ *imā u tvā suté-sute náksante ... girāḥ / ... // stotṛñāṃ vivāci / vājebhir vājayatām // 6.45.28-29.*

The word for competition here, *vivāc-* clearly suggests ‘speaking from many sides’, a competition where many invoke the gods to their own rites.

Essentially similar to *vivāc* of this context are the words *vihava* (calling from many sides) in 3.8.10 and *ṛṣiṇām śrava eṣa* (the fame-seeking of the *ṛṣis*) in 5.66.5. And in each of these instances too, we have other indications that it was not just a priestly competition but a twofold activity — of princes as well as of priests.

The significant phrases of each of these hymns (6.45, 3.8 and 5.66) can be tabulated as follows:

	PRIESTLY ACTIVITY	PRINCELY ACTIVITY
6.45	Competition of eulogists	“with steeds... let us win the prize that is set”.
3.8	Competitive invocation with other priests	Martial contests ³⁹⁸
5.66	<i>ṛṣis</i> ’ seeking of fame	The speeding of cars ³⁹⁹

This twofold activity is well summed up at 8.19.10:

For whose ritual you rise high (O Agni), / he gains success, commanding men. / With fast steeds is he the winner, / with singers (skilled in song). / The prize he wins with heroic men.//⁴⁰⁰

The basis of the competition of priests must naturally have been the fact that, as in war,⁴⁰¹ so in these ritualized contests too the princes were supported by their respective priests. To the latter it would be a case of which one among them would succeed in winning over the gods. “With whose devotions are you pleased?”, asks 5.74.3⁴⁰² and the hymn goes on to say: “Who among many mortal men this day has won gain to himself,

³⁹⁸ Cf *vāghādbbir ... vibavé ... and pṛtanājyeṣu* 3.8.10c,d

³⁹⁹ Cf. *śravaeṣā ṛṣiṇām* 5.66.5b and *eṣe rāthānām* 5.66.3a.

⁴⁰⁰ *yāsya tvām ūrdhvō adhvārāya tīṣṭhasi / kṣayādvīraḥ sā sād̥bate /sō ārvadbhiḥ sānitā sā vipanyúbhiḥ / sā śūraiḥ sānitā kṛtām //* 8.19.10.

⁴⁰¹ On the role of magical rites in war, cf. AV 8.8. in its ritualistic setting: see Lanman’s notes added to Whitney Atharva Veda, 8.8.

⁴⁰² *kāsya brāhmāṇi ran̥yathah* 5.74.3.

what bard ... with sacrifice?”⁴⁰³

According to the Vedic view, there is hardly any distinction between the objectives of wars and contests and those of the cult as expressed in the ritual. Thus at 7.19.4 the occasion in which Indra kills a multitude of foes is called the *devavīti*, normally a term for the sacrifice.⁴⁰⁴ It would seem that from one point of view, ritual was a continuation of Indra’s celestial war. The two constitute two aspects of the mighty activity of gaining *vāja* (*vājasāti*). There can be no question of separating this activity from the ritual. Says 4.20.2:

The exuberant one, generous wielder of the bolt,
shall stand, favouring, beside this sacrifice,
(this rite) of ours, where *vāja* we gain.⁴⁰⁵

But the winning of *vāja* was not only through war. It was also eminently attainable through other similar contests linked to the sacrifice. One may here refer to the many Ṛgvedic references to (race-) cars and swift horses as seekers of *vāja* etc. and to men who invoke Indra, god of martial triumph, in war *as well as in peace*. Thus, for example,

Men seeking *vāja* call on Indra, both they that dwell in peace and they that fight.
(4.25.8)⁴⁰⁶

These martial contests for gaining *vāja* must have had an enormous cultural significance to the Aryans of Vedic India. They would have provided the motive for the younger men to master the ‘arts of war’ and for the priests the skills of word and ritual act. They also appear to be the forerunners of the famous learned disputes of the Brahmanas of later times.

(6)

We discussed above the Ṛgvedic allusions that seem to depict the *ari* as ritually allied, in some situations, with Dasyu and *yātu* cults.

⁴⁰³ *kó vām adyá purūṅām / á vavne mártyanām / kó vípro ... yajñátr ...* 5.74.7.

⁴⁰⁴ See n. 238 above.

⁴⁰⁵ *tīṣṭhāti vajrī maghāvā virapśī / ’mām yajñám ānu no vājasātau* 4.20.2cd.

⁴⁰⁶ *índram kṣiyánta utá yúdhyanānā / índram náro vājayánto havante //* 4.25.8cd. On this see the author’s article, “Yoga and Kṣema, The Significance of their Usage in the Ṛgveda”, Vidyodaya Journal of Arts, Science and Letters, 1/2 (July 1968), pp. 185 ff.

The *sūris* of course are never represented as tainted with the guilt of such associations. As we found above, they are depicted in the image of the god Indra.

One of the extreme positions of Vedic Indraism was its anti-asuric posture. It would be interesting, in view of this, to find out the evidence, if any, of the *ari* references in regard to asurism.

One of the surest cases of an *ari* that is associable with asurism is found in RV 1.126. The identification is easy because the gift that is won by the priest, Kakṣīvant, is described in one of the stanzas of this hymn as “cows that nourished the *ari*”⁴⁰⁷ (1.126.5). Gifts obtained by Kakṣīvant are also mentioned in stanza 2 and are there described as “the cattle that belonged to the *asura*”.⁴⁰⁸ Clearly, *ari* and *asura* here refer to the original possessor of what was donated.

Two other princes in the RV are referred to by the word *asura*. These are Rāma, mentioned at 10.93.14⁴⁰⁹ and Tryaruṇa, the Pūru prince who is alluded to in RV 5.27.⁴¹⁰ Interestingly enough, both of them are linked (as associates and / or relations) with others who are, elsewhere in the RV, indicated by the designation *ari*. We are here referring to Pṛthi Venya of RV 10.148.3 and Trasadasyu of 4.38.2. We have briefly discussed these allusions at the end of chapter II above.

It would then seem that where the word *asura* is applied to human potentates in the RV, these men can clearly be associated with the designation *ari* as well. And what is of further interest is the fact that in 2 of these instances, we have some evidence of the *ṛṣis*' unfavourable disposition to their forbears. This evidence too was discussed in chapter II above.

Incidentally, a matter that cannot be overlooked in view of this *ari* - *asura* association in the RV, is the explicit reference to the Pūrus as *asura-rakṣas* in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.⁴¹¹

The fact that Svanaya and Tryaruṇa (and also Trasadasyu) are not themselves depicted as opposed to the Vedism of the *ṛṣis* does not affect that to which we are calling

⁴⁰⁷ *aridhāyaso gāḥ* 1.126.5b.

⁴⁰⁸ *ásurasya gónām* 1.126.2c.

⁴⁰⁹ *prá rāmé vocam ásure* 10.93.14b.

⁴¹⁰ See n. 108 above.

⁴¹¹ Śatapatha Br. 6.8.1.14.

attention at this point, namely, that in each of the instances mentioned, which also happen to be the only ones of their kind in the RV, it is an *ari* that has been also called an *asura*. The other evidence in regard to these individual princes, found in the references under consideration, seems to us to reflect certain developments in Vedic society which are also explicatory of the other aspect of the *ari* problem to which we must now turn our attention.

VIII. The ‘Functional’ Aspect of the *ari* - *sūri* Distinction

(1)

It was the position adopted by us throughout that the hero of the Vedic *ṛsis* is the one whom they call the *sūri*. The *sūri* is not only the valiant prince; the usage also seems to imply that the heroes favoured the Vedic priests by accepting the guidance that the priests offered.⁴¹² (It is possible that there is a solitary exception in 1.176.4; but, if that is so, it is certainly an exception that proves the rule).⁴¹³

Often the *sūri* contends against an owner of wealth, of cattle, in order to win riches and fame. And often the RV calls such an owner of cows and wealth an *ari*. Although the *ari* is frequently regarded with disfavour for reasons that are tribal-political and cultural, it would be misleading to think that in every context *ari* means a tribal opponent. In many instances the distinction seems to be functional in that a rich cattle-owning chief would most likely be the one whose wealth became an attraction to fame seeking heroes of every type.

Even this appears to us to be only a part of the explanation. The evidence appears to indicate that often the contests were merely part of the tribal life. The cattle owning chief in other words is often an institutor of contests at which *sūris* may compete and, by sheer show of strength, obtain the prizes set. The *ari* and the *sūris* need not for that reason be regarded as implacable foes. It may well be that in some instances the *sūris* were close relations of the *ari* himself, competing for the prizes in the context of a

⁴¹² Cf. 6.25.7; 4.50.7-9; Also see Ch.V (1) above.

⁴¹³ *ásunvantaṃ samaṃ jahi / dūñāśaṃ yó ná te máyaḥ / asmábhyam asya védanaṃ / daddbī sūrís cid obate //* 1.176.4. Geldner translates: “Jeden der nicht Soma auspreßt, erschlage, den unzugänglichen, der nicht deine Freude ist! Gib uns sein Besitztum! Er rühmt sich sogar ein nobler Herr zu sein” and notes thereunder: “Ironisch gesagt”.

customary tribal institution.

If the *ari* often seems to be cast in this role (of rich man whose wealth was the object of contests), essentially it may prove nothing more than that he is very much a part of the early Aryan tribal life. That is to say, it means neither (i) that every institutor of such contests and events should be called an *ari*, if he was not for other reasons so-called (and of this we cannot be 100% sure), nor (ii) that in every case the *ari* is portrayed as a cultural opponent. The cultural distinction, which in fact we took much pains to emphasize, is independent of the functional distinction. As a tribal chief the *ari* appears as the institutor of festivals and competitive contests and there faces one kind of 'opposition'; he faces another kind of opposition as a chief who (on occasion?) was lukewarm in his adherence to a militant or violent aspect of the *yajña* religious system.

In any attempt to elucidate the meaning of Ṛgvedic *ari*, one would have to offer a cogent explanation of the varied allusions to winning wealth from the *ari*. Part of that explanation, in our attempt to clarify the meaning of the word, is that the *ari's* power was sought to be crushed on grounds that were clearly cultural and tribal-political. The other part is that he was cast in the role of a defender of wealth — as probably any tribal chief would be — in the position of one who instituted contests where others sought to win, by a show of strength, the prize he staked ("the wealth that is set").

It is not always easy to gain a clear idea of the nature of the early Vedic tribal contests and of the ritualistic atmosphere which they seem invariably to be shrouded in. Fortunately however a glimpse into some aspects of these festivals (of which the contests seem to have formed a part) can be obtained through the *dānastutis* which appear (usually) at the end of some Ṛgvedic hymns.

While in some *dānastutis* we have reference made to the *ari*, in others this is not the case. Indeed, it need not be the case, as pointed out above.

Broadly speaking the *dānastutis* are of two kinds: those that refer to rewards won by *purohita* priests for services rendered in war and foray, and those that speak of rewards received at the end of competitive ritualistic ceremonies or festivals.

We have the first kind of *dānastutis* in RV 6.27, 6.47 and 7.18.

The other variety of *dānastutis* is far more complex in nature, particularly where they mention several donors in the same hymn. (There is of course a simpler type such as e.g. 1.126 which refers to Svanaya Bhāvya's gifts to the singer Kakṣivant).

(2)

As an example of the more complex *dānastutis* we may take RV 5.27. This hymn deals with the gifts received by a priest from king Tryaruṇa of the Pūru tribe, and from another prince, Aśvamedha. It is the latter whom the singer calls “my *sūri*”; he is thus the actual patron of the author of the hymn, and this is further proved by the fact that it is for him that the benediction at the end of the hymn is sung.

The contents of the hymn, verse by verse, are as follows:

- (1) Tryaruṇa has distinguished himself by means of tens of thousands of (gifts). He, the *asura*, has presented the singer a pair of oxen with wagon(s).
- (2) Agni should grant protection to Tryaruṇa who rewards the singer with 120 oxen and 2 bay horses.
- (3) (Tryaruṇa, descendant of) Trasadasyu, with a pair of yoked horses, expresses his approval of the singer’s many songs, showing his desire for Agni’s favour for the 9th time for the newest (song).
- (4) Tryaruṇa will say to the singer’s patron Aśvamedha that he should give the treasure (won) to him who “goes to the win” by means of his song, to the man who follows the *ṛta* (i.e. the singer).
- (5) (Tryaruṇa) whose 100 dappled bulls enrapture the singer, (coming as) the gifts of Aśvamedha.
- (6) May Indra and Agni maintain royal power in Aśvamedha, giver of a 100 (bulls).⁴¹⁴

This brings us directly to the question of the gifts that were donated to the priest. That both Tryaruṇa and Aśvamedha gave gifts is clear, but exactly how is the question.

Let us analyse the references to the gifts found in the above statements.

Stz. 1 says T. gave a pair of bulls and (wagons). (The reference to thousands may be a general statement praising T.’s customary generosity).

Stz. 2 refers to a gift of T. of 120 bulls and 2 bay horses.

⁴¹⁴ RV 5. 27 : (1) *ānasvantā ... māmabe ... āsuro ... daśābbiḥ sabāsrair ... tryaruṇaś ciketa* // (2) *yó ... śatā ca viṃśatiṃ ca gónāṃ / hārī ca yukṭā ... dādāti / agne yácha tryaruṇāya śárma* // (3) ... *te agne sumatiṃ cakāno náviṣṭhāya navamāṃ trasādasyuḥ / ... me gíras ... pūrvīr yukṭénābhī tryaruṇo grṇāti* // (4) *yó ma iti pravocaty ásvamedhāya sūrāye / dādad ṛcā sanim yaté dādan medhām ṛtāyaté* // (5) *yásya mā paruṣāḥ śatām uddharṣāyanty ukṣāṇaḥ / ásvamedhasya dānāḥ ...* // (6) *indrāgnī śatadāvny ásvamedhe ... / kṣatrām dbārayatam ...*

Stz. 3 repeats that T. showed his pleasure with the gift of a pair (of bulls).

Stz. 5 refers to a gift of a 100 bulls as Aśvamedha's gifts.

Stz. 6 again calls A. a "giver of a 100".

If we now study the contents of the hymn as summarized above it would appear that stz. 2 refers to two gifts and stanzas 3 and 5 repeat the reference separately for each gift; but in stz. 5 the poet speaks of the first gift in the round number 100 rather than in the numerically accurate 120.⁴¹⁵

But what specific reason induces one to think that the reference to 100 in stz. 5 is the same as the reference to 120 in stz. 2? Essentially it is the presence of the relative pronoun *yasya* (genetive case) at the beginning of stz. 5, which connects the gift with Tryaruṇa mentioned in the previous verses. In this way it appears that the gift of the 100 is associated with both Tryaruṇa and Aśvamedha.

Thus interpreted, all the gifts mentioned in 5.27 are those ultimately issuing from the possessions of Tryaruṇa. What then was the role of Aśvamedha?

We may here think of the *dānastuti* in 6.47. Here the gifts of the *sūris* (i.e. Divōdasa and others) are described as *śāmbaram vasu* or Śambara's wealth, i.e. what was originally Śambara's.⁴¹⁶ It seems to us that in exactly the same way the gift that Aśvamedha gives to his priest is here described as (what was originally) Tryaruṇa's: which means that Aśvamedha won these in a contest as prizes offered by Tryaruṇa. Such an assumption seems to us to make sense of

(i) Aśvamedha alone being called "my *sūri*", and shown the favour of the final benediction, and

(ii) The exhortation (to Aśvamedha) "let him give" which Tryaruṇa is shown here as proclaiming.⁴¹⁷

Furthermore, such an assumption also (iii) guarantees the unity of the hymn

⁴¹⁵ Cf. RV 8.6 where stz. 46 refers to the gifts as 100 and 1000; stz. 47 refers to them again as 300 and 10000. See n. 441.

⁴¹⁶ *divodāsād atithigvāsya rādbah / śāmbaram vasu prāty agrabhīṣma* 6.47.22cd.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Geldner's translation of 5.27.4: "Der meinem Lohnherrn Aśvamedha also sagen möge, er solle dem, der mit Versen auf Verdienst ausgeht, schenken; er solle dem, der die Dichtergabe richtig gebraucht, schenken."

(which by other interpretations it would seem to lack).

And what then of the priest's role in this event? That is explained by stz. 4: he is the one who "reaches victory by means of the ritual song". In other words, he gave the ritual support to the contesting prince, like *purohiti* service to a war-chief.

We feel it safe to assume that *Aśvamedha* wins a gift of a hundred and donates it to his priest on account of such clear descriptions of the *sūri's vrata* as the following: the royal victor, true to his *vrata*, "takes the booty in order to donate (it)" (1.180.6)⁴¹⁸; "Possessors of good horses (go) forth for booty that they may give gifts" (5.65.3).⁴¹⁹

5.27 thus seems to speak of the contestant's donation of his winnings and also of the institutor's own additional gifts to the priest in appreciation of his many successful songs. Stanzas 1 and 3 seem to refer to this extra gift while stanzas 2, 4, 5 and 6 indicate *Aśvamedha's* winning of prizes offered by *Tryaruṇa* at a contest and *Tryaruṇa's* approval of the donation of these to the *sūri's* priest.

(3)

RV 5.27 does not use the word *ari*, although we know from the genealogical evidence on the *Pūrus* (of whom he was one), that he is a descendant of one who was called an *ari*. The absence of the word is immaterial to us at this point, because what we wish to gain from this hymn is an idea of the different kinds of participants in *Ṛgvedic* ritual-competitive ceremonies, and most centrally of the winning of wealth from the institutor and donating it to one's priest. When we add the information that this hymn seems to provide us with to what we have already learned from such hymns as 7.21 and 5.42, it appears that we may visualize a ritual competitive event in which four kinds of participants probably had a part to play:

A	B
1 Institutor	3 Competing princes
2 His ritual supporters	4 Their ritual supporters

⁴¹⁸ 1.180.6: See n. 278 above.

⁴¹⁹ *svāśvāsah ... vājāṃ abhi prā dāvāne* 5.65.3cd, which Geldner translates: "Die Besitzer guter Rosse (gehen) ... auf Siegeswinne aus, um sie zu verschenken" adding the note: "Die Besitzer der guten Rosse sind die Opferherren. Sie mögen durch ihre Rosse Beute oder Siegespreise gewinnen und damit die Sänger honorieren".

And it appears that in many instances it is the institutor that is called the *ari*, but never any of the contestants.

It seems to us that all four parties are mentioned in the long *dānastuti* hymn 1.122. Geldner says that the actual background of the *dānastuti* is unfortunately not easy to visualize. This is indeed the case unless we are able to visualize the alignment of the persons involved. Geldner's translation of the hymn is generally reliable, except where he has made a confusion as to this alignment. And it seems to be the case that the rendering of the hymn makes much better sense when changes are made in consideration of this alignment.

We take it that the institutor of the ritual ceremony in this hymn is the one who is referred to as *Nahuṣ* in stanzas 8, 10, and 11 and as *ari* in stanza 14. In each instance the reference to him is in the fifth case. Thus,

we shall win (wealth) from *Nahuṣ* (8);⁴²⁰

(the *sūri* is) stronger than *Nahuṣ* (10);⁴²¹

(*Ādityas*), come to the *sūri*'s call from *Nahuṣ* (11);⁴²²

(Goddesses of Dawn), come to (our) chants from the *ari* (14).⁴²³

The institutor's priest, who by the nature of the event appears as the rival of the singers, seems to be the one who is described in stanza 9 as "the treacherous man... who prepares Soma (as thin) as water" and who is also contrasted with the 'truthful' practitioner "who has success with his offerings".⁴²⁴

As for the *sūris*, they are mentioned several times and in the following way, beginning with several references in the singular:

Stz. 8: this great giver; the person who is a donor to the *Pajras*; the *sūri* (who will give) me

⁴²⁰ *sanema náhuṣaḥ* 1.122.8b.

⁴²¹ *náhuṣaḥ śárdhastaraḥ* 1.122.10ab.

⁴²² *gmántā náhuṣo hávaṃ sūrēḥ* 1.122.11a.

⁴²³ 1.122.14 : See n. 295 above.

⁴²⁴ *jánaḥ ... abhidhrúg apó ná ... sunóti* (1.122.9 ab), in contrast to *ápa yád im hótrābhír ṛtāvā* (9d). Geldner renders these as follows: "Der unredliche Mann, der hinterlistig den Soma wie Wasser bereitet", "... während der rechttuende mit seinen Opfern Erfolg hat".

(gifts) rich in horses and cars.⁴²⁵

Stz 10: stronger than the strong Nahuṣ; (ritually) strengthened by (the cult's) miraculous power. His fame is sung among men. Strong of movement, he goes, a man liberal with gifts, in every contest ever the hero.⁴²⁶

(This patron is not mentioned by name.)

Stz 11: Nabhoju Nirava, (whose) gift is (given) with magnanimity for glory's sake, to (the priest), the owner of the car.⁴²⁷

The *sūri* however is not alone. Four others make up his 'troop' (*śardha*) and they are next mentioned, along with the *sūri* himself.

Stz 12 (ab): (Here is he), the hero whose troop we shall form.

(cd): (The princes), among whom may splendour and munificence remain!⁴²⁸ In contests may they all win the prize!

Stz. 13: Will Iṣṭāśva, Iṣṭaraśmi, (and) these victorious lords shower distinction upon (their) men?⁴²⁹

Stz. 15: Maśārśāra and Āyavasa, the triumphant prince⁴³⁰.

The priests are throughout referred to as speakers in this hymn and the consistent use of the first person when giving their words is an aid to the proper rendering of the verses. The priests and the *sūris* are together referred to in the 14th stanza in the traditional way: "(May the dawns rejoice) in both (these groups of men) that are ours!"⁴³¹

⁴²⁵ *asyā ... māhimaghāsya (rādhah); ... yāḥ pajrēbhyo vājīnīvān āsvāvato rathīno māhyaṃ sūrīḥ* 1.122.8.

⁴²⁶ *sā vrādhato nāhuṣo dāmsujūtaḥ / śārdhastaro narāṃ gūrtāśravāḥ / viṣṭarātir yāti bālhasṭvā / viśvāsu pṛtsū sādām ic chūrah* // 1.122.10.

⁴²⁷ *nabhojuvo yān niravāsya rādhah / prāśastaye mabinā rāthavate* // 1.122.11cd.

⁴²⁸ *etāṃ śārdham dhāma yāsya sūrēḥ* (12ab); *dymnāni yēsu vasūtātī rārān / viśve sanvantu prabhṛtheṣu vājam* // (12cd). Geldner's translation is as follows: "Ein Patron, dessen bekannte (Marut)schar wir bilden wollen" and "bei denen Glanz und Freigebigkeit gem weilen möge, sie alle sollen bei den Untemehmungen Gewinn davontragen". We differ with him in dropping the "(Marut-)" element, i.e., rejecting the image of Indra and the Marut troop in ab, and in rendering *prabhṛtha* in d as contest (comparable with *bhara*).

⁴²⁹ *kim iṣṭāśva iṣṭaraśmir etā / iśānāsas tāruṣa ṛñjate nṛṇ* // 1.122.13cd.

⁴³⁰ *maśārśārasya ... rājña āyavasasya jiṣṇoh* / 1.122.15ab (Genitive case to refer to their gifts).

⁴³¹ *(usrās cākantu) ubhāyeṣv asmé* 1.122.14d.

(4)

We said above that in some instances the *sūris* may be close relations of the *ari* himself. It appears that this was exactly the case in the situation depicted in RV 5.33, which again is a *dānastuti* hymn.

In 5.33 the word *ari* occurs (or, the words *ari* / *arya* occur) three times. A hymn of this kind should be a good testing ground of any hypothesis which seeks to explain the meaning of R̥gvedic *ari*.

Like in other hymns where the “competitive ritual ceremony” is the background, here too the four types of persons are referred to: *ari*, his priests; *sūris* and their priests. But, and this is the interesting point, the (chief) *sūri* is one who elsewhere has been called an *ari* i.e., *Trasadasyu* (who in 4.38 is referred to as *ari* and in 8.19 as an *arya*).⁴³² It seems likely that one among the *sūris* too is called an *arya* in this hymn (as *Trasadasyu* is at 8.19.36)....

What could *arya* mean as distinct from *ari*? Obviously, *arya* as a derivative from *ari* must mean “pertaining to an *ari*” or, “descended from an *ari*” e.g. a son of an *ari*.

Now let us examine the different allusions in 5.33.

The *ari* and his priests:

Stz. 2 Advance, subdue the *ari*'s men⁴³³.

Stz. 6: I will praise the gift of the (*sūri* who is) liberal, above the *ari*.⁴³⁴

The competing princes
and their priests:

Stz. 5: We (priests) and these heroic men who have formed into your host, O Indra⁴³⁵

Stz. 6: See above.

Stz. 7: Eulogizing minstrels... and they who even give the skin
...⁴³⁶

⁴³² RV 4.38.2d and 8.19.36c.

⁴³³ See n. 91 above (: 5.33.2).

⁴³⁴ See n. 92 above (: 5.33.6).

⁴³⁵ See n. 90 above (: 5.33.5ab).

⁴³⁶ *gr̥ṇatāḥ* ... *kārīn* / ... *utā tvācam dādātāḥ* 5.33.7bc (*skin* a reference to “das bei der Somabereitung verwendete Fell” — Geldner).

Stz. 8: (The gifts of) Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa Girikṣit,
the *sūri* ...⁴³⁷

Stz. 9: (The gifts of) Marutāśva Vidatha... Cyavatāna, the
arya ...⁴³⁸

Stz. 10: Gifts of Dhvanya Lakṣmanya... Saṃvaraṇa, the *ṛṣi*
...⁴³⁹

It seems to us that what this hymn refers to is a tribal event during the youth of Trasadasyu, when he, while not yet in control of the Pūrus' tribal destinies, appears at the ritual festival of a related tribe to win treasures from the *ari* along with other similar princes whose names are mentioned in the hymn.

(5)

“Princes appearing at an *ari*'s contest”... This would seem to be taking a lot of things for granted. What evidence is there to support such an assumption?

First of all we have the evidence of 4.20.3:

“Through you, O Wielder of the *vajra*, would we, like a successful gambler, the *ari*'s contest win, for gain of wealth.”⁴⁴⁰

The word for contest here is *āji*, which in itself could mean a battle or a war. But that sense is hardly applicable here. What sense would it make to take *āji* as war here, with the word *ari* in the genitive case? The foe's war? That would be an unusual way to refer to a war, even for the RV Saṃhitā. On the other hand the usage reminds us of “the *āji* of Yama” (1.116.2), of Khela (1.126.15) and of Vivasvat (9.66.8)⁴⁴¹ — in all of which a contest, a competition, a festival with stakes offered for contenders to win by a show of valour or strength would be what is meant by *āji*.

It is obviously in the same way that the *ari*'s *āji* is referred to at 4.20.3 and possibly also at 4.24.8 (see above, Ch. VI).

⁴³⁷ *paurukutsyāsya sūrés trasádasyoh ... gairikṣitāsya* 5.33.8.

⁴³⁸ *mārutāśvasya ... vidāthasya (rātau); cyavatānah ... aryāh ...* 5.33.9 (see also n. 93 above).

⁴³⁹ *dhvanyāsya ... lakṣmaṇyāsya ... ; saṃváraṇasya ṛṣeḥ* 5.33.10.

⁴⁴⁰ See n. 371 above (: 4.20.3).

⁴⁴¹ In each of these contexts Geldner uses *Wettkampf* to translate *āji*. RV 1.176.5 has *ávo yāsya dvivárbaṣṭh ... ājāv índrasyendo* which Geldner translates: “Du Saft halfst im Kampfe dem doppelstarken Indra ...”

Next, what evidence is there to assume that the contestants were guests, or at least that some of them were guests?

The coming of guest princes with their priests to ritual feasts is referred to at several places in the RV, e.g. in 8.19 and 8.74 both of which contain *dānastutis*.

At 8.19.32 the Sobhari priests proclaim their position as guests in the following words: "To him have we come ... to (Agni), Trasadasyu's imperial prince.⁴⁴²" Trasadasyu, associated with *ari* at 4.38.2, is here called "the most generous *arya*, the lord of the (ritual) house. His gift is 500 maidens",⁴⁴³ while the actual patrons of the singer, who seem to be alluded to in stanza 37 as Prayiyu and Vayiyu present him "thrice seventy cows" with a "dusky horse" at their head.⁴⁴⁴ The hymn makes reference to fast horses, and winning of great wealth through ritual song and devotion to gods. The whole atmosphere in it bespeaks a great Soma festival.

At 8.74.4 the priest says: "To the Anus' ritual fire we have come, before whose face Śrutarvan, son of R̥kṣa, gains prosperity".⁴⁴⁵ The priests' *sūri* however is mentioned in the concluding *dānastuti* verses. He is Śaviṣṭha whose fast steeds carry the singer (home) in a beautiful car. "A greater giver of horses than Śaviṣṭha there is none."⁴⁴⁶

In the *dānastuti* hymn 8.6, stanzas 46 and 47 allude to the reward of a hundred (horses) from Tirindira (which stz. 47 steps up to 300) and 1000 (cows) from Parśu (which stz. 47 steps up to 10 thousand).⁴⁴⁷ These are styled "the Yādva gifts".⁴⁴⁸ However, merely because of this we may not conclude that Tirindira and Parśu were Yadu princes. On the other hand, the concluding stanza definitely refers to the Yadu chief who instituted the festival. "Up unto the skies did the *chief* exalt with renown the Yādva folk, giving 4

⁴⁴² *tām āganma sōbharayaḥ ... samrājāṃ trāsadasyavam* 8.19.32.

⁴⁴³ *ādān me paurukutsyaḥ pañcāsātaṃ trasādasyur vadbūnām / māṃbhiṣṭho aryaḥ sātpatiḥ //* 8.19.36. See also n. 94 above.

⁴⁴⁴ *utā me prayīyor vayīyoḥ ... tisṛṇāṃ saptatīnām / śyāvāḥ pranetā bhuvad ...* 8.19.37.

⁴⁴⁵ *āganma ... agnīm ānavam / yāsya śrutārvā bṛhānā / ārkṣo ānika ēdbate //* 8.74.4.

⁴⁴⁶ *nēm ... aśvadātaraḥ śaviṣṭhād asti* 8.74.15cd. In the previous stanza Śaviṣṭha's gift is referred to as follows: *māṃ catvāra āśavaḥ / śaviṣṭhasya dravitnavaḥ / surāthāso abhī prāyo / vākṣan vāyo nā tūgryam //*

⁴⁴⁷ *trīṇi sātāny ārvatām / sabāsrā dāśa gōnām / dadūḥ ...* 8.6.47.

⁴⁴⁸ *sātām abāṃ tirindire / sabāsrām pārśāv ā dade / rādḥāṃsi yādvānām //* 8.6.46.

pairs of camels (as gifts to the priests)”⁴⁴⁹ — bringing out a situation very similar to that depicted in 5.27, 5.33 and 8.19 discussed above, in all of which the singer is rewarded by both the institutor and his own *sūris*. And obviously the *chief* here, like the *satpati* of 5.27 and 8.19 and the *ari* of 5.33 and 1.122 must be the institutor of the festival.

The picture of the gathering of generous princes or *bhojas*, where one comes ‘invited’ while another comes ‘uninvited’ is found in RV 10.107 as well.⁴⁵⁰ The invited one is welcome and, when a generous giver, he is one who “gains eminence”.⁴⁵¹

(6)

But perhaps more than any of the above, there is a special class of *ari* references which seems to us to indicate that the *ari* was the chief of competitive ritual ceremonies at which the *sūris* strove to gain riches, attracting the gods away from the rites of the *ari*.

Already we have discussed one type of statement in the RV Saṃhitā which urges the gods not to be attracted by other (and competing) sacrificers. “May not the other *yajamānas* halt you — for there are many *vipras* here!” says the song at 2.18.3.⁴⁵²

But apart from all the *yajamānas* or *sūris* is the *ari*.

We saw how 8.1.4 refers to the competing conjurations of the *ari*’s men and of the brahmanical priests and how in 1.122 the gods are invited to come away from the *ari*’s to the ritual of the singer. Likewise 8.34.10 asks Indra to “come away from the *ari*, to drink of the Soma sap (with us).”⁴⁵³

With such references we may compare 4.48.1 which says, according to Geldner’s rendering: “Have longing for the sacrificial gifts; (may) the riches, like the hymns, of the rival be unlonged for!” but which may perhaps give a better sense if rendered as follows:

Have desire for the sacrificial gifts. The conjurations, not the treasures, of the *ari* be undesired!⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁹ *úd ānaṭ kakubó dívam / úṣṭrāñ caturyújo dádat / śrávasā yádvam jānam //* 8.6.48.

⁴⁵⁰ *dákṣiṇāvān prathamó hūṭá eti* 10.107.5a; *bhojá ... yé áhūṭāḥ prayánti* 9d.

⁴⁵¹ *ágram eti* 10.107.5b.

⁴⁵² See above n. 381 (: 2.18.3).

⁴⁵³ *á yāby aryá á pári ... sómasya pītáye* 8.34.10. For 8.1.4 see n. 378 above ; for 1.122.14 see nn. 417, 425.

⁴⁵⁴ *vihí hótrā ávītā / vípo ná ráyo aryáh /* 4.48.1.

Such stanzas then refer to the ritual of the *ari* as distinct from that of the *sūris*. And the gods are implored to ignore the *ari*'s ritual — suggesting that the *sūris* compete with the *ari*, that both the *ari* and the *sūris* seek divine help and that it is the singer's wish that the *ari* be denied this aid. The cultural distinction which we discussed above comes to the surface when it is stated or implied that the *ari*'s ritual is unworthy, his devotion is deficient and/or his priests' services are substandard. But this distinction is not always made, which in itself is a significant thing.

As corroborative of the above assumptions we consider the references to the *ari*'s libations etc., which the gods are requested to bypass, in order to come to the ritual of the singer and his side. These references are RV 3.43.2, 4.29.1, 7.68.2, 8.66.12 and 8.33.14.

Come hither, past many peoples, (past) the prayers of the *ari*, to us on your two bay horses — for these thoughts forged into lauds call you, eager for your alliance, O Indra! (3.43.2)⁴⁵⁵

Come to us, O Indra, being praised, exhilarating yourself, past the many libations of the *ari*! (4.29.1)⁴⁵⁶

For you two are the exhilarating drinks set up. Come in time to partake of my sacrificial gift, across the (ritual) invocations of the *ari*! (7.68.2)⁴⁵⁷

In you are many longings (sought to be fulfilled). Your aid is invoked by many, O Indra! Come past the libations of the *ari* ..., hear my call! (8.66.12)⁴⁵⁸

May (your) bay horses carry you ... hither, past (the Soma-pressing?) of the *ari*, (and) those pressings of others, O Vṛtra-slayer! (8.33.14)⁴⁵⁹

The last stanza is particularly important. It helps us gain an idea of the persons involved in these events:

- The *ari* with his rites
- The *sūri* with his rites
- Others with their rites

⁴⁵⁵ *ā yāhi pūrvīr āti carṣaṇūr ān / aryā āśīṣa ūpa no hāribhyām / imā hi tvā matāya stómataṣṭā / indra hāvante sakhyām juṣānāḥ //* 3.43.2.

⁴⁵⁶ *ā na stutā ūpa ... / indra yāhi ... mandasānāḥ / tirás cid aryāḥ sāvanā purūni /* 4.29.1.

⁴⁵⁷ *prā vām āndhāmsi mádyāny asthur / āraṃ gantaṃ haviṣo vītāye me / tiró aryó hāvanāni ...* 7.68.2.

⁴⁵⁸ *pūrvís cid dhi tvé ... āśāso hāvanta indrotāyaḥ / tirás cid aryāḥ sāvanā ... gāhi / ... śrudhi me hāvam* 8.66.12.

⁴⁵⁹ *vāhantu tvā ... ā hārayaḥ ... / tirás cid aryāṃ sāvanāni vṛtrahann anyéṣāṃ yā ...* 8.33.14.

In the light of these verses we may understand a saying such as the following: “Subdue the *ari*’s song with song. O *vipras*! Halt Indra, O singer, at our (libation of) Soma!” (10.42.1)⁴⁶⁰

It does not seem necessary in such a statement to take “*ari*’s song” over-literally and see in it a reflection of the *ari* in a priestly role. One might, perhaps, unwittingly misjudge the meaning of *ari* in such a statement and regard that here there is a notion of a rival priest, a *Konkurrent*. This seems to be pretty much out of the question when viewed against the background of all the above statements in which the *ari* is functionally set against the *sūri*, at times with overtones of a cultural distinction, but at times not.

⁴⁶⁰ See above n. 380 (10.42.1).

IX. The *ari* as a Devotee of the Brahmanical Cult

(1)

In one of the Ṛgvedic verses which we discussed above there was this request to Indra:

All the *vipāścits* of the *ari* / overlook, and swiftly come! //⁴⁶¹

Under normal circumstances, a *vipāściti* would be an erudite Brahmanical priest. But as we had the occasion to stress again and again, it is with various kinds of lapses from the Brahmanical cult that the *ari* is frequently associated in the RV Saṃhitā.

Is there then another kind of *ari*, who is not represented in the above manner?

The evidence indeed points in this direction, thus adding to the complexity of our problem.

The three points, related to matters of cult, on which the *ari* appears to be depicted as a deviant can be summed up as follows:

- (i) He is not an enthusiast of the Soma sacrifice (and possibly also of the ritual slaughter of cattle).
- (ii) He is not a steady adherent of Indra worship.
- (iii) He is not a loyal supporter of Brahman authority and does not sufficiently respect the sanctity of giving them lavish gifts. He occasionally seeks the services of men whose fitness to function in a priestly role for an Aryan chief is debatable.

But if an *ari* employed a *vispāściti* he could hardly be so decried, at least not on the third point above.

Let us then examine such allusions as the above — what one might call the less normal kind of allusions to the *ari*.

Let us take RV I.150.1. Here a singer speaks to Agni:

“As one who offers much do I address you. The *ari*, O Agni, is in your refuge, as (in that) of a mighty warrior”.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹ See n. 379 above (8.65.9).

⁴⁶² *purú tvā dāsvān voce / r̥ir agne táva svīd ā / todāsyeva śaraṇā ā mahāsya //* I.150.1.

The *ari*'s devotion to Agni that is emphasized here is in itself not surprising; what would have been more particularly interesting is a depiction of the *aris*, loyalty to Indra. However the continuation of this theme in the next stanza of the hymn adds a special significance to this statement. And we would render that stanza as follows:

Away (do I go) (from the place) of the rich man who gives not, who goes not forth even to invoke (the gods) — the masterless, godless one! (1.150.2)⁴⁶³

So here the *ari* as a devotee of gods is a frequenter of sacrifices — which is why his priest is able to make frequent offerings to the gods. The singer is pointedly referring to this aspect of the *ari*'s conduct, by suggesting that were he otherwise, he would have not served him any more. It seems to us that the singer is trying to draw attention to the condition of many another *ari* in contrast to that of his own chief; for we found that in many other contexts the qualities of being niggardly and 'ungodly' were exactly those suggested of the *ari*. And "masterless" (*anina-*) of this context strongly reminds us of *anindra* which we found applied to many whom the *ṛṣi*s found fault with.

Coming to a specific personality, we find the *rājan* named Svanaya Bhāvya who lived by the river Sindhu, is praised in RV 1.126. Stanza 1 says that, wishing for fame, he instituted thousands of *sava* ceremonies⁴⁶⁴ (no doubt ritual occasions with Soma offerings, as Sāyaṇa points out). We found above that the cattle which he is here said to have gifted to the *ṛṣi* are described as those that "belonged to the *asura*" and that "gave nourishment to the *ari*". It was our view that *asura* and *ari* here refer to the same person (VII - 6 above), and it is possible that both these words refer to the man called the *rājan* Svanaya Bhāvya in stanza 1 of the hymn.

And in that case the point that would specially interest us in this contest is that this *ari* is a rich and generous patron of the *ṛṣi* Kakṣivant, who is the author of the hymn. But of course, we cannot be altogether sure of this.

A clearer instance of a favourable depiction of an *ari*, is RV 4.38.2 which describes Trasadasyu's war horse Dadhikrā as a gift of Indra and Varuṇa to the Pūru tribe:

"And you two gods gave them the *vāja*-winning Dadhikrā, bringer of many gifts, gladdener of all the *kr̥ṣtis* (Aryan tribes?) the straight moving hawk, breath-spraying, swift,

⁴⁶³ *vy ānināsya dhanīnaḥ / praboṣe cid āraruṣaḥ / kadā canā prajigato ādevayoḥ // 1.150.2.*

⁴⁶⁴ *yāḥ ... sabāsram āmimīta savān ... śrāva ichāmānaḥ ... 1.126.1cd.*

— and worthy of the *ari*'s praise as is a brave prince".⁴⁶⁵

The *ari*'s commendation of a brave prince seems to us to be an affirmation of the view that he institutes competitive rites where strong heroes could distinguish themselves and win riches with which they could expand their power⁴⁶⁶; but it is not everywhere that the *ari* is depicted as acknowledging another's valour. This reference to so likeable an *ari* after all is to the conduct of a particular chief — perhaps to Trasadasyu himself, as we can infer from the characterization of Trasadasyu (in his youth?) as an *ari*-scion at RV 8.19.36. And from the first stanza of 4.38 we learn that he was in the *ṛṣi*'s eye a beneficiary of Indra's and Varuna's grace.⁴⁶⁷

This view of (some of the later?) *ari* chiefs is echoed in Atharva Veda XX. 127.11: "Indra has awakened the bard: 'Stand up! Go around singing. Glorify me the, powerful. Every *ari* will give you gifts!'"⁴⁶⁸

(2)

If in such instances as those discussed above, we hear of the *ari*'s loyalty to (or more accurately his happy relations with) the Brahmanical system, there are also cases which suggest that this was not quite the natural thing to expect of the *ari*; in other words, that his loyalty deserved to be viewed as something exceptional, perhaps even to be viewed with suspicion.

Let us ponder, for example, on the tone of such a statement as 8.1.22 which is exceptional insofar as it depicts the *ari* as offering praises to Indra; "Celebrated by all, praised by the *ari* (as well), to the Soma presser and the singer he gives (gifts)."⁴⁶⁹

After saying *all*, what could be the point in singling out the *ari*? It is at least an allowable guess that this may indicate that it is an exceptional thing for an *ari* to offer a *stoma* to the god Indra.

⁴⁶⁵ *utā vājīnam puruniṣṣīdhvānam / dadhikrām u dadathur viśvākṛṣṭim / ṛjipyām śyenām prūṣitāpsum āśūm // carṣṭyam aryó nṛpātīm ná śúrām // 4.38.2.*

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. RV 1.186.3, 8.1.22 above nn. 302, 303.

⁴⁶⁷ 4.38.1 refers to *dātrā* ... *pūrvā* which "Trasadasyu showered on the Pūrus" (*yā pūrvūbhyas trasādasyur nītośé*) as stemming from Indra and Varuṇa (*vām* ... *sānti*).

⁴⁶⁸ *indrah kārīm abūbudhad / ūttiṣṭha ví carā jānam / māméd ugrāsya carṣṭdhi / sārva it te pṛnād ariḥ // AV 20.127.11.*

⁴⁶⁹ See above n. 303 . (8.1.22).

But we feel that it is more than just an allowable guess, when we take into consideration an instance such as RV 1.9.10:

To Indra, the mighty dweller at each (separate) Soma-pressing, ever the *ari* sings a great enthusing-song!

Here, as to the word *even*, Sāyaṇa, Geldner and Thieme are all of the same mind. (Cf. Sāyaṇa: *ic-chabdo 'pi-śabdārthaḥ*)⁴⁷⁰

Here it does seem that, though the *ari* is no real alien, though indeed he does participate in the worship of Indra at a Soma festival, there still is some lingering suspicion.

And indeed that suspicion is explicitly voiced elsewhere. As, for example at 4.2.12 (which we referred to above):

The guileless seers (: the Aṅgiras) directed the Seer (: Agni), setting him down in the dwellings of Āyu'. From there these visible (intentions) (of Ayu) you may see by (these active hands and) feet; and by the *ari's* ways (i.e., conduct), (his) secret (intentions).⁴⁷¹

Similar sentiments no doubt were behind the thought that one finds expressed at 6.51.2:

He who knows the three *vidathas* of these (gods), and (knows also) the birth of gods, he, the *vipra*, (witnesses whatever they do) on this side and on every side. Seeing the straight among mortals and the crooked, the Sun-god observes the ways of the *ari* (too).⁴⁷²

Or at 1.71.3, which seems to characterize the *ari's* prayers to the gods as not genuine but dictated by worldly greed:

They (the Aṅgiras) established the *ṛta* (sacrifice) and set its understanding in motion. Thereafter (came) the gain-seeking (calls) of the *ari*, which (in order to be effective?) needs to be carried across (i.e. they are not strong in themselves). The 'unthirsting' (invocations) of the dexterous (singer) reach the race of gods, strengthening (them) with sweet nutriment.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ *suté-sute nyókase / bṛhád bṛhatá éd ariḥ / índrāya śūśám arcati // 1.9.10.* Cf. F. p.12 "Ihm ... singt auch der Fremde ein hohes Einladungslied (?)".

⁴⁷¹ See n. 133 above (4.2.12).

⁴⁷² *véda yás trīṇi vidáthāny eṣāṃ / devānām jānma sanutár á ca vípraḥ / ṛjú márteṣu vṛjiná ca páśyann abhí caṣṭe sūro aryá évān // 6.51.2.*

⁴⁷³ *dádbhann ṛtām dhanáyann asya dbhítim / ád id aryó didbhīsvò vibhṛtrāḥ / áṛṣyantír apáso yanty áchā*

But perhaps the clearest example of this kind of attitude on the part of the *ṛṣi*s is to be found at 10.39.5:

Before the tribe your ancient heroic deeds will I narrate, ... that faith this *ari* may have, O Nāsatyas!⁴⁷⁴

The singer has, no doubt, in view an *ari* before whom he performs a sacrifice; but the personal and subtly ironical statement he makes about the *ari* suggests his conviction that the latter's faith is not yet strong enough. Its subtlety renders this verse doubly valuable for the understanding of the *ari* riddle.

In their entirety then these allusions seem to indicate that in course of time the *ari* chiefs, or perhaps sections of them, found it possible or worthwhile to achieve (or perhaps re-gain) a relationship of harmony with the *ṛṣi*-elite. The later Purus seem to be the best example for this development. But in other instances the earlier sharp division in attitude where cult was concerned seems to have been hard for the *ṛṣi*s to forget. They continued to regard the *ari* with suspicion even where he appears as a sacrificer among sacrificers.

/ devāñ jānma prāyasā vardhāyantīḥ // 1.71.3.

⁴⁷⁴ purāṇā vāṃ vīryā prā bravā jāne / ayāṃ nāsatyā śrād arir yāthā dādhat // 10.39.5ad.

X. Three Important Contexts

(1: RV 1.169.6 and 10.28.1)

Thieme's interpretation of *ari* as stranger and as guest appears extremely apt in two important stanzas among the many R̥gvedic references that contain this word. These are RV 1.169.6 and 10.28.1. Let us examine these contexts.

In *Mitra and Aryaman* (p. 75) Thieme discusses the first of these two contexts. The verse contains a request to Indra to come to (the aid of) *sūris* at a time at which the antelopes of the Maruts are said to be standing “like the forces of the stranger at a ford (which he does not dare to cross, being unfamiliar with the country)”. This is how we would have to understand the stanza if we follow Prof. Thieme's interpretation.

1.169.6 is located in a hymn the background of which is a martial situation such as a raid, a foray or a contest. In the first part of it, which precedes stanza 6, Indra as the god of heroic triumph is praised and described with the Maruts as his hosts. The singer hopes to gain wealth through his aid (4)⁴⁷⁵ and their grace (5).⁴⁷⁶

At this point the singer actually expects the physical presence of the Maruts, so that they may help the *sūris*. In the second part of the hymn, which follows stanza 6, we are told that the footsteps of the Maruts' antelopes are actually heard — of the Maruts who swoop down on the man who prepares to give fight⁴⁷⁷ (i. e. the man who stands on the *sūris*' way to victory).

This location helps us to understand the meaning of the words in stanza 6, which in its entirety, we would translate as follows:

“Come Indra, to (our) heroes who shower gifts. At the terrestrial session (i.e. the sacrifice which precedes the contest) direct the strong ones (the Maruts) — then when their wide-bottomed antelopes have poised themselves (ready to swoop on adversaries), like the manly forces of the *ari* at the crossing- place.”⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ *tvāṃ ... na indra tāṃ rayiṃ dāḥ* 1.169.4a.

⁴⁷⁶ *té śú ṇo marúto mṛlayantu* 1.169.5c.

⁴⁷⁷ *marútāṃ śṛṇva āyatām upabdīḥ / yé mártiyam pṛtanāyāntam ... patáyanta ...* 1.169.7bcd.

⁴⁷⁸ *práti prá yābhīndra mīlhuśo nṛṇ / mahāḥ párbhive sádane yatasva / ádha yád eṣāṃ pṛthubudhnása étās / tīrbhé nāryāḥ paúmsyāni tashūḥ //* 1.169.6.

What the “crossing place” here signifies we would not wish to comment on except to say that it may mean a ford across which one may reach a settlement, or, any similar point across which one may reach the booty that was desired to be won. If this was to be won from the *ari*, we see his men depicted here as staying at the crossing point, ready to swoop on them who dared to challenge their strength. To meet them without fear one wishes the Maruts to come to one’s aid — the Maruts who too stand poised to appear, having been earlier invoked at the sacrifice. The sequel to stz. 6, it seems to us, justifies this rendering. On deeper reflection it would appear preferable to an interpretation that suggests that the antelopes of the Maruts are standing as if afraid to cross a ford, like one unaccustomed to the land.

10.28.1 is the opening verse of a *saṃvāda* or dialogue hymn. Thieme translates the verse as follows:

(The wife): “Every other guest has come, my own father-in-law, however, has not come: he would have eaten (roasted) grains, and he would have drunk Soma; well-fed, he would have returned home.”⁴⁷⁹

Unfortunately, the narrative of dramatic background of RV 10.28 is obscure and of course this is vital to the understanding of the hymn. According to Geldner’s interpretation, which is constructed partly with the aid of statements found in various early Indian sources, the speakers in this hymn are (i) Indra’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Vasukra, (ii) the poet, (iii) Indra himself and (iv) Vasukra. The last named is a son of Indra who is his exact physical likeness and who makes use of this to pose as his father. In this hymn he is also depicted (according to Geldner) as the host and institutor of the sacrifice at which Indra appeals incognito and reveals his identity only when Vasukra’s wife laments that he has not turned up for this sacrificial feast. Geldner treats the word *ari* as referring to Vasukra in the role of host-institutor.

We do not feel entirely satisfied with this identification. It seems to us that Geldner’s version of the dramatic background can be accepted because it visualizes somewhat correctly the persons involved in the event in which this hymn is grounded. We would however regard these persons to be more exactly the following:

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| (i) | the host-institutor; |
| (ii) | a counterfeit Indra; |
| (iii & iv) | Indra and his daughter-in-law; |

⁴⁷⁹ M.A. pp.73-74.

(v) the poet-priest.

It does not seem to us that the institutor takes part in the dialogue, though it must be admitted that it is not possible to be quite definite about this point.

In any case, the opening verse proclaims, in the words of the daughter-in-law, that all the legitimate participants of the ceremony have come, with the exception of the father-in-law. In the ensuing dialogue, Indra reveals himself and declares his firm alliance with the man who offers him Soma. He hints that some one is posing as Indra. Apparently the dialogue goes on to a confrontation of a sort between the true Indra and the counterfeit one. The hymn ends with the poet-priest's declaration that those who are not loyal to the cult and do not offer lavish gifts to the priesthood will suffer a terrible fate.⁴⁸⁰ It does seem to us that some of the essential elements of a hymn referring to the *ari* are found here again — namely (a) some sort of mishandling or disrespect to the personality of Indra and (b) misobservance of the obligations to Brahman priests. Hence it seems to us that, whatever be the exact details of the dramatic background, the opening stanza may be translated on the assumption that *ari* here means as elsewhere the owner of wealth, the patriarch or chief who institutes a tribal ritual-festival. It may possibly be that in this little dramatic skit an Indra-priest is seeking to impress that the *ari*'s Indra is not the real Indra at all, that the latter favours the Soma-offerers and not those who disavow the practices of the Brahmanical sacrifice.

But even if these 'details' regarding the background be wholly off the mark, the stanza seems to us to be best translated as follows:

Every one else (has come). The *ari* has come. (But) my father-in-law (only) has not come. (If he came) he would have eaten (roasted) grains and would have drunk Soma and gone back home well-fed.⁴⁸¹

If *vísvo hy ànyó arír* in this stanza were taken as one unit and translated as "every other *ari*", it would mean that there were many *aris* present at this ritual ceremony. It is difficult to find any parallel for such a depiction. *Ari* is noticeably a word used in the singular number, because almost invariably the RV refers only to one *ari* at a given

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. "A crocodile will drag away the leg from them that resist (the rewarding of) Brahmans with victuals": *tébhyo godhā ayātham karṣad etād / yé brahmāṇaḥ pratipīyanty ānnaiḥ* // 10.28.11.

⁴⁸¹ *vísvo hy ànyó arír ājagāma / māméd āha śvāsuro nā jagāma / jakṣīyād dhānā utā sōmam papīyāt / svāśītaḥ pūnar āstam jagāyāt* // 10.28.1.

locus. (A plural sense may possibly be detected at 8.51.9ab, if the lines are translated as: “every Ārya who is a treasure-guarding *ari*” and AV 20.127.11: “every *ari* will give you gifts” In both instances *ari* is singular in form, but certainly there is an implied plural sense. But in neither is there the suggestion that more than one *ari* is present in a given locus. In later Vedic literature, however, the suggestion of many *aris* at one place may be found, as for example at Śatapatha Br. 3.2.1.23-24: *he’lavo* for *he’rayah*. But this usage reflects the change of tribal life with which the old meaning of *ari* became obscured and was replaced by the generalized sense of foe.)

“Every one (has come) and the *ari* has come”. The *ari* is singled out here for special mention because he is a very special ‘functionary’ in this kind of ritual setting. We should think that in this dramatic skit eloquent gestures on the narrator’s part would have made up for the missing words “has come”.

(2: RV 10.27.8)

The third context we should like briefly to comment on is RV 10.27.8. The hymn 10.27 seems to be one of the most important hymns for the understanding of the meaning of *ari*, but again most unfortunately the background of the hymn is hard to visualize.

With all due respect, we must confess that Thieme’s translation here is scarcely enlightening. He renders the stanza as follows:

“The cows let loose ate the stranger’s barley ... The calls of the stranger came from all sides. How long will the lord of the property find pleasure in them (= will he tolerate them)?”⁴⁸²

We would very tentatively suggest a different translation:

The *ari*’s cows, let loose, have eaten the barley. I saw them, moving about with the herdsman. The *ari*’s calls (or, invocations) came from all sides. How long will the owner of the property (the cows) find pleasure in them (= be able to save them from being captured or killed)?⁴⁸³

This would agree with the usual association of the *ari* with ownership of cattle and wealth. But the point which bothers us here is, who then is the owner of the barley? And from whom is there a threat to the cows?

⁴⁸² M.A., p.75.

⁴⁸³ *gávo yávam práyutā aryó akṣan / tá apaśyaṃ sabāgopās cārantiḥ / hávā id aryó abhitaḥ sám āyan / kiyad āsu svāpatīś chandayāte // 10.27.8.*

It is not so hard to find the answer to the second question. Further on in the hymn, the poet refers to a strange fact:

“I saw from afar, the *grāma* (horde) that was borne without wheels, by its inherent strength ...”⁴⁸⁴

Obviously the reference is to the Maruts who no doubt herald the appearance of Indra on the scene — which means that Indra was coming to lend his martial support to his worshippers out on a foray. It is for their sake the hymn is sung. (Interestingly, the Bharata hordes in RV 3.33, Indra-inspired, were also called a *grāma*, and what is more, a *grāma* that was out to plunder cattle: *gavyan grāmah.*)

So it would seem that the *ari*'s cows are threatened by foraying fighters that sought Indra's aid, and the Maruts! The cows of the *ari* feeding on the barley then may not be taken as an implied explanation of the threat to the cows. Rather the lines portray the quiet peace of the scene at the *ari*'s place just before the attacking hordes appear. We have no reason to assume that the cows were doing some kind of damage to the owner of the property. After all, the reference may be to cows feeding on barley stalks? And *ari* (line *a*) then, being = *svapati* (line *d*), would be carrying much the same significance as *dhanasvāmin*, the sense that Mahīdhara gives to its derivative *arya* in the Yajurveda Saṃhitā.⁴⁸⁵

One would ask, is the *ari* here portrayed both as a cattle-raiser and as an agriculturist? If that is indeed the case, it would explain many of the peculiarities associated with the *ari* tangle.

One is emboldened to suggest that this (the *ari* in some contexts being depicted as someone associated with agricultural practices) is not altogether unlikely. At least four other instances there are that lend some slight support to such a view.

The first two are found in the RV itself.

We find, in that rather unusual and unorthodox hymn 10.34, an interesting saying attributed to the *arya* Savitr̥ (it would appear that the *aryas* liked to refer to the gods with this epithet, which probably fitted any princely being as much as any person that belonged to a prince). The saying is the following:

⁴⁸⁴ *āpaśyaṃ grāmam vāhamānam ārād / acakrāyā svadhāyā vārtamānam / 10.27.19ab.*

⁴⁸⁵ On V.S. 33.82.

“Play not with dice but till the field. Take pleasure in property and hold (it as a thing of) much value.⁴⁸⁶

Value a life of frugality and work in the fields, rather than nomadic wandering, forays and lavish contests and feasts: for the RV indeed a very unusual message.

It must however be admitted that we cannot be sure about how much importance is to be attached to the use of *arya* in this context.

The other from the RV is 10.42, in which the *ṛṣi*'s party of *rājans* (*rājabbih* ... *asmākena vṛjānena*: 10c) hopes to win treasures (*dhānāni*: 10c) of cattle and barley (*yávamad gómad*: 7c *góbhib* ... *yávana*: 10a) in a raid or contest in which the opponent, or the offerer of stakes is indicated as the *ari* (cf. l.c.: “with song subdue the *ari*'s song!”). The *ari* then should have been the possessor not only of cattle but also of grains.

The third instance we referred to comes from the Atharva Veda, where the mantra 8.10.24 has for a long time been rightly regarded as indicating the adoption of agriculture by Pṛthi Venya,⁴⁸⁷ whom, as we have discussed above, the RV represents as an *ari*.

The fourth instance is from the Yajur Veda. Here in reference to the scene where the queen cohabits with the horse in the *ásvamedha* ceremony, the word *arya* occurs in the dialogue between the *kṣattr* and the *pālāgali*. These verses are to the following effect:

1. When the deer eats the corn (the owner of the field) does not pay heed to (the fact that) the animal has grown fat (by feeding on his corn) (this is no cause for satisfaction to him). When the *sūdra* woman is the *arya*'s mistress, he (the *sūdra*) does not wish (by means of that) to obtain wealth (for him) to thrive on.
2. When the deer eats the corn, (the owner of the field) does not regard the fattened (animal) as (something of) great (value). When the *sūdra* becomes a paramour to the *arya* lady, (the *arya*) does not approve of the ‘nourishment’ (the fertilization?).

(Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, 23.30-31).⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ *akṣātr mā dīvyah kṛṣīm it kṛṣasva / vittē ramaśva bahú manyamānaḥ / 10.34.13ab.*

⁴⁸⁷ “Pṛthi, Pṛthī ... a semi-mythical personage who is mentioned ... as the the inventor of agriculture”: Vedic Index, under Pṛthī. Cf. AV 8.10.24: ... *tām* (= *pṛthivīm*) *pṛthī vainyò 'dhok, tām kṛṣīm ca sasyām cādhok; te kṛṣīm ca sasyām ca manusyā ūpa jīvanti ...*

⁴⁸⁸ *yadd hariṇò yávam atti / ná puṣtām paśú manyate / sūdrā yád áryajārā / ná pošāya dhanāyati // yadd hariṇò yávam atti / ná puṣtām bahú manyate / sūdró yád áryāyai jāró / ná pošam ánumanyate*

What can we make of such references?

Two facts at least seem to be beyond dispute: one, that *aryas* or wealth-owning Aryan tribesmen possessed agricultural land; two, that they and their families were in close contact with men and women of the *śūdra* class — who were of non-Aryan extraction and most probably the same as the *Dasyus* of the Ṛgveda period.

This important context helps us then to surmise that *ari* families of the Vedic age were resorting to agricultural practices, and also in this process they were entering into such close association with non-Aryan agriculturists that not only males of *arya* stock but also females could enter into extra-marital relations with these persons of *śūdra* extraction: which probably explains their tolerance and even observance of *Dasyu* cult practices hinted at in some of the RV references which we discussed above.

XI. The *ari*'s Social Position

(1)

We have been assuming throughout that *ari* stands for a chief, a kind of tribal patriarch. A word must be said about this assumption before we close our discussion.

In the first place we must emphasize that the *ari* of the RV cannot be just an ordinary man. He is distinctly a “holder of wealth” and also of power, as we have already seen. (See VII - 3, above).

Then we have the significant evidence of the use of *ari*, *arya*, *su-ari*, *a-kavāri* to refer to such gods as Mitra-Varuṇa (they are the *aris*, the *asuras* of the gods — 7.65.2), Varuṇa (7.86.7), Viṣṇu (7.100.5), Agni (4.1.7), Apām Napāt (2.35.2), Uṣas (*aryā* 1.123.1 5.75.7), Savitar (10.34.13) and even Indra (qualified as “the noble” *ari* 1.61.9; “the not-ignoble” *ari*: 3.47.5, 6.19.11) — impossible if *ari* were lacking in connotations of power.⁴⁸⁹

Noting the *ṛṣi*'s fury at seeing the *ari* such as they were, we should think that it must have been their tacit assumption that the condition of the *aris* they saw was a travesty of an ideal. The ideal of course was that such a chief as the *ari* with the wealth and power at his command should be a splendid example for all to follow. And it would seem that it was these suppressed connotations of respect and fear and authority that enabled the application of the word to describe the gods.

In the usage of *ari* in the RV we can also detect connotations of elderliness (which we assume would be appropriate for a patriarch-like chief), of splendour reduced by age (which would show up the contrasting vigour of youth of the *sūris* whom the *ṛṣis* often preferred to the treasure-guarding *aris*).

⁴⁸⁹ *tā hi devānām āsurā tāv aryā* 7.65.2a; *ācetaṃ acito devō aryah* 7.86.7c; *prā tát te ... nāmāryāḥ śamsāmi* 7.100.5ab; *śuciḥ śukrō aryó rōrucānah* 4.1.7d; *viśvāny aryó bhūvanā jajāna* 2.35.2d; *ḥṛṣṇād úd asthād aryā* 1.123.1c; *tirás cid aryayā pári vartir yātam* 5.75.7cd; *tán me ví caṣṭe savitāyām aryāḥ* 10.34.13d; *svarāḥ indro ... svarih* 1.61.9cd; *ākavāri*: see n.356 above.

In relation to *ari* as a person of position and authority, it is interesting to note the use of *aya* (a word ultimately derived from *ari*, through *ārya*) as a title or epithet of royalty among early Aryans in Sri Lanka : “In many of the inscriptions ... the sons of kings are referred to with the title *aya* (Skt. *ārya*, Pali *ayya*) attached to the name either preceding or following it. Some of these princes with the title *aya* later ascended the throne. The title *aya* may be compared with *ayaputa* of the Aśoka edicts.” Parānavitana ... p.lxvi.

Thus says 2.8.2 of Agni:

Unaging he brings decay (old age) to the *ari*, to his devotee gives an excellent lead;⁴⁹⁰

and that difficult and complicated verse 5.54.12 declares:

You Maruts shake down from the sky — whose brilliance the *ari* has captured not — that radiant berry (rain? the thunderbolt?)⁴⁹¹

and 6.13.5 says:

... You in your might increase the herd's life-strength, for the languishing *ari* to benefit, and the wolf!⁴⁹²

In these Ṛgvedic instances the connotation of splendour vitiated by age may seem so hidden as to be almost undetectable. As against this we would urge that in each of these cases it is that very hidden connotation that really gives pointedness to the statement the poet makes.

(The *sūri* on the other hand is explicitly depicted as a man who is in the prime of his youth; the singer even dares to wish that the *sūris* continue to remain youthful, almost in defiance of nature's laws — as one may see from RV 1.125.7⁴⁹³).

(2)

We have upto this point relied almost exclusively on Ṛgvedic evidence to support the views that were advanced. We feel that sufficient evidence was adduced in this process to set up our hypothesis on fairly firm ground. As a matter of fact, this way of setting about the task (i.e. limiting the basic research to that text where only the word frequently occurs) seems to us to be a better course of action than gathering a vaster array of evidence from far-flung and often heterogeneous sources over the whole range of Indo-Iranian and Indo European dispersal.

But now that the main structure of our hypothesis can be set up to stand by virtue of its own strength, let us also draw a little from sources outside the sphere of the RV Saṃhitā.

⁴⁹⁰ See above n. 318 (2.8.2).

⁴⁹¹ *tāṃ nākam aryō agrbhītaśociṣaṃ / rūśat pīppalam maruto vī dbūnutha* 5.54.12ab.

⁴⁹² See Ch. VII - 3 above with n. 376 (6.13.5).

⁴⁹³ “May not the *sūris*, who are loyal to the *vrata*, be weakened by age”: *mā jāriṣuḥ sūrāyaḥ suvratāśaḥ* 1.125.7b (cf. Geldner: “nicht sollen die pflichtgetreuen Patrone altersschwach werden”).

As to the connotation of elderliness, the whole semantic history of the derivatives of *ari* such as *arya* and *ayya*, is astonishingly illuminating. Prof Thieme himself has pointed out the use of *ārya* for elder brother in Bhavabhūti, in the *Gitā* and possibly also in the *praśasti* inscription of Samudragupta at Allahabad.⁴⁹⁴ (It is interesting to note that the Sinhalese word for elder brother is *ayyā*).

ārya and its feminine form *āryā* are also widely used in Indian kinship terminology for husband's wife's father, husband's father, wife's father, husband's mother and son's wife's mother etc. etc as Irawathie Karwe has clearly shown.⁴⁹⁵

Dravidian derivatives of the word also confirm this basic connotation of elderliness. Thus,

Tamil	<i>accan</i>	father
Malayalam	<i>accan</i>	father
Kota	<i>aj ayn</i>	very old man
Kannada	<i>ajja</i>	grandfather
Tamil	<i>ayyan, aiyan</i>	father etc. ⁴⁹⁶

In Pali *ayya* and *ayyakā* are used for grandfather and grandmother respectively,⁴⁹⁷ and the word *ariya* in general is widely attested as connoting nobility, aristocracy and refinement in the highest sense.⁴⁹⁸

In classical Sanskrit, *ārya* predominantly carries the associations of nobility and high birth, virtue, delicacy, munificence, righteousness, truthfulness, gratitude, reliability and absolute dutifulness.⁴⁹⁹

Thus, derivatives of *ari* seemed to have had connotations of age and respectability,

⁴⁹⁴ F. p. 100; KZ 79 (1965), p.284.

⁴⁹⁵ Karwe, pp 36-37, 88, 103, 145, 197, 241, 248, 236, 284 (*aja, ayya, āi, aji, aja, ājā, āji, ajja, ajjā, ayyā, ajji, ajje, ajjiā, ayyake*). Note her observations on pp. 108, 166, 167, 205, *ai, aiyan* ..used for any elderly relation or an unrelated but respected person ... derived from the Skt *ārya*".

⁴⁹⁶ DED, 2nd ed., Entries 50, 196.

⁴⁹⁷ Karwe, pp. 88f. (items 2,4,9,11) and PTSD s.vv. & Turner, s.v. *ārya*.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. e.g., such usages as *ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika magga, ariyapuggala, ariyo tuṅhībhaḥavo, ariyapariyesana* etc. etc.

⁴⁹⁹ Cf. : *kulaṃ śīlaṃ dayā dānaṃ / dharmāḥ satyaṃ kṛtajñatā / adroha iti yeṣv etat / tān āryān sampracakṣate //*, quoted in Jagaddhara's Commentary on *Mālatīmādhava*, Kale.

geographically as well as chronologically throughout the Indian scene.

(3)

But what could have been the actual sphere of authority of the *ari*? It is obvious from the word's connotations of power and wealth and its application to refer to the gods, that the *ari*'s sphere of authority was something greater than the household. He could not have been a *grhapati* pure and simple. And since *viśpati* is attested in the RV as a distinct term for the chief of the *viś* it does not seem to be likely that the *ari*'s sphere of authority was the unit known as the *viś*.

What then remains?

The RV does not enumerate the different units of the Vedic social set-up anywhere in a clear-cut way. But the evidence from the Avesta seems to be suggestive and may even prove to be useful.

The Avestic evidence is summed up by Benveniste. To quote that evidence (as presented by Thieme, with terminological modifications):

In the *nmāna*, the house, there lives the *xvaētu*, the family;
 in the *vīs*, the settlement, ... *vərəzāna*, the clan / community;
 in the *zantu*, the territory of the tribe, there lives the *airiāman*, the hospitality: those with whom one is connected by hospitality;
 in the *dabhyu*, the country, the widest area, there live the *sāstāro*, the rulers.⁵⁰⁰

First, a word on the above statement:

<i>nmāna</i> (house)	:	<i>xvaētu</i> (family)
<i>vīs</i> (settlement)	:	<i>vərəzāna</i> (clan)
<i>zantu</i> (territory of tribe)	:	<i>airiāman</i> (those connected by hospitality)
<i>dabhyu</i> (country)	:	<i>sāstāro</i> (rulers)

It does seem to us that the third step in this scheme is a little awry. We would like to ask: Is it not more sensible to think of that step as follows:

In the *zantu* (territory of tribe) lives *airiāman* (the tribe, i.e., those connected by the tribal relationship).

In any case, this scheme visualizes a stage of territorially settled communities — which

⁵⁰⁰ M.A. pp. 79-80 referring to Benveniste, J.A. 221(1932), pp.124-9.

does not exactly fit with the picture of Ṛgvedic India. But yet the corresponding elements are all there:

1. *gr̥ha*
2. *viś / vṛjana*
3. *jantu / aryaman*
4. *dasyu*

Let us reflect a little bit about the third step. A clear sense of the word *jantu* in the RV is 'offspring' as in the following instances:

5.19.3: *śvaitreyasya jantavaḥ* : the offspring of Śvaitreya.

9.67.13 : *vāco jantuḥ kavīnām*: the offspring of the poets' word

10.48.1: *mām havante pitaraṃ na jantavaḥ*: they call on my aid as offspring call their father.

Cognate with *jana* and *jāti*, the word *jantu* certainly suggests "the community of those related by kinship". That *jana* carried such a sense is of course obvious from such usages as *pañca janāḥ* (the five *jana*-s). We may legitimately conjecture that the related word *jantu* also carried this sense.

The bracketing of *zantu* with *airiāman* in the Iranian scheme reminds us of the *ari-jana / jantu* juxtaposition in several RV passages, i.e., 1.81.9, 5.33.2, 8.14 (*ari / jana*) and 7.21.5 (*ari / jantu*).⁵⁰¹

Besides, if we take the word *aryaman* as a derivative ultimately from *ari*, as we have to, then *aryaman* would have the following senses:

- (a) community connected to oneself through the *ari*
- (b) the quality or character proper for an *ari*.

(And of course *aryaman* the god would be the deity representing the qualities proper for the chief — which ideally must include hospitality, the basic sense in Thieme's scheme of ideas.)

Let us reflect further on the scheme

gr̥ha - viś - jantu - dasyu.

⁵⁰¹ 1.81.9, 5.33.2, 8.1.4, 7.21.5: See above nn. 317, 91, 378 and 337 respectively.

In the R̥gvedic situation, this might well signify

1. the members of the family unit
2. the members of the clan or settlement
3. the members of the *jana* or tribe — as offspring of a common kind
4. the outsiders.

Taking into account the relationship drawn by the above Iranian scheme between the *zantu* and the *airiāman*, it seems to us that a similar R̥gvedic scheme would represent the ‘units’ and their ‘authorities’ in the following way:

1. *gr̥ha* : *gr̥hapati*
2. *viś* : *viśpati*
3. *jantu* / *jana* : *ari* and
4. the *dasyu*, the outsiders or the non-Aryans, i.e., those who do not belong to any of the Aryan *jana*-s.

We may even go a bit further. Frequently, the RV *jana* seems to be also called *kr̥ṣṭi*, as evident, e.g., from the widespread interchangeability of *pañca janāḥ* with *pañca kr̥ṣṭayah*. And remarkably enough, the relationship of *kr̥ṣṭi* with *ari* is also distinctly attested at 1.4.6 which we referred to above. (See nn. 16 and 116.)

Still another fact there is which makes us think that the *ari* must have been the chief of a *jana* or a tribal unit in the RV period.

We have seen above how closely the *ari* is associated with the notion of the ownership of wealth (Ch. VII.3) of which the main element to the Vedic Aryan was constituted by cattle. It is interesting to note how this information helps us gauge the significance of statements such as the following three verses of RV 8.21 (which speak of the accomplishments desired by the *sūri*’s party):

With you, our ally, would we O steed,
stand up in speech against the “puffing” one
in the *saṁstha* of the cattle-rich tribe.
No rich man will you ever find
fit to ally with: they with *surā* sharp,
scoff at you — but when you
the cry of war do raise, and
to confrontation (the fighters) bring,
then like a father are you invoked!

From thine gift, O giver of cows
 may we not stray away ...
 the *ari*'s (treasures), even the firmly-held,
 take in your sweep and hither bring,
 for yours are gifts not to be negated.⁵⁰²

Here too it seems to us, the *ari* is portrayed as the chief of a cattle-rich tribe, again at odds with the *ṛṣi* — and hence depicted as haughty, wealthy, not given to the Soma cult and to the proper adoration of Indra. He seeks to withhold the gifts to priests, contrary to the practice of Indra-worshippers. When we read these verses in their relation to one another and in the light of what is so often said about the *ari*'s attitudes, it becomes clear that the 'puffing' or haughty man of the rich tribe in stanza 11 is the same one who is styled *ari* in stanza 16.

If we now for a moment assume the *ari* is a tribal chief, we instantly gain an insight into the true significance of the usage of *gopā* ("guardian of cattle") for 'chief' in the RV Saṃhitā. Let us take a line as the following from RV 3.43.5:

Or will he make me the *gopā* of the *jana*?⁵⁰³

Or the following from 5.11.1:

As the *jana*'s *gopā* has he been born (referring to Agni).⁵⁰⁴

Or the following from 9.35.5:

Soma, the *jana*'s "lord of cattle" (*gopati*).⁵⁰⁵

in each of which *gopā* (or the equivalent *gopati*) stands for *leader* / *chief*. And in these, it seems to us, we have the image, howsoever faint, of the tribal chief as the holder of cattle. Another echo of such a usage we could find in RV 10.27.8, where, we found above (Ch. X - 2), *ari* appears equated to *sva-pati*, lord of property (— and here we must again remember that to the RV Aryans property almost always meant cattle).⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰² *tvāyā ha svīd yujā vayām / prāti svasāntaṃ vṛṣabha bruvīmahi / saṃsthé jānasya gómataḥ // 8.21.11;*
 (For stz. 14, see n. 141 above) *mā te godatra nīr arāma rādhasa / indra mā te grhāmahi / dṛḥbā cid*
aryāḥ prá mṛśābhy ā bhara / ná te dāmāna ādābhe // 8.21.16.

⁵⁰³ *kuvīn mā gopāṃ kārase jānasya / 3.43.5a.*

⁵⁰⁴ *jānasya gopā ajaniṣṭa jāgrvīḥ / 5.11.1a.*

⁵⁰⁵ *sómaṃ jānasya gópatim / 9.35.5c.*

⁵⁰⁶ There is also a reference to *gopati* in the famed dialogue between Saramā and the Paṇis. Here, the

The position thus seems to be that the *ari* was the elderly tribal chief or patriarch and the tribe's cattle, its traditional wealth, were in his charge. Distinct from him were the youthful militant leaders, the *sūri*-s, and in the RV period we see these men emerging as a new force to reckon with, fostering Aryan expansion, taking the lead in vanquishing Dasyu power. It was from among these *sūri*-s that the *rājan*-s were chosen, and to all appearances, the *rājan* was a supra-tribal institution.

It seems to us that this position explains that curious fact to which Schlerath refers in his monograph on kingship in the RV and Atharva Veda period, namely that these Saṃhitās do not seem to use the term *gopā* as an epithet for the king, a fact over which Schlerath quite rightly expresses surprise,⁵⁰⁷ for nothing should be more natural than the use of *gopā* for king among a pastoral-nomadic people as were the Vedic Aryans. This is certainly very significant, yet there has been no explanation for it upto now. The actual facts seem to be that the traditional tribal chiefs were the *ari*-s, from whom power gradually passed on to the youthful *sūri*-s who led the Aryans as *rājan*-s in various military encounters. Our position is quite in agreement with the basic thesis of Schlerath that in the RV and AV the *rājan* is depicted as an intermittent or discontinuous bearer of glory and power.⁵⁰⁸

We would argue that tribal chief whose specific function was to guard the wealth of the tribe was the *ari*, rather than the *rājan* (a political entity that came into its own in spite of tribal resistance?). For the early Aryans, it was obviously not necessary to specify the *ari* as a *gopā*: the very word probably carried this connotation. What is important to realize is that the *ari*'s wealth was also a symbol of authority in the social set-up of the early tribes.⁵⁰⁹ The supra-tribal office of the *rājan* arose not specifically to guard the

spokesman for the Paṇis says, tongue in cheek, "Let Indra come to us; then he will become the *gopati* of our cattle". Saramā replies, in effect: "You cannot trick him; instead he will trick you." *āthā gāvāṃ gópatir no bhavāti* 10.108.3d. Saramā's reply: *nābhāṃ tāṃ veda dābhyam dābhat sáḥ* / 10.108.4a. For her to say so, obviously it should have been possible to construe the Paṇi's words as expressive of a tempting offer.

⁵⁰⁷ Schlerath, pp.104-105.

⁵⁰⁸ Schlerath, pp. III-III2.

⁵⁰⁹ Here we may reflect on statements about the manliness, the splendour and the wrath of the *ari*. That the *ari* was the object of considerable terror is proved by the references to his arāti that brought agony to the *sūris* and ṛṣis. Especially instructive in this context is 8.48.8: "Will surges forth, and also wrath, O Indu! Deliver us not to (that will and wrath) of the *ari*, as he wishes." Similar is 7.31.5: "Deliver us not to the *ari*'s insult and malicious speech!" *ālarti dākṣa utā manyúr indo / mā no aryó*

wealth of the group, but to wield power of a more complex kind. Thus when the *ari* was leader, it was not necessary to call him a *gopā*, and when the *rājan* was the leader, it was insufficient to call him a *gopā*. It is even conceivable that the very association with the *ari* made the title *gopā* too much a term of tribal administration — hence not quite appropriate to be used for the supra-tribal *rājan*.

It is instructive, while speaking of the likelihood of the *ari* having been the tribal *gopā*, to reflect on the various epithets of Agni, who represents all the authorities known to the Vedic Aryans. In his humblest manifestation, he is the *grhapati*, the chief of the household. He is also the *viśpati*, the chief of the settlement. And he bears the title *gopā* too: chief of the herds or guardian of the cattle. (Present-day connotations should not mislead us: it must have been a grand function in those times to be the tribe's keeper of cattle.)⁵¹⁰

And, with the rise of kingship, Agni also came to be described as a *rājan*.

If the *ari* was the *gopā*, and if *ari* also gave rise to the words *arya* / *ārya*, we must at least regard that at the stage that these words were formed, the *gopā* who was the *ari* was *the* characteristic tribal chief after whom the whole membership of the tribe came to be called the *ārya*-s, which must ultimately be regarded as meaning “those connected by the relationship to the *ari*”.

In the light of what was said above, we would very tentatively suggest that

- (1) *grhapati*
- (2) *viśpati* and
- (3) *ari*

are reflected in the RV as an ascending order of early tribal authorities. We would think of the *ari* as the patriarchal chief (or at least as a patriarchal chief) in a *jana* (= *jantu* / *kṛṣṭi*?). And, the community bound by his authority would be (in a usage already

anukāmām pārā dāh / 8.48.8 (Geldner's translation of this stz. is highly misleading, to say the least.); 7.31.5: see n. 350 above. See also nn. 464, 374, 334, 297, 377, 351, 352 citing 1.169.6, 10.76.2, 4.4.6, 4.16.19, 7.60.11, 6.48.16, 6.59.8 and 7.83.5 in which reference is made to the *ari*'s *paum̐sya*, *dymna*, *ṅṛm̐ṇa*, *manyu* and *arāti*.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. also 7.18.4c which says of Indra: “Every one told me that you alone are the guardian of cows” : *tvām in me gópatiṃ víśva ābá*.

obsolete in the Veda) the *aryaman*: those connected by the *ari*-relationship.

(It is not our intention in this study to go into the details of the semantics of Ṛgvedic *aryaman*. We believe the above basic position is of sufficient help to accept Thieme's version of the meaning of *aryaman*, with the changes that have to be made in the light of the difference it signifies.)

But, as we have pointed out, even within the RV period, we see this tribal order collapsing. For it is clear that *rājans* (= *sūris*) who are consecrated through the brahmanical ritual of investiture with *kṣatra*, are steadily replacing the *ari*-s. As is obvious, this represents a new social order rising above the tribal one, and, probably under the conscious tutorship of the *ṛṣi*-elite. A clear instance of the new set-up is the rise of the Pūru Trasadasyu, who is said to have “overspread the five tribes with his might,” as 4.38.10 declares.⁵¹¹ The collapse of the old order and the forces that precipitated that collapse, are, in our opinion, very largely responsible for the amazing obscuration of the sense and significance of Ṛgvedic *ari*.

In conclusion it must also be stated that perhaps neither the *ṛṣi*-elite nor the RV Saṃhītā should be regarded as typical products of the tribal order. It was the *ṛṣi*-elite that supported the emergence of the *sūri*-s to power. The RV is their manual, the brahmanic handbook supporting the emerging *kṣatric* power. The entire message seems to be hinted at in RV 10.124:

“Agni abandons Father Asura and goes over to Indra. Rulership changes hands. The waters contemptuously stand apart from the fallen power, as do the people when they choose a *rājan*”.⁵¹²

Thus the *ṛṣi*-s were probably not unaware of what was going on, and the significance of that they actively encouraged.

⁵¹¹ See n. 86 above.

⁵¹² See 10.124.8 in n. 165 and its translation above.

XII. Summary and Hypothesis

It now remains for us to attempt to visualize the course of events that led to the strange assemblage of connotations round the word *ari* in the RV.

Our view throughout was that the word indicated a very old tribal institution: the patriarchal chief as the custodian / owner of the tribe's wealth. Both his authority, and his primary distinction from the youthful *sūri-s*, seem to have sprung from this position of the *ari*.

It appears that one of the main functions of the *ari* was to institute the tribe's ritual festivals and to offer the stakes for heroic youths (*sūri-s*) to win by valiant effort. In the context of such festivals the *ari* seems to have been functionally the equivalent of an adversary or opponent, since it appears that the offered stakes had to be won by sheer force, probably frustrating the resistance that the institutor placed against their removal. Our evidence suggests a complex of ritual practices associated with these events whose main participants appear to have been the *ari* and his ritual supporters on the one hand and the *sūri-s* and their ritual supporters on the other. The sociological function of such events may be surmised to have been the creation and sustenance of a militarily capable stratum of youth within the Aryan tribes.

We need not assume that *ari* in the context of these events has necessarily a *hostile* signification.

But there are other aspects — political and religious-cultural. We have stressed above the fact that the picture is complicated by (i) the almost consistent anti-*ari* attitude visible in the pro-Bharata/Sṛṅjaya hymns, (ii) the cultural distinction drawn between the *ari* and the *sūri-s* — a distinction that associates the former with an attitude of laxity toward Indra worship, the Soma sacrifice and the patronage of Brahmanical *ṛṣi-s* and (iii) the occasional positive praise of the *ari* and the depiction of him as adhering to Vedic ritual practices.

Hence, as we have stressed again and again, the above simple explanation cannot be all that is needed to understand the meaning of *ari* in the RV.

So we had to carefully take into account the significance of the exuberant growth of Indraism in Vedic India on the one hand and the indications of the *ari's* association with Dasyus and possibly thereby with agricultural rites and practices on the other.

One ventures to think that we have here some evidence of an Aryan leadership adopting an attitude of progressive realism and trying to settle down to a dialogue with earlier dwellers of the land, thus opening the door to a process of varied cultural changes embracing both the religious sphere and the economic.

It appears that some such development deeply distressed the brahmanical *ṛṣi*-elite, and, under their influence, the *sūri*-s, who, in the militancy and exuberance of youth could more easily be persuaded toward a policy of destroying the Dasyus than toward one that called for a process of learning a new way of life from these people whom the *ṛṣi*-s had taught them to despise. It is but natural that such a policy would be most effective if it possessed what we would call an ideological, but what in our documents appears as a religious, backing. That ideological / religious backing is what we have called Indraism.

As far as we can see, the Bharata-Śr̥ṅjayas were foremost among this militant anti-Dasyu element, or such militant sentiment originated amongst them. To put it another way, the Bharatas seem to have been a group led by *ṛṣi*-s and *sūri*-s with a staunchly Aryan consciousness and a matching 'Indralike' spirit, due to some peculiarities of their geographical location or historical circumstance.

Indraism, whose banner the Bharatas held aloft, should then be regarded as either a new adaptation of theology to suit a militant ethnic consciousness, or an aspect of Vedism which the more militant of the Aryans preferred to identify themselves with and raise above the other aspects of Vedic worship.

The practices of Indraism demanded of the *sūri*-s a ceaseless slaying of *vṛtra*-s as the price of their alliance with the divine *vṛtrahan*. It demanded of them also a lavish munificence to Brahman priests, in the likeness of the conduct of the celestial *maghavan* himself. In the ritual field it laid great stress on the Soma draught and the offerings of cooked meat and roasted grains.

Neither the violence of Indraism, nor its extravagant munificence (which in practice was an euphemism for waste), nor its ritual practices seem to have been attractive to the older *ari* leadership, to whom Indra at best was merely the god of war. This tribal leadership appears to us to have been heading toward a settled agricultural life — which apparently they could procure only via collaboration with the Dasyus. Thus it appears that the *ṛṣi*-s and the *ari* chiefs were at loggerheads over the supremely important question of how to deal with the Dasyus.

So the Aryan expansionism which the *ṛṣi*-s desired could be fostered not by fighting the Dasyus alone; it also *demande*d a hostility toward entrenched Aryan authority. In other words, circumstances forced the *ṛṣi*-s (or at least those *ṛṣi*-s whose views prevailed and are recorded in the documents extant) to encourage a revolutionary role for the *sūri*-s: to struggle against the elderly *ari* leadership for its reluctance to place the tribal wealth at their disposal to destroy Dasyu strength.

We believe that at this stage the *ṛṣi*-s openly took a stand against asurism. A notion such as the one of Agni abandoning “Father Asura” and going over to the side of the *deva* Indra (RV 10.124) should have emboldened the *sūri*-s to depart from the ways of the elderly *ari* leadership.

The anti-*asura* stand must reflect a decisive turning point in Vedic thinking, but one for which there must have been a slow gathering of momentum over a considerable time. For the *asura* concept must have been to the Aryans an alien concept of divinity which the high priests of early Vedism probably always regarded with suspicion. Thus for example it appeared to them to be associated with a differing “technology”: whence wheel-turned pottery was indicated as an *asura* artefact in contrast to handmade pottery, which was *daivika*; and the former was banned in orthodox ritual acts.⁵³ Inherent in such notions lies an arrogant rejection of a culture which in a more sober mood might have been recognized to be superior to Aryan achievement, at least in a few given fields.

So it would seem that the *asura* concept was regarded as paving the way to economic and cultural practices that threatened the position of what was regarded as the genuine *deva* cult, its true practitioners and their accepted way of life. We believe that among such practices were agriculture and the settled, frugal life associated therewith. When it became clear that to tolerate the *asura* concept was to bless such cultural compromise,

⁵³ Cf. the observations of S.R. Das in his article “The Mahābhārata and Indian Archaeology” in Sircar, Bharata War and Puranic Genealogies, pp.51-85; pp.73 ff.: Discussion of pottery of Rgvedic age — Aryans predominantly not users of wheel-turned pottery. In ritual, wooden or leather vessels were mostly used (p. 75) “If pottery was ever used, it was certainly handmade. Even today handmade pottery only is used in orthodox Brahmanical ritualism ... We learn from the later texts that wheelmade pottery is to be associated with the Asuras, and as such cannot be used in the Vedic sacrifices ...”. In a footnote, Das refers to a quotation in R. Mitra: Indo Aryans I, p.274: *āsureṇa tu patreṇa / yatra dadyāt tilodakam / pitaras tatra nāśnanti / daśa varṣāni pañca vā // kulālacakraḡhaṭitam/ āsuram mṛṇmayam smṛtam / tad eva hastaḡhaṭitam / sthālyādi daivikam bhavet //*.

the *ṛṣi*-s made an attempt to call a definite halt to its spread.

Thus the anti-*ari* stand was radical in so far as Aryan expansionism was concerned, but retrogressive from the broader point of view of the assimilation of advanced techniques of production and of cultural changes associated therewith.

It appears that the climax of these developments was the *dāśarājña* war in which the *ṛṣi*-supported Bharatas confronted a “confederacy” of Dasyus and some Aryan groups, probably as the final result of a fairly long drawn out series of mutually hostile acts.

The Bharatas won the battle, but the others apparently won the war. For, strange as it may seem, at the end of this event, the glory of being acclaimed in the hymns belongs not to Bharata princes, but to those called the Pūrus and Kurus. And culturally, the *ṛṣi*-s appear to have survived not by the strength of obstinate orthodoxy, but by virtue of accommodation and vision.

Our interpretation of the relevant references makes us think that after depletion of Aryan strength in the internecine fighting of the *dāśarājña*, the Dasyus for once cherished the hope of dealing a death blow to the entire Aryan race in their land, and rose even against their erstwhile Aryan supporters in the war. At this supremely critical moment, the *ṛṣi*-s seem to have discarded their deep-seated antipathy to the *ari*-led groups. They rose to the occasion and forged Aryan unity in the face of this new Dasyu offensive on the basis of Indraism tempered by accommodation with Varuṇa worship, presenting the Pūru Trasadasyu (“Terror to the Dasyus”) as the son of Indra (the *deva* par excellence) and Varuṇa (the asuric deity, if ever there was one), consecrating him as a supra-tribal *rājan* holding sway over “the five *ḥṛṣṭīs*” or *janas*. By this consecratory act, the *ṛṣi*-s seem to have sanctioned a descendant of a tribe that was hostile to the Bharatas in a new ritual arrangement that heralded a break with the tribal chieftaincy pattern of the early Aryans. It reminds us of the theory of divine concession of power to Indra in the face of the threat from Vṛtra.

The *janas* were saved from defeat and they survived as Aryans, but by now they had already learned something of the superior non-Aryan economic and cultural practices.

Thus it appears that with the *dāśarājña*, tribal, political and cultural- religious practices among the Aryans underwent a sweeping change. From now on, the recognized way to authority was not tribal elderliness but investiture with *ḥṣatra* by brahmanical rites. In this way there probably came about the supersession of the *ari* by the *ḥṣatriyas*. To begin with, the qualification necessary for a *sūri* (= *rājan*) for investiture with *ḥṣatra*

would have been proven capability in the military field in addition to birth in a family of wealth and power.⁵¹⁴

The supersession of the *ari* by the *rājan* would not have been sudden. It is likely that at first the *rājan* was granted the authority to command the tribesmen during periods of military exigency, with the traditional tribal leadership resuming control in times of peace. The researches of Schlerath and also the evidence of the theory of concession of *kṣatra* seem to us to point in this direction.

In any case the *ari* would have remained, even after the advent of the *kṣatriyas*, as cattle-owning agricultural chiefs, for a considerable time. And of course some of them would have risen to power as *kṣatriyas* by virtue of their own might and strength. But by and large they would have constituted the leadership of a new, wealth-owning productive class, the *aryas*. Eventually, chiefly due to the residue of Brahmanical prejudices associated with the concept of *ari*, the title itself seems to have been replaced by that of *śreṣṭhin*,⁵¹⁵ and the productive class known as the *vaiśyas*.

It is our belief that the various constituents of the hypothesis outlined above explain the *ari* tangle to a very great extent. They provide a satisfactory explanation of the various connotations and associations of the word such as the following:

- (1) the *ari* as the holder of wealth and sources of nourishment.
- (2) the *ari* as the power from whom wealth is to be forcibly won by the *sūri*-s,
- (3) the *ari* as the opponent of Bharatas and Śrñjayas,
- (4) the *ari* being associated with trends inimical to Indra and Soma cults, to Brahmanical culture and power ; and his being associated with Asurism, and Dasyu and *yātu* cults, and
- (5) the *ari* as an occasional happy partner in practices favoured by the *ṛṣi*-s.

They also explain the reasons for

- (6) the disappearance of the primary and designative meaning of *ari* and
- (7) the Ārya-Dāsa collusion against the Bharatas in the War of Ten Kings (which hitherto remained a baffling phenomenon).

⁵¹⁴ One of the words used in the RV for the *sūri* is *sujātā*- “nobly-born”. Cf. e.g. 7.1.4c (describing the sacrificial altar): *yātrā nārah samāsate sujātāḥ* // and 7.1.15 : *sujātāsah pāri caranti vīrāḥ* //.

⁵¹⁵ But even during the period of the Brāhmaṇa texts *śreyas* / *śreṣṭhin* did not exclusively mean “a rich Vaiśya” : see Rau, pp.32ff., 73ff. They were also applied to rich Brahmins and kings.

Our hypothesis does not also complicate

(8) the problem of the derivation of the ethnic term *ārya* from the word *ari* (indubitable from such references as *ārīr viṣaḥ* — Aryan clans: RV 1.77.3, 1.96.3).

(On the other hand our hypothesis provides a cogent basis for that derivation).

And last, but not least,

(9) Our hypothesis is generally in accord with the indigenous explanations of the meaning of *ari* / *arya*, offered by Yāska, Pāṇini and Mahidhara.

Incidentally, our hypothesis also does not contradict the more valid aspects of Prof. Thieme's researches, notably those associated with the secondary meanings of *arya* and *aryaman*.

Conclusion

We surmise then the development of the senses of *ari*, *arya*, *ārya*, *ārī* and *aryaman* to have been as follows:

- A.
- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>ari</i> : | tribe's chief as holder of its wealth and institutor of contests, from whom wealth could be won by valiant effort. |
| <i>arya</i> : | chieflike, noble, wealthy. |
| <i>ārī</i> / <i>ārya</i> : | belonging to an <i>ari</i> , related to an <i>ari</i> , noble; (member) of the race whose tribal chiefs were <i>ari</i> -s. |
| <i>aryaman</i> : | god who epitomizes the ideal qualities of an <i>ari</i> . |
- B.
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| <i>ari</i> : | holder of wealth who has grown averse to the Vedic concepts of its utilization and disposal, who has assimilated non-Vedic practices of increasing and hoarding wealth and thus has learned to accept (or tolerate) alien rites and beliefs. |
| <i>arya</i> : | master, owner of wealth, <i>vaiśya</i> . |
| <i>ari</i> : | unfriendly one, adversary, foe. |

Thus the connotations of *ari* move from (i) "power to contend with" to (ii) "power to contend against".

Appendix I

The Āyus

Geldner, in notes to his translation of RV 1.31.5/11 and 1.104.4 suggests that Āyu was the word for a prominent Aryan stock as well as its ancestral patriarch, and that it often appears to be used with the same significance as the word Ārya. Commenting on 5.43.14 he says, however, that in this context the Āyus are Aryan priests, as also in 9.15.7, etc. etc.

In 1.31.11 Agni is the *prathama āyu*: the first *āyu*. This helps us understand the exact significance of Āyu. Agni is the first of priests, and the Āyus are priests. We can see that significance in most contexts of the RV where the word occurs. A few examples are:

- 1.60.3: The Āyus, as *ṛtvijs*, have enkindled the fire.
- 1.117.25: The Āyus have declared the ancient heroic deeds of the *Aśvins*.
- 1.130.6: The Āyus have, “for sake of (gaining your) pleasure, fashioned this word for you”.
- 1.131.6: The Āyus have distinguished Indra with eulogies (*stoma*).
- 2.20.4: The new Āyu who engages in *brahma* activity (i.e. specifically religious work). (New, as opposed to Agni, who is the first Āyu).
- 9.15.7, 57.3, 63.17, 64.23: Āyus purify (strain) Soma.

It is important to note that in several instances, the authors of hymns refer to themselves as Āyus (Cf. e.g., 1.130.6: *imāṃ ... vācam ... āyāvo ... atakṣiṣuḥ*; 2.31.7: *etā ... atakṣann āyāvaḥ*; 8.3.16: *stómebhir maháyanta āyāvaḥ priyāmedhāso*).

Where the *kavyatā* of Āyu is referred to, as in 1.96.2, Āyu obviously is regarded as *kavi* which again invites comparison with the priestly epithet of Agni, as in 4.2.12: *kavīm śasāsuh kaváyó 'dabdhāḥ*: “the wise ones (the *kavis*) instructed the *kavi*, being undeceived” or 1.1.5: *agnír hótā kavíkratuḥ*.

Appendix II

Dāsas and Dasyus

An examination of the total Ṛgvedic evidence on the Dāsas and Dasyus shows that

- (i) the word *dāsa* can convey an ethnic sense (cf. e.g., such usages as *dāsaṃ vārṇam*, *dāsīr vīśah*: 2.11.4, 2.12.4, 4.28.4, 6.25.2 etc.),
- (ii) a *dāsa* could also be called a *dasyu* at the same time (cf. e.g., Śuṣṇa at 7.19.2 and 8.6.14, Śambara at 4.30.14 and 1.59.6, Pipru at 8.32.2 and 1.51.5),
- (iii) *dasyu* conveys associations of cult-hostility (cf. the use of such adjectives as *avrata*, *aśraddha*, *akratu*, *ayajyu*, *adevayu*, *akarma*, *amantu*, *anyavrata* to qualify Dasyus as in 1.175.3, 4.16.9, 7.6.3, 8.70.11, 10.22.8 etc.)
- (iv) the attested instances link *dāsa* with concepts of power, authority etc., cf. *pūro dāsāpatnīr* (3.12.6), *dāsāpatnīr ... āpah* (1.32.11), *ōjo dāsāsya* (8.40.6), *dāsasya ... vadhām* (10.102.3) etc.

If one were to judge from the Ṛgvedic evidence alone, one must say that *dasyu* is the term that is used to denote non-Aryans in general, perhaps any one distinguishable from the Aryans on account of religious differences; in distinction to that *dāsa* is a word that seems to denote a specific ethnic group that held authority in the area to which the Indo-Aryans migrated.

“The great difference between the Dasyus and the Aryans was their religion ... As compared with the Dāsas, they are less distinctively a people ...” (Macdonell and Keith: Vedic Index, under Dasyu).