THE ‘ARYAN’ GODS OF THE MITANNI TREATIES

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

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

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

It is easy to see that in each case where there exists a clearly recognizable difference between Indo-Aryan and Iranian, the terms and names of the Akkadian and Hittite documentation (as far as they are safely identifiable) side with Indo-Aryan—s in intervocalic or prevocalic initial positions, which in Iranian appears as h, is preserved: Našaattijā- (Mitanni treaty): Sanskrit Naṣatiya, but Iranian *Naḥaṭya (Av. Naḥaṭya); sattā- (Kikkuli): Sanskrit saptā, but Iranian ḥaftā, hafta; the numeral ‘one’ is aika- (Kikkuli): Sanskrit eka, but Iranian aīva.

However, it is not possible to deny that the forms Naṣatiya, saptā and a numeral aika might be Proto-Aryan. As far as s is concerned, Indo-Aryan preserves the old situation while Iranian has innovated; as to aika, the possibility must be admitted that both *aika and *aīva were Proto-Aryan and that the exclusive adoption of *aika in Indo-Aryan and of aīva in Iranian is the result of a later development. The fact that Proto-Aryan *ai and *au are replaced in Indo-Aryan by e and o,
while in old Iranian they are preserved as \textit{ai} and \textit{au} and that \textit{ai} and \textit{au} regularly appear on the Anatolian documents (e.g., Kikkuli’s \textit{aika}), is unfortunately inconclusive. It is quite possible that at the time of our oldest Indo-Aryan records (the hymns of the Rigveda) the actual pronunciation of the sounds developed from *\textit{ai} and *\textit{au}, spoken and written by the tradition as \textit{e} and \textit{o}, was still \textit{ai} and \textit{au}. The pronunciation \textit{e} and \textit{o} can be a secondarily introduced change under the influence of the spoken language on the scholastic recitation.\footnote{Differently J. Wackernagel, \textit{Altind. Gramm.} I § 35, with an ingenious, but hardly cogent argumentation: weak perfect stems like \textit{pec-}, \textit{sek-}, \textit{sep}- need not have been created in analogy to \textit{sed-} (\textit{*sazd-}) with old \textit{\textae}, but can be innovations after \textit{yem-}, \textit{yet-} (\textit{Av. \textaeet-}) with old \textit{*ai}.}

The interpretation of the ‘Aryan’ proper names is often highly conjectural. But, in no case do we get a decisive argument against their Indo-Aryan or Old-Indic character.\footnote{Cf. Dumont, \textit{JAOS} 67 (1947), p. 253. H. S. Nyberg, \textit{Religionen des alten Iran} (1938), p. 332 speaks of a language which is ‘arisch, weder indisch noch iranisch, steht aber dem späteren Indisch zunächst.’ I cannot see that our linguistic data permit us to make such subtle distinctions and to establish an answer to the theoretical dilemma: Indo-Aryan or Old Indic (theoretically more precise still: Indo-Aryan, Proto-Indian, Old Indic, or Vedic Indic)? Of ‘clearly Iranian sound forms’ (G. Widengren, \textit{Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte}, p. 105) Nyberg makes no mention. Widengren, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 104, n. 167 and p. 105, n. 170, and Mayrhofer, \textit{Die Sprache}, vol. V, p. 91, n. 72 fail to offer any valid instance of an ‘Iranian’ name, which would have to be a name for which an explanation in terms of Indo-Aryan (Old Indic) can be excluded.} A chance of finding more distinct clues is offered by the series of Aryan divine names on the Mitanni treaties. In his essay \textit{The Aryan Gods Of The Mitani People} (Kristiania Etnografiske Museums Skrifter Bind 3 Hefte 1; Kristiania, 1921), Sten Konow vigorously maintained that a clear-cut difference between Proto-Aryan and Indo-Aryan divine nomenclature necessarily has to be assumed, and that by taking into account this difference it becomes possible to settle the Indo-Aryan (Vedic) nature of the gods named as witnesses on the treaties.

Sten Konow’s arguments have been unduly neglected by several contemporary scholars. It is, for instance, hard to accept T. Burrow’s statement (\textit{Sanskrit Language}, p. 30): “It is only the antiquity and conservatism of the Indian tradition, as opposed to the Iranian, that has led scholars to regard these Aryans [in the Mitanni realm] as specifically Indo-Aryan.” One of Konow’s chief points was that the Vedic \textit{Indra} must be distinguished from a presumable Proto-Aryan \textit{*Indra} and that the particular role he plays in the RV alone can be held responsible for his appearing in the Mitanni treaty in the company of \textit{Mitra} and \textit{Varuṇa}. Nor do I find it possible to concur with Mayrhofer’s characterization of the relation of Vedic and Iranian to Proto-Aryan religion (\textit{Die Sprache}, Vol. V, p. 90: “Bei den Götternamen [war] . . . was uns nur im Veda in voller Blüte erscheint, doch mit Sicherheit [sic!] bereits im Gemeinarischen, aber ebenso wohl im vorzarahus-trischen Iranischen vorhanden . . .”), which, while being in full harmony with views held and expressed by H. Oldenberg in his time (\textit{cf.}, \textit{e.g.}, \textit{JRAS} 1909, pp. 1096-98), cannot be derived with any cogency from our actual data, and rather rests on highly questionable simplifications. It is not quite fair to censure for ‘overlooking facts’ (Mayrhofer, \textit{l. c.}) those who, like Konow, do not take such simplifying generalizations for granted. To be correct, Burrow’s verdict might well have to be inverted: It is only the unquestioning acceptance of the conservatism of the Indian tradition, as opposed to the Iranian, that has led some scholars to regard the Aryan gods of the Mitanni treaty to be Proto-Aryan.

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

2. The lists of the Aryan gods on the Hatti-Mitanni (KBo I 1 and duplicates) and the Mitanni-Ḫatti (KBo I 3) treaties read:
It cannot be doubted, and indeed never was, that the onomastic elements of these texts, which are given in italics in my transcription, have exact equivalents in Vedic religious poetry. Here the stem forms of the names quoted would read: Mitrā-, Varuṇa-, Indra-, Nāsatya-.

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

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

ahām mitrā-vārūṇaḥ ubhā bibharmi
ahām indrāgni ahām āsvinā ubhā

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

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

It is the merit of G. Dumézil (Les dieux des Indo-Européens, Paris 1952, p. 9 ff.) to have pointed out the analogy of the Mitanni series and that of RV 10.125.1bc. Whether or not we follow his interpretation of the rationale of the grouping—and I for my part do not—, the parallelism remains a fact worthy of consideration. There is no justification for obliterating this potential clue by choosing to quote the gods of the Mitanni treaties in an arbitrarily changed order (Burrow, op. cit., p. 28).

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

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

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

* Cf. Friedrich, Hethitisches Elementarbuch I §§ 6b, 17a.
* A. Goetze writes: ‘I do not think that you might simply read uaruna; one might suppose that the scribe (for reasons not known to me) understood (or explained for himself) yaruna standing for uruana (which may have conveyed some sense to him).’

* Cf. also the Avestan spelling armaiī for expected *armaitī, obviously to be explained as due to a wrong analysis of the sandhi in the expression: *spontārmaīti or, rather, its Middle Iranian equivalent.
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Of course, all this must remain guesswork. As matters stand, we can count ourselves fortunate that the context permits no doubt; the two spellings are representations of the name that appears in Indo-Aryan as Varuṇa.

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

Traces of this archaic type of compound can be found also in Old-Iranian (Avestan: pasu-vitra 'beast and man,' mitra-ahura 'Mitra and Ahura') and perhaps among some other Indo-European languages (cf. Wackernagel, Alteind Gramm., II 1 § 63 a). Catullus' Veneres Cupidinesque (3.1; 13.13) may be a late echo of this construction—preserved in a ritual formula—meaning actually: 'Venus and Cupido' (E. Schwyzer, IF 14, p. 28 ff.). Apart from the superabundant -que, the Latin expression would precisely correspond to the Akkadian orthographical rendering of Mitra-Varuṇa in that it replaces an older dual, that has vanished from the language, by a plural.

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

RV 7.38.4cd

abhī samṝṛjo vārṇaṃ grṇanty
abhī mitraṣo aryamā sajōṣāḥ

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

AV 3.4.6ab

indrendra manuṣyādhi, pārehī
sāṃ hy ājñāsthā vārṇaḥ saṃvidānāḥ

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

The plural seems to designate the god as being in the company of other related deities: Mitra ś Mitra and so on, Varuṇais 'with Varuṇa and so on.' Similarly Aryamānas in RV 3.54.18a would have to be taken, according to my suggestion (Mitra and Aryaman [1957], p. 13) as 'Aryaman and so on.'

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

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

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

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

The verse seems to refer to Indra's adulterous relations to human wives (cf., e.g., Ahalyā legend). For manuṣyādhi read mānuṣyādhi! Whitney's numerous conjectures appear uncalled for and arbitrary.

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

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

A. Goetze would explain the expressions in quite a different way. Following his analysis, we should obtain something like ‘to God Mitra belonging ones.’ The difficulty is that this furnishes a type of expression that is neither common in Vedic nor found in Avestan. The nearest equivalent I could think of would be the Vedic hapax: Mitrā-Varunavant- ‘accompanied by Mitra and Varuna.’ It qualifies the two Nāsatyas in RV 8.35.13:

*Mitrā-Varunavantā utā dhārmavantā<br>Marūtvantā jaritūr gacchatho āvam ... Aśvinā*

13 A. Goetze writes: “The only way in which I can understand dīngir-mēš Mit-ṛa-aś-śi-il/el is this: It is subject of an intransitive verb, i.e., the form which with a transitive verb would mark the object. This form ends in the singular in -n, in the plural in -lan (<-śan). However, under certain conditions the -(a)n would not appear on the noun itself (see JAOS 60 [1940], pp. 217-23). Here we have the -(a)n-less form in Akkadian context. The chain of suffixes is as follows: dīngir-me-Mitra-ś: plural indefinite ‘Mitra-gods’ (to this the plural determinative properly belongs). Mitra-śē<sreekă Mitra-ś-eve: ‘genitive’ (in reality an adj. of appurtenance, see RHA 39 [1940], pp. 193-204), ‘belonging to Mitra-gods’<br>Mitra-śē<śel: ‘accusative,’ ‘some (indefinite) belonging to Mitra-gods.’

The plural ‘Mitra-gods’ probably represents the Skt. dualis Mittṛa/Mitru.

dīngir-mēš-C-ru-ya-na-aṣ-śi-el should be explained in analogous fashion.”

“You two Aśvins! Come to the singer’s call, accompanied by Mitra (personified ‘contract’) and Varuna (personified ‘true speech’) and accompanied by Dharma (personified ‘lawfulness’ or the like), accompanied by the Maruts ...”

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

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

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

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

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

15 Cf. E. F. Weidner’s German translation in *Boghashki Studien* 8, p. 29 and p. 49, which I follow, introducing certain corrections I owe to A. Goetze.

16 A. Goetze doubts the correctness of his translation. He contemplates ‘gods of the assembly’ (pu-ur-ri ‘secret’ erroneously written for pu-uh-ri ‘assembly’). The general gods (those of the ‘assembly’) would be distinguished from the special gods (‘the lords of the oath’). Cf. also below pp. 307 and 316 n. 26.
these words of the treaty [are pronounced], may they hear and may they be witnesses. If thou, Mattrigaza, son of a king, and ye the Hurri people do not keep the words of this treaty, may the gods who are the lords of the oath destroy you, thee . . . and ye the Hurri people, together with your country, together with your women, and together with your possessions . . . ."

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

Since the Mitanni prince Mattrigaza himself, his father Tusratta and other Mitanni princes bear names that are unmistakably Aryan, the obvious presumption is that the Aryan gods in the list are gods of the royal family - and perhaps of part of the nobility - while the Mitanni gods are those of the Hurri people.

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

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

Appaching the problem in this way, we are looking in the same direction as Konow did in his Aryan Gods . . . But we differ in several respects. Konow really asks and answers only the much vaguer question whether the Aryan gods of the treaties can by their nature 'have something to do with the treaty itself.' Thus he is satisfied to motivate, e.g., the naming of Indra by his being 'the god of war and battle whose activity led to the conclusion of the peace.'

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

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

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

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

RV 3.59.1a

mitrō jānān yātayati bruvaṇāḥ

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

3.59.3cd

ādityāśya vratām upakṣiyānto
vayām mitrāśya sumatau syāma

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

The Avesta, especially the Mihr Yašt (Yt. 10) is even more explicit and eloquent in depicting Mitra as the protector of those that are faithful to their contracts and as the enemy of those who
belie’ their ‘contract’ or ‘contractual word’ (miṭra-ārūj). For material see my Mitra and Aryaman, pp. 24-38 and J. Gersevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mitra (1959), p. 26 ff., where Miśra’s role as ‘the guarantor of orderly international relations,’ as ‘the god of the international treaty,’ is rightly stressed, and pp. 75 ff., passim.

Since A. Meillet’s well known paper in JA X (1907), p. 143 ff., it must be considered as firmly established that already in Proto-Aryan times there existed a god *Mitra ‘Contract, Treaty,’ a personified and divinized abstraction. The Avestic appellative noun miṭra- means ‘contract, treaty,’ so does the Rigvedic mitra-, e.g., in 10.54.14a, 10.108.3c, 10.89.9a (cf. Thieme, Fremdling im RV, p. 139, Mitra and Aryaman, pp. 20, 62). This meaning is clearly recognizable also in bahuvrīhīs like drōghamitra ‘he whose contract (contractual word) is a lie,’ hitāmitra ‘by whom a contract/treaty is (was) concluded’ (mitram dhā ‘to establish, conclude a treaty’: Mitra and Aryaman, p. 39 ff., RV 10.132.5b hitē mitrē ‘when a contract is concluded’): cf. H. W. Bailey, TPS (1953), p. 40; amitrā means ‘without contract,’ i.e., ‘not recognizing the sacredness of contracts’ (Mitra and Aryaman, p. 62), only occasionally in the plural (in the expression ubhāyā amitrāh, RV 2.12.8): ‘not bound by mutual contracts’ = ‘enemies.’

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

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

AV. 1.10.3 [yad] yād uvākthāṃtāṃ jihvāyā virjīnām bahā rājītas tvā satyādharmaṇo muṇcāmi vārunād ahām

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

AV 19.44.8ab

bakh idām rājan varuṇā-

-ṇṛtam āha pāruṣaḥ
tāsmāt sahasravirya
muṇcā naḥ pāry āmūrasyaḥ

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

RV 7.49.3ab

yāsāṁ rājā vāruno yāti mādhye
satyāṅrī avapāṣyaḥ jānānam...

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

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

AV 4.16.2cd
dvāsā samnirāḍya [yad] yān mantrāyete
rājā tād veda vāruṇas īṛtyāḥ

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

In RV 1.136.3f Varuṇa is explicitly identified with Mitra: both are yātayajjana ‘causing people to make mutual agreements’: mitrās tāygar vāruno yātayajjanaḥ. “Among these two (Mitra and Varuṇa, mentioned in the preceding line) Varuṇa, insofar as he causes people to make mutual agreements, is Mitra . . . .” Cf. Mitra and Aryaman, p. 41.

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

RV 5.65.6ab

yuvāṃ mitrā, imāṃ jānāṃ
yātathāḥ sām ca nayathāḥ

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

5.72.2ab

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

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

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

Assuming the existence of a Proto-Aryan divine name *Varuṇa, we would have to explain why its linguistic equivalent does not appear in the Avesta. This is not easy. Of the names of the four chief Vedic Ādityās: Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and Bhaga, the last three have clear and uncontestable correspondences in the Avesta—Mithra, Aryanman, Baya—while the first is conspicuously lacking. This is all the more singular since rta 'truth,' the ethical concept most intimately associated with Varuṇa in the RV, is in its Avestic form (rēta/ aša) a central concept of Zarathushtrian religion. The general affinity of the Rigvedic Āditya terminology and that of Zarathustra and the younger Avesta is so close that deviations must be taken seriously. While, for example, the correspondence of Rigvedic asura and Avestic āhura establishes a Proto-Aryan religious term, the lack of an Avestic linguistic equivalent of āditya and that of a Rigvedic one of Avestic sūnīa creates a problem and may turn out to be significant. So does the non-existence of an Avestic *Varuruna.

Just as the Rigvedic Mitra forms a pair with Varuṇa, designated by the dvandva Mitra-Varuṇa, the Avestic Mithra appears, on several occasions, coupled with Ahura in the dvandva Mithra-Ahura (Ny. 1.7; 2.13; Yt. 10.113; 145) or Ahura-Mithra (Y. 2.11; 6.10; 17.10), Ahuraēībya-Mītraēībya (Y. 1.11; 3.13; 4.16; 7.13; 22.13).

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

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

As other gods and some demons, Mitra-Varuṇa can be, and indeed are characteristically often, designated as asura; the Avestic Mithra is clearly called ahura twice (Yt. 10.35; 69).

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

RV 5.63.3d
dyāṁ varṣayatho āsurasya māyāyā
“You two (Mitra-Varuna) make rain the sky through the magic power of Asura.”

and RV 5.83.6d
apó nisiñcann āśuraḥ pitā naḥ

“Our father, the Asura, who sprinkles down the waters.”

In the Yasna Haptañhaiti (‘s i riche en survivals mythiques’: Benveniste, op. cit., p. 46), the waters (āpō) are qualified on several instances (e.g., Y. 38.3; 68.10) as ahurānī ahurāyā/ahurāhe ‘[wives] of Ahura, [daughters] of Ahura.’ There is no reason whatsoever not to connect this directly with the statements of RV 5.83.6d and 5.63.3d.

Mitra-Varuna are joined with Asura not only in giving rain, but also in ‘protecting their vows,’ that is, as guardians of truth:

RV 5.63.7bc
vratā rakṣetha āśurasya māyāyā
tēna víśvam bhūvānām vi rājaṭahāḥ

“You two (Mitra-Varuna) protect your vows (= those given to you and by you) through the magic power of Asura; through truth (ṛta) you rule the universe . . . .” Most closely corresponds:

Ny. 2.12 mitra-ahura harsqata
aiḍhyajānha aśāvana
yazamaide

“We worship Mitra and Ahura, the high, who are without danger (i.e., ‘who protect from danger’), who are characterized by truth (i.e., ‘protect, and work through truth’ [aśa = ṛta]).”

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

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

RV 2.12.9
yāsmān nā rtē vijāyante jānāso
yāṃ yūdhyaṃānā dvase hāvante . . .
. . . sā jandasa īndrāḥ

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

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

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

RV 10.89.9
prā yē mitraṃ prāryamānaṃ durēvāḥ
prā samgirāḥ prā vārunaṃ minānti
ny āṃṭreṣu vadham indra tāṁrāṁ
vīṣan vīṣāṇam aruṣāṁ sīṣiḥ

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

It does seem unfortunate that Dumézil did not
follow up this track, which he discovered himself.\footnote{While admitting in the text (op. cit., p. 33) that the explanation of Indra as a guarantor of the treaty is possible, Dumézil surprisingly states in the ‘Sommaire’ (op. cit., p. 15): ‘cette explication échoue pour Indra ...’}

For him, the difficulty is that it leads away from the point he had firmly made up his mind to reach: an accommodation of the Mitanni-Aryan gods within his ‘idéologie des trois fonctions.’ Considering the perfect ease with which almost any series of men or gods divisible by three can be accounted for by the terms of Dumézil’s theory, as J. Brough experimentally established by applying it to data of the Old Testament (BSOAS, 23, pp. 69-85), we may forego investigating this approach. Happily, for our present purpose we are concerned not with what Dumézil, but with what the Vedic poet says. He is unequivocal. The Vedic poet insists on Indra slaying the amitra ‘him who does not recognize the sacredness of contracts/treaties’ to the point of becoming repetitious:

RV 1.63.2; 69.5; 100.5; 133.1; 3.30.16; 6.25.2; 33.1; 44.17; 46.6; 46.8; 73.2; 3; 7.18.9; 25.2; 32.35 8.16.10; 10.103.4; 152.3.

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

RV 2.12.10

yāh sāsvato máhya éno dádhānān
āmanyamānān chārvā jaghāna ...

sā janāsa indraḥ

“Who has slain with the arrow those committing great guilt, one after the other (sāsvatas), when they were not thinking [of him] ... he, you peoples, is Indra!” Compare the analogous idea held with reference to Mitra in Yt. 10.19 (Mitra and Aryaman, p. 34).

RV 7.104.8

yó mā pākena mánasā cárantam
abhičaśte ántrebhīr vácobhīr
ápa iva kāśīnā sāṃgrbhitā
ásann astv ásata indra vaktā

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

7.104.13cd

hánti rākṣo hánty ásad vādantam
ubhāv indrasya práśitau sāyāte

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

7.104.16

yó máyātmam yātudhānēty áha
yó vá rakṣāḥ śucir āsmitā áha
indras tāṁ hantu mahatā vadhēna
vīśvasya jāntor adhamāś padiṣṭa

“Who says to me, who is a non-sorcerer: ‘You sorcerer,’ or who, being [himself] a harmer (=a sorcerer), says: ‘I am clean’—let Indra slay him with his great club, let him (the sorcerer) fall [so as to be] the lowest of all [living] creation.”\footnote{To say nothing of those, exceedingly numerous, cases where a series is not so divisible in fact, but has to be adjusted by the devices of adding, subtracting, splitting or combining.}

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

7.83.9ab

vrtrāny anyāh samithēsu jighnate
vrūtāny anyāḥ abhi rakṣate sădā

“The one (Indra) smashes the defences [of the

\footnote{According to Lommel, op. cit., p. 7, the subjective preference accorded to certain groups of details in the picture of a given god would be a necessary, but objectionable, feature of historical analysis in contradistinction to Lommel’s own method.}\footnote{Or cf. Bo I 1 rev. 28: ‘... Mattiāvazā is not to contemplate any calumny against Bijaśsīlī, his brother, and not to instigate another man to calumny against Bijaśsīlī ...’}
attacked enemy] in the battles, the other (Varuṇa) protects the vows always."

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

7. 85. 2cd

yuvām tāṁ indrāvaruṇāv amitrān
hatām pārācaḥ śārvā viśūcaḥ

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

4. 5 Indra and Vṛtrāryaṇa: The name Indra appears twice in the Avesta (VD. 10.9; 19.43) as that of a bad demon (daēva) together with Sauرة (Vedic Sāra; ΑV, VS +) and Nāvhaṭha (Vedic Nāṣatya). He has shared the common fate of the other *daivas ‘the heavenly,’ who were demonized throughout, with the conspicuous exception of Haoma = Vedic Soma, whereas the old *asuras (e.g., *Mitra, *Aryaman) continued to exist as gods side by side with Ahura Mazda in the younger Avesta. While the Rigvedic Indra is occasionally called an asura, he is most frequently designated as deva.

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

The Avestan god who protects treaties by punishing those who break them is, in the first place, Mītra ([God] Contract), himself. He wields as his weapon the club (vázra), as the Vedic Indra his vajra. Mītra is vṛtrārjasta ‘most victorious’ (Yt. 10.98), Indra is vṛtrahan. As a victoriously fighting hero, the Avestan Mītra resembles, in fact, the Rigvedic Indra so closely that, since H. Güntert, Der arische Weltkönig (1924), p. 57, there is a widespread tendency to assume that the Avestan Mītra, who is an ahura (Yt. 10.25; 69), has borrowed a great number of features from the old Indra, who was a *daiva.

The situation may have to be interpreted altogether differently. The assumption that one god has borrowed certain traits from another one becomes necessary, and hence justifiable, only if these traits do not fit his fundamental character or are in glaring contradiction to others. Now, the Avestan Mītra evidently stays in character and behaves with perfect consistency if, in protecting the sanctity of covenants, he not only rewards the faithful, but also punishes the deceitful. He cannot give victory to those who keep their treaty without helping to defeat those who do not. Why should not the Avesta have preserved Proto-Aryan ideas and the RV have made an innovation by making Indra the executive, as it were, of the gods who are the guardians of truth and covenants (as in RV 10.89.9)? Even the Rigvedic Mītra, in whose image the benign traits are usually emphasized, has snares in which to catch transgressors: RV 2.27.16; 7.65.3, and may show wrath: RV 7.62.4 (cf. Mitra and Aryan, p. 51 ff. and 58). It is true, the picture of the Avestan Mītra, victoriously fighting from his chariot those who belie their contractual word (mītra-druj) and fight against their contract-partners (aiwi-mītri), so eloquently evoked in Yt. 10.124 ff., has no match, as far as colorful distinctness goes, in what the Rigvedic poet says about Mitra and Mītrā-Varuṇa. Yet RV 8.25.2 speaks of Mitra and Varuṇa as tānā nā rathyd ‘charioteers as it were in person’; 5.63.1 opens: rtasya gòpāv ādhi tiṣṭhathī ratham ‘as the protectors of truth you mount the chariot.’ Even more explicit is AV 4.29.1 and 7:

manvē vāṁ mītrāvaruṇāv rtārādhau
sācetasau dhūvano yau nudēthe
prā satyāvānam āvātho bhāreṣu...
yāyo rāthah satyāvartmarjārāsinīr
mithyād cāranti abhiyāti dūsāyan...
“I think of you, Mitra and Varuna, who are strong through truth, of one mind, who drive away the liars, who help the truthful one in the battles, . . . [you] whose chariot, of which the course is true, of which the reins are straight, attacks him who behaves with falsehood, destroying [him].”

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

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

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

Far from being able to dispute the basic principles of the approach of Benveniste and Renou, I disagree with them only on one particular point, where I seem to find that they did not keep to their principles with all desirable consistency, but preferred to comprise with the communis opinio, which for the rest they combatted so successfully. I cannot accept the reconstruction of a Proto-Aryan divine name *Vṛtraghan (op. cit., p. 116). This reconstruction, which is not demanded by our facts, leads to an impasse: Benveniste and Renou have to disregard ‘la formation légèrement différente’—in reality: the incompatibility—of the Vedic and Avestan adjective vrtrahan-/vərəbragan-‘smashing resistance[s], victorious’ and of the Avestan personified abstract Vərəbrāyna ‘[God] Victory’ (op. cit., p. 184). By not insisting on the difference of the two terms they themselves established, they left an open door to their prospective opponents. For example, H. Lommel (Der arische Kriegsgott, p. 47 ff.) bases his objections on the assumption of a Proto-Aryan God *Indra Vṛtraghan, with whose help he attacks the inferences of Benveniste and Renou. This would not have been possible, had they only reconstructed the necessary minimum: 1. a *daiva Indra (possibly qualifiable, like other gods, as *vrtra-ghan ‘victorious’), and 2. a *Vṛtraghana m. ‘[God] Victory’ (possibly qualifiable as *asuradhāta ‘created by the *asuras’ or ‘by *Asura’).

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

The Proto-Aryan term *vrtra-ghan must have been an adjective ‘smashing [hostile] resistance[s]’ (formed like Vedic rakṣo-hān-, dasyu-hān-, ahihān-: Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., p. 116, n. 1). In the sense ‘victorious’ the Avestic adjective vərəbragan qualifies various gods—Haōma, Śraōša, Vāta, Miθra, Ahura Mazdā—but also a human hero—Ωrəståona (Yt. 5.61)—and his weapon (Yt. 19.92), religious saviors, starting with Zarathustra (Yt. 8.20), and their prayers (mqbra): Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., p. 20 ff. While in later Sanskrit literature Vṛtrahan exists as a name of Indra, the RV itself uses vṛtrahan, essentially as an adjective (fem.: vrtra-ghnī, qualifying Sarasvatī), which itself cannot take an epithet: Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., p. 115. This adjective is preponderantly a qualification of Indra, which occasionally, especially in the vocative, may be used as a quasi-nominal designation of the god. Not too rarely, however, it qualifies other gods, too, and even the king Trasadasuṣy. In some cases this might be accounted for as a secondary transfer of an attribute of Indra, but, as Renou showed (op. cit., p. 115 ff.), by no means is this possible in every instance. There is, then, no valid justification for supposing that the Proto-Aryan adjective *vṛtraghan was specifically connected with *Indra or with any other particular god (though, by prima facie evidence we can reconstruct a combina-
tion *Soma *vṛtraghan [Y. 9.16; Yt. 14.57; RV 9.89.7; 10.25.9]). Even less reason exists for postulating a god *Vṛtraghan.

The Avestan divine name Vṛerdrāyna m. cannot be looked upon as a derivative or an equivalent of the adjective vr̥erdra-gan. Its true linguistic analysis is obvious. It is the masculinization of the abstract neuter vr̥erdra-ya ‘the smashing of resistance[s]’ / ‘strength to smash resistances’ = ‘victory/victorius strength’ — formed like Vedic ahīghna n. ‘the slaying of the dragon’; parrnayagarna n. ‘the slaying of Parnaya’; goghana n., purusagarna n. ‘the slaying of cattle/men’; *sva-garna n. ‘the slaying of the “dog”’ (= ‘victory in gambling’) : cf. Renou-Benveniste, op. cit., p. 117, n. 1; Wackenagel-Debrunner, Altind. Gram. II 2 § 22 ba.²⁵ The standing attribute of Vṛerdrāyna is ahurādāta; with one typical exception, it belongs to him alone (Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., p. 42). As Benveniste has shown with cogent argumentation, ahurādāta cannot be interpreted as ‘created by Ahura Mazda,’ but must be taken as ‘created by the ahuras’ or ‘created by Ahura.’ Vṛerdrāyna must then be a pre-Zarathushtrian deity (op. cit., p. 49). He belongs in the vicinity of the ahura Midra (Yt. 10.25; 69), whom he also resembles in being the masculine personification of a neutral abstract. Though the Veda does not furnish a direct confirmation, the odds are in favor of the assumption that the Pre-Zarathushtrian Vṛerdrāyna reflects a Proto-Aryan *Vṛtragha.

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

Quite different is the situation with regard to the Vedic Indra. He is a most complex personality, composed of sometimes disparate, sometimes even contradictory traits. Even Lommel, who makes it his task to ‘understand’ Indra as a perfectly integrated whole: ‘als einheitliches Ganzes’ (Der arische Kriegsgott, p. 7), has to ignore certain features of his as being ‘not characteristic,’ since they contradict his alleged unity (op. cit., p. 17, n. 2). These are precisely the traits he shares with Vṛerdrāyna (cf. above p. 310). On the one hand, Indra is a deva, who kills asuras (asura-han), on the other, he is an asura himself who collaborates with the asuras, Mitra and Varuṇa, and appears closely joined to Varuṇa in the common dvandva Indrā-Varuṇa. He is the hanū vṛtrāsa ya ‘the slayer of (= about to slay) the obstruction (which prevents the waters ‘they (the Fravašis) recognize those (tē) as warriors, in whom there is the [youthful] smell of [the strength of heroic] resistance.’ The feminine gender of the relative pronoun is due to the concept tandī, ‘body, person’ being mentally substituted for tē ‘those [men].’ Cf. Yt. 10.90; 143 (and Gershevitch’s note p. 289).
from flowing),' or of the snake (ahi), the 'personified obstruction' (Vṛtra m.), that obstructs the waters (RV 4.16.7 ḍrṇo vṛtṛm vaeśvīṁsam), and he is also the hánta vṛτṛdāi 'the [habitual] smasher of [hostile] resistances.' Accompanied by the Maruts, he kills the snake (dragon) with the club and frees the waters, and accompanied by the Aṃgirases, he bursts open the rock (vāla), which encloses the cows, with the magic power of truth (cf. Lüders, Varuṇa I, p. 20) and releases the cows. He has traits of a human hero (Benveniste-Renou, op. cit., p. 190), but he is also a world creator (cf. Lüders, op. cit., p. 183-196), whom mankind owes the fundamental necessities of life: light, fire, water, and milk. He is the victor in the battles upon whom any fighting man, all fighting parties, will call for help that brings victory (e.g., RV 2.12.8; 9) and who assists even Mitra and Varuṇa in their battle for the victory of truth.

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

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

4.6. The two Nāsatyas: Quoting the description of the Nāsatyas given by Macdonell in his Vedic Mythology (p. 51), Konow concludes (op. cit., p. 38): "There is nothing in this description which helps us to understand why the Nāsatyas are invoked in the Mitanni treaty." According to Dumézil, Naissance d'archanges, p. 34, the Nāsatyas are 'unequiment bienveillants et bienfaïsant,' and hence their character would forbid explaining their presence in the treaty list in a similar way as that of Indra might be explained—according to Dumézil himself—by referring to RV 10.89.9.

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

RV 8.35.12 explicitly says: hatam ca śatruṁ yātataṁ ca mitriṁaḥ... aśvinī "You two Aśvins (= Nāsatyas) slay the enemies and array (= keep in agreement) those who are connected by a contract/treaty . . . ." For the phraseology, compare RV 7.36.2d jāmaṁ ca mitrō yatati . . . .

"[God] Contract arrays (brings to agreement, keeps in agreement) people," 5.65.6 ab yuvāṁ mitreṁāṁ jāmaṁ yātathāḥ sām ca navatīḥ 'you two, Mitra [and Varuṇa] (i.e., God Contract and God True-Speech) array (bring to agreement, keep in agreement) these people and lead them together': Mitra and Aryaman, p. 40-42.

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

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

8.35.13ab

mitrāvāruṇavantā utā dhārmavantā
marītvantā jāriūc gagacchatam āhavam

"You two (Nāsatyas) come to the singer’s call, accompanied by Mitra and Varuṇa, accompanied by Dharma, accompanied by the Maruts." The difference to what the statement of the preceding verse already indicates is only that the poet adds the more general concept of 'ethical Establishment, Lawfulness' (Dharma) to the divinized concepts 'Contract, Treaty' (Mitra) and 'True Speech' (Varuṇa), and, instead of naming Indra himself, speaks of Indra’s companions in battle, the Maruts. Abstractive from what evidently is nothing but poetic elaboration (the addition of Dharma) and
variation (the substitution of the Maruts for Indra), we obtain in fact again—in addition to RV 10. 125, 1bc, see above p. 303 a Vedic pendant to the Mitanni treaty list, whether it is taken as: 'Mitrā-Varuṇa, Indraḥ, Nāsatya' or (cf. above p. 305) as: 'Mitrā-Varuṇavantaḥ, Indraḥ, Nāsatya.'

Cf. also 1.120.8a mā kāśmai dhātam abhy àmitrīne naḥ "Do not (you Nāsatya) hand us over to anyone who does not keep his treaty."

In RV. 8.10.2 the Aśvins, named by the side of Indrā-Viṣṇu, are called āśuheśasā ‘whose weapon is swift’ (Lüders, Philologica Indica, p. 783 ff.); in 8.8.9 and 22 they are characterized by the adjective vytrahantamā ‘most victorious,’ which again brings them into the vicinity of Indra; the horse they have given is akīhān in 1.118.9, ‘dragon killing’ like Indra himself; the attribute rudravārānti, RV 1.3.3, most probably does not allude to their peace loving nature, but to their character as fighters [against evil], whether we translate ‘of terrible [chariot-]course’ or ‘of the course of Rudra.’

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

The assumption that this idea—that the Nāsatyas fight enemies in general and preserve peace by keeping treaty partners in general agreement (RV 8.35.12)—was the result of a special development within Vedic religion is not contradicted by Avestan evidence. In fact, the Avesta knows of one Nāhāhāiβya only, who is mentioned as a daēva in company with Indra and Saurva (Vd. 10.9; 19.43). Consequently, the reconstruction of a Proto-Aryan dual *Nāsateya must remain doubtful. It must be borne in mind that a single Nāsatya is known to the RV also (4.3.6) and, moreover, the RV once forms a dual dvandva Indra-Nāsatya (8.26.8), which can only mean ‘Indra and the [one] Nāsatya.’ Konow’s statement (op. cit., p. 37): ‘The existing state of things makes it necessary to infer that the dual designation Nāsatya is of Indian growth,’ seems to me to stand unimpaired. Anyway, even if a dual dvandva *Nāsateya did exist in Proto-Aryan times, we have good reason to think that, in association with the name Indra, Nāsatya was in the singular: Rigvedic Indra-Nāsatya (8.26.8) and Vd. 10.9 Indrōm ... Nāhāhāiβim correspond in a way that is, to say the least, strongly suggestive. In this context it is noteworthy that in RV 4.3.6 Nāsatya (sing.) is associated with Rudra (pārījanā nāsateya... rudrāya nṛghnē), in the same way as Nāhāhāiβya is joined with Saurva in the Vd. (Saurva... Nāhāhāiβim), and that Saurva (not attested in the Rigveda) is a Vedic and Classic equivalent of Rudra.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet even this objection is not necessarily fatal.
We have to bear in mind that Mesopotamian and
Anatolian polytheism, on the one hand, and Vedic
polytheism, on the other, represent two distinctly
different types.26

The first one is a temple religion. In such a
religion generally each god has his temple where
his image is worshipped. If the same god has
different temples, he is likely to be regarded as a
different god in each place (A. Goetze, Kulturge-
schichte des alten Orients [1957] p. 131). Within
the district dominated by the temple and the
sphere of its fame, the god is liable to become
omnipotent, even if originally he was a god of
special, limited functions. The greatness of the
god depends on the greatness of the temple: the
‘Sun-goddess of Arinnā,’ for example, who was the
state goddess of the whole Hittite realm (Goetze,
op. cit., p. 136), must have been worshipped in an
all-important sanctuary. All the temple gods
would have the power and the function—besides
many others—to avenge broken oaths and vows.

But in concluding a treaty it was essential to
invoke as many gods as possible in order to cover
the vastest area without leaving, perchance, a gap
where a fugitive might obtain immunity. Thus we
find in our treaty text the Ḫatti and Mitanni gods
qualified by geographical indications on innum-
erable occasions. Of course, evidently in order to
make quite sure that there be no place left where
some god would not rule and deal out punishment
and reward, other more general deities, who hardly
had temples, are invoked, thus (KBo I 1 rev. 53)
not only ‘Heaven’ and ‘Earth,’ but also the ubiqui-
tous ‘Winds’ and ‘Clouds.’ In case they should
violate their treaty, the Mitanni prince and his
subjects are threatened: ‘Thou Mattiğaza and the
Ḫurri people, you shall indeed be enemies to the
thousand gods, may they hunt you’ (KBo I 1
rev. 68).

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

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

a) stitial śa pu-uz-ri (or rather pu-uḫ-ri [cf. above
p. 305, note 16]) ‘the gods of the assembly.’ (This
is, of course, the assembly of the gods, as though
you may invoke the ‘Olympian gods’).

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

Later Hinduism is in type much more similar to old Anatolian religion than Vedic religion is. It presents us with the impression of a chaos, scarcely less than Hittite religion does according to Goetze (op. cit., p. 131), with a ‘hunta Gewimmel’ just as Greek polytheism does according to Goethe (Braut von Korinth). Each city, each town, each village has its temple or temples and gods, and each house its images, its ‘kula-devatās. True, there are, since olden times, certain gods emerging from the multitude and aspiring to the rank of universal gods. Yet, in many cases the geography of the temple still clings to their name. Śiva is still called Kāśmāth ‘Lord of Banaras’ and in this resembles the ŚAMĀS of Arinna,” the ‘Apollo of Delphi’ or the ‘Black Mother of God of Czenstochau.’

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

AN AFRO-ASIATIC PATTERN OF GENDER AND NUMBER AGREEMENT

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It is well-known that in the West Semitic languages, outside of North Arabic and Ugaritic, the masculine singular demonstrative pronoun and adjective *hī has a variant with suffixed -n (*hī-n) and that somewhat less frequently a similar suffix appears with forms from the plural suppletive base *pili (*pili-n). The feminine singular *dā likewise displays two variant forms, with and without a -t suffix. This latter element is, of course, the most widespread indicator of the feminine singular in Semitic and in Afro-Asiatic languages generally. Brockelmann considered the -n suffix of the masculine singular and of the plural as an instance of a general -n demonstrative element and did not acknowledge its specifically masculine character in the singular. Barth on the other hand considered -n suffix of *hī-n as a masculine element which he used to explain the third persons masculine prefix of the East Aramaic verbal form negtol. He cited as a further parallel the third person masculine singular pronoun ni of the Cushitic languages.

1 Brockelmann, Carl, Grundriß einer Vergleichenden Grammatik der Semitischen Sprachen (Berlin, 1908-13), I, 317.
2 Barth, J., Die Pronominalbildung in den Semitischen