Franco Rendich

The origin of Indo-European languages

Structure and genesis of the mother tongue of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin

3rd revised and expanded edition
Franco Rendich

The origin of Indo-European languages

Translated by Gordon Davis

All rights reserved.

3rd revised and expanded edition
All rights reserved under the law and international agreements. The name of the author will be cited in the event that a part of the text is rendered public in any form.

The letters that appear on the cover belong to the Sanskrit Devanāgarī writing system.
Index

FIRST PART
Origin and formation of the first Indo-European language  p. 9

SECOND PART
The Indo-European consonant \( n \) and the waters  p. 19

I  \( Nāga \), “snake”, and \( nagna \), “nude”  p. 21
II  \( Nakta \), “night”, and \( nakṣatra \), “constellation”  p. 25
III  \( Eka \), “one”, and \( na… \), “nothingness”  p. 29
IV  \( Kāma \), “love”, and \( manas \), “mind”  p. 32
V  \( Hiranyagarbha \), “seeds borne by the waters”, and \( Ka \), “the luminous water”  p. 36
VI  \( Nr \), “man”, \( jan \), “to generate”, and \( jñā \), “to know”  p. 42
VII  \( Napāt \), “grandson”, and \( Naptu \), “Neptune”  p. 47

THIRD PART
Indo-European mythology of the cosmic waters  p. 51

I  The \( Ṛg-Veda \) and the Vedic divinities of the waters  p. 53
II  \( Mitra – Varuṇa \)  p. 54
   a) \( Mitra \) solar divinity
   b) \( Varuṇa \) and night
   c) \( Varuṇa \) and the waters
   d) \( Varuṇa \) and law
   e) \( Varuṇa \) and creation
   f) Etymology of the names \( Mitra \) and \( Varuṇa \)
III  \( Agni \)  p. 63
   a) \( Agni \) and the waters
   b) Etymology of the name \( Agni \)
IV  Indra  p.66
   a) The god Indra brings the sun to safety
   b) Indra and the clouds
   c) Etymology of the name Indra

V  Soma – Moon  p. 73
   a) Soma – Candramas
   b) Candramas and the waters
   c) Etymology of the name Candramas

VI  The two Nāsatyas  p. 81
   a) Etymology of the name Nāsatya

VII  Vāc, the divine word  p. 86
   a) Vāc and the waters
   b) Vāc and the gods’ names
   c) Etymology of the word Vāc

FOURTH PART
Features of arctic philology  p. 89
The Indo-Europeans’ ancient Siberian homeland  p. 91
The polar environment of the Ṛg-Veda  p. 97
Indra and the mountains  p. 97
Indra and the return of the sun  p. 100
Indra and the polar night  p. 102
Indra and the waters  p. 105
The celestial wheels  p. 106
The dawns, the number thirty and the aurora borealis  p. 107
The seven horses of the sun  p. 111
The Ādityas and the mystery of Mārtāṇḍa  p. 113
Kāla, Kaśyapa, Savitṛ and the number seven  p. 117
Navagvas and Daśagvas  p. 120
Devayāna and Pitṛyāna  p. 123
Ṛkṣa, the bear, and vyāghra, the tiger  p. 124
FIFTH PART
The genesis and history of the sounds of the most ancient Indo-European alphabet

The letters are arranged according to the schema of the Sanskrit alphabet Devanāgarī, which follows the order of the vocal organs that emit sounds, and which are: guttural, palatal, dental and labial, to which are added the semivowels (y, r, l and v), the sibilants (ś, ś and s), and the aspirated h.

In order to demonstrate what the associative method was that was followed by Indo-European grammarians in the process of forming the verb roots of their language, three of them are here analyzed within the phonetical area of each consonant.

For all other verb roots, please refer to the Comparative Etymological Dictionary of Classical Indo-European Languages: Sanskrit, Greek and Latin.

K  ak, anāk, kal  p. 135
G  ag, anāg, gam  p. 145
C  ac/aṅc, ca, car  p. 151
J  aj, jan, jñā  p. 157
T  takṣ, tan, tṛ/tṝ  p. 167
D  ad, dā, dhā  p. 175
N  an, nak, nabha  p. 189
P  ap, paj, pū  p. 195
B  bal, bhā, bhr/bhar/bhrā  p. 203
M  am, man, mṛ  p. 211
Y  yaj, yā, yuj  p. 221
R  ar, al, īr, ur, er, or dā ṛ, ṛj/ṛñj, ṛṇh  p. 229
L  lag, labh, lī  p. 239
V  vac, vas, vah  p. 247
S  as, sa/sam/sama, sr/sal  p. 255
H  ah, had, han  p. 261

Bibliography  p. 265
First Part

Origin and formation of the first Indo-European language
As far as Indo-European language scholars are concerned, the sounds of the letters of the alphabet, taken individually, have never had any meaning\(^1\). The thesis that I will expound in the pages to follow radically refutes this opinion. Indeed, I believe that from the very beginning of the formation of their first language, Indo-European grammarians have attributed a precise semantic value to consonant and vowel sounds. These sounds, as joined together based on precise associative criteria, gave meaning to every word formed. This method, once learned, allowed every member of the community to form vocabulary.

All of this began around 8,000 years ago\(^2\), when, as I believe, a large group of men and women\(^3\), migrating from the north, came to a

---

\(^1\) This goes as far back as Plato who, in *Cratylus*, considered etymology to be a compendium of pure conjecture, a science in which consonants and vowels contain little or nothing and a word can under no circumstances be the primary source for the knowledge of something. In the modern era, it was Professor Max Müller (1823-1900), a distinguished scholar of Indo-European languages with a special focus on Sanskrit, who, unrefuted until now, stated: “a sound etymology has nothing to do with sound”.

\(^2\) It is G.B. Tilak’s theory, with which I concur, according to which migrations of Aryan peoples, from the North Pole southward, took place circa 10,000 years ago; that is, between 8000 and 5000 BC, when the vernal equinox occurred in the *Punarvasu* constellation, as ruled by the goddess *Aditi*, a period thus called *Aditi* or *pre-Orion*. In the subsequent *Orion* period, which began around 3,000 years afterward, the vernal equinox took place in the *Orion* constellation. Numerous Vedic hymns were composed during this latter period (*The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, pp. 325-26).

\(^3\) This population had lived for millennia in the North Pole, during the interglacial period, enjoying a temperate and dry climate amid lakes, rivers and rich forests. Some scientists theorize that more than 12,000 years ago (some sources, instead, aver that the end of the last glaciation, and not the start of it, goes back that far) an enormous meteorite fell into the northern Atlantic Ocean. The impact caused the rising up of a huge cloud of dust and debris that would block out the sunlight for months. This caused a sudden climate change that saw temperatures plunge below zero. According to these astrophysicists, the impact shifted the earth’s axis, and the poles with it (at that time, the poles fell on Greenland, to the north, and in the vicinity of Tasmania, to the south), some kilometers—that is, about one degree. The cycle of glaciations, which was, in all likelihood, set off about two million years ago by the impact of a gigantic asteroid crashing into the southern Pacific Ocean near the Patagonian coast, would undergo from that day forward an acceleration so
village located in an area of the Arctic Circle. These refugees, owing to increasingly harsh winters, headed south seeking a milder climate and a secure homeland. Over the many years of this trek, due to the bitter cold and hardships undergone, the elderly among them largely perished. It is noteworthy that in this immense Nordic homeland it was the old who upheld and orally passed down the religious and literary traditions of their people. From that day onward, there grew a dread among the inhabitants of a looming glaciation and the fear, once the oldest among them had passed away, of the dying out of their common language. This spelled the end of their civilization’s culture and history. This is why, in the face of such a danger, the village wise men decided to create a new language that would be easier to remember and, eventually, to reconstruct. The task of coming up with it was entrusted to an astronomer-priest, who was a famed seer, and who set to work immediately.

significant as to make human survival impossible in the polar regions. Thus began the diaspora that brought these ancient Indo-European populations to new lands (Prof. Wally Broecker believes that climate changes, which over the past 100,000 years have caused the alternating of glacial and interglacial epochs, were brought about by the excess of fresh water periodically pouring into the northern Atlantic Ocean from thousands of drifting icebergs. Fresh water, at the culmination of this phenomenon, had the power to interrupt the beneficial flowing of warm currents originating in the tropics with the effect of causing sharp decreases in polar temperatures as well as resulting in glaciation).

4 I refer the reader to the fourth part of the text: “The Indo-Europeans’ Ancient Polar Homeland”.

5 Recently, Prof. Richard Alley, through core sampling and the analysis of polar ice taken from great depths, has come to the conclusion that climate change did not occur slowly during glaciations, as had been once thought, but took place in a sharp and violent way over the span of three or five years.

6 Here I mean an old language that had been spoken in the North Pole by Indo-European populations.

7 This new language that, in keeping with convention, I will also call “Indo-European”, subsequently underwent multiple influences and contaminations due to the different times in which, during the Ice Age, there took place the separation of populations from their common arctic homeland. Prompted by the continuing growth of glaciers, these populations would seek safety ever further southward by traveling along the meridians between India and Europe, and this explains the origin of the word: “Indo-Europeans”. Some of these populations would end up in places as far flung as India, Persia, Anatolia, Greece and Italy. However, even if the language spoken in their ancient Nordic homeland had been the same, by coming
First of all, he chose the vowel \( i^8 \) to indicate “continuous” motion, which was the typical action of the verb “to go”, and the vowel \( r^9 \) to represent motion “directed toward a destination”, which was a typical action of the verbs “to move toward”, “to catch up with”, “to meet” and “to reach”.

He then assigned to the vowel \( a \), used as a prefix\(^{10}\), the task of starting the verb action, while attributing to the vowel \( u \), by setting it against the action of motion expressed by the verbs \( i \) and \( r \), the meaning of “stasis” or “stability” as well as, in reference to the accumulation of energy, the meaning of “intensity,” “persistence” or “force”. He formed the verb roots by joining as a rule two or three sounds, and in composing them, other than using consonants, he

\[ \text{RV, X, 18,4} \]
\[ // \text{imaṁ jīvebhyaḥ paridhiṁ dadhāmi maṁ jīvantu śaradaḥ purūcīr antar mṛtyum dadhatām parvatena} // \]

“Here do I erect this rampart for the living: may none of them reach this limit. May they live for one hundred long autumns and keep death buried beneath this mountain”.

As can be seen, the concept of “reaching the limit” here encompasses the idea of man’s final journey toward the earthly kingdom where death is confined and, therefore, it was rendered with the two letters of the verb \( mṛ \), which had this very meaning in Indo-European.

\(^8\) Latin eo, -ire, “to go”.

\(^9\) The vowel \( r \), in its meaning of “to reach”, was much used by Indo-European grammarians to create compound verbs. One of the oldest was certainly \( mṛ \), “to die”, which in Latin went on to become morior, mori. With only two phonemes, one of which, the consonant \( m \), meant “limit” (base of the root \( mā \), “to measure”), these grammarians managed to tell the story of the extreme event that touched all human beings—that of being taken outside of their village, far from the living, to be buried within the rampart constructed to receive their mortal remains. This action of “reaching \( r \) the limit \( m \)” was thus the final action carried out by the deceased. It was an action that will also be interpreted as “the extreme limit of life”. This final journey by the corpse to the land set aside for the deceased is described in a stanza of the \( Rg-Veda. \) The speaker in these verses is the \( Adhvaryu \), the priest that conducted the rite.

\(^{10}\) As a nominal prefix, the vowel \( a \), is privative as a rule. As a verb prefix, it forms the imperfect, the aorist and the conditional.
used the vowels $a$, $i$, $u$ and $r^{11}$.

On the other hand, since in his studies of astronomy he had observed the presence in the celestial vault of five different types of motion, he decided to assign to them the sounds of the first five consonants of the new alphabet: the two gutturals $k$ and $g$; the two palatals, $c$ and $j$; and the dental $t$, that is:

\[
\begin{align*}
    k &= \text{“curvilinear motion”} \\
    g &= \text{“winding or zigzag motion”} \\
    c &= \text{“circular motion”} \\
    j &= \text{“rectilinear motion”} \\
    t &= \text{“motion between two points”}
\end{align*}
\]

With these phonetic symbols, he constructed, for example, the following roots:

\[
\begin{align*}
    ak &= \text{“to move by turning” or “to round”} \\
    ka &= \text{“moves in the celestial vault”, “water”, “light” or “happiness”} \\
    ag &= \text{“to move in a winding fashion” or “to zigzag”} \\
    gā &= \text{“to move in every direction”, “to go” or “to walk”} \\
    ac &= \text{“to move in a circle”} \\
    ca/ci &= \text{“round” or “rotund”} \\
    aj &= \text{“to move straight forward” or “to guide”} \\
    ji &= \text{“to move straight forward into the enemy’s lines”, “to win” or “to conquer”} \\
    at &= \text{“to move between two points” or “to wander”} \\
    tṝ &= \text{“to go from one side to another” or “to cross”}
\end{align*}
\]

He attributed the meaning of “light” to the consonant $d$ and the meaning of “water” to the consonant $n$. Based, as always, on the observation of the sky and heavenly bodies, he derived the meanings

---

\[^{11}\text{In verb roots, the vowels } e \text{ and } o, \text{ just as with the diphthongs } ai \text{ and } au, \text{ which were respectively increased by the first and second degree of the vowels } i \text{ and } u, \text{ were not present. They will go on to be used in a later era in the conjugation of verbs and primary derivatives.}\]
of the consonants \( p, m, y, r, v, s \) and \( h \)\(^{12}\).

The consonants \( k, g, c, j \) and \( t \) were used to form the most complex verb roots (such as \( kṛ \), \( car \), etc.) that characterized in a more articulate way the kind of motion expressed by the consonant they depended on.

With the sounds of this first alphabet, the astronomer-priest formed the verb roots and primary derivatives of the new language that, in other times and geographical areas, would give rise to Sanskrit, Greek and Latin.

In the pages that follow, beyond clarifying the meanings attributed to consonants, I have presented the constructive method used in word formation. Today, in reconstructing this first Indo-European language, and obviously being unable to lay out any of the astronomer’s texts, I have been compelled to personally fill in for him myself, with the hope of better getting across his thinking and grammatical choices.

The roots heretofore analyzed, as later preserved unchanged in Sanskrit\(^{13}\), make up only a brief introduction to my etymological dictionary, to which I refer the reader. Their preservation in Sanskrit was only possible because, at the end of their migration southward over the barren and inhospitable Siberian steppes\(^{14}\), Indo-European populations that had left circumpolar regions ended up in India and the Indo-Iranian region while keeping their language free from contaminations and cultural influences from

\(^{12}\) The consonants \( l \) and \( b \) did not exist at that time. They would come into being much later as phonetic variants of, respectively, the consonants \( r \) and \( v \). The labial \( b \) was often confused with the labial \( v \) that, in most cases, expressed the force necessary to achieve an act of separation, such as in \( bala \) “force”; \( bhṛ \) “to move with force”, or “to bear”; \( bhrātyr \) “support with force” or “support” and, from this, “brother”; \( bhuj \) “to cause to advance with force” or “to bend”.

\(^{13}\) In Sanskrit, the oldest Indo-European language, most roots are monosyllabic and generally consist of a vowel combined with one or more consonants. The roots of Semitic languages are, instead, distinguished by generally being made up of a rigid triconsonantal structure that develops by being placed next to or by inserting a certain number of letters destined to form, together with the idea of the root, a long chain of derived words.

\(^{14}\) Since, in the Vedas, as stated above, the word for tiger \([\text{vyaghrā}]\) does not appear, I believe that the Indo-Europeans’ encounter with this animal, which had been completely unknown to them, took place in Siberia over the course of their migration that concluded in India toward the middle of the second millennium AD.
other languages. The other Indo-European populations that had also been pushed southward had, instead, migrated along the westernmost meridians. Consequently, they ended up in present-day Europe amid peoples with different cultures and languages. Their original language, which in these places would later develop into Greek and Latin, thus underwent, in contrast to what took place with Sanskrit, changes so profound as to lose a great deal of its purity.

If I were to now be asked to explain how it is possible that no linguist has ever recognized in the Sanskrit verb sad, “to sit” (Latin sedeo, -ere), the action of “placing oneself near [s] food [ad]”, or why no one has ever read in the Sanskrit verb han, “to kill,” the action of “taking away [h] breath [an]”, just as nobody has read in the roots śru, “to listen”, and snā, “to bathe”, respectively, the actions of “being close [ś] to noise [ru]” and “being in contact [s] with water [nā]”, I would answer that this came to be because the Sanskrit language was considered to be of divine origin and it would have seemed sacrilegious to consider words inspired by God to be a union of sounds that can be fitted together or not at the discretion of the human mind. Moreover, one must also consider in this regard that, around 1000 BC, with the advent of writing and the use in Greece of the

15 Ad is the Sanskrit verb “to eat”. Not even Latin grammarians realized that their verb sedeo, -ere, “to sit”, was actually a compound made up of s “adjacency” + edere “to eat” and meant “to get close to” food in order to eat it. Even more extraordinary seems the fact that in Old High German the verb “to eat” was ezzen and no grammarian has realized that their verb sezzen “to sit” had been constructed with that verb. This occurred as well with the English to seat in which no one ever recognized the root to eat.

16 An is the Sanskrit verb “to breathe”.

17 The Israelites also believe that their writing is God’s work: “And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables (Exodus 32:15)”.

16
Phoenician\textsuperscript{18} alphabet and in India of \textit{Brāhma}\textsuperscript{19}, the Indo-European meanings of consonants and vowels were transferred into words by way of visible and permanent signs, which is the reason why the importance of these semantic values was gradually lost over time.

Nowadays, in the process of recalling that the phonetic symbols of the Indo-European alphabet came into being out of the observation of the universe and cosmic phenomena, it should be noted that in the first Indo-European language, which Sanskrit, Greek and Latin came from, the sounds of the names given to things clearly reveal to us, once their Indo-European meanings are recognized, the nature or function of the things named\textsuperscript{20}.

\footnotesize{
\begin{itemize}
\item It was Herodotus who hinted at the Phoenician origin of the letters of the Greek alphabet. Such writing was called \textit{Kadméia grámmata}, “Kadmeic letters” and also \textit{phoinikéia grámmata}, “Phoenician letters”, which is why it has been supposed that it had been a Phoenician named Cadmus to have endowed the Greeks with writing.
\item \textit{Brāhmī lipi} is the name that was given in India to the Sanskrit alphabet by the \textit{Brāhmans}, who believed it had been an invention of the god \textit{Brahmā}.
\item I state as much here. That is, the sounds of the names given to things by Indo-Europeans describe at least one essential aspect of the things named. It is the theme of this work, in contrast to what has been put forward by grammarians and linguists from all eras.
\end{itemize}
}
Second part

The waters in the first Indo-European language
I

Nāga “snake” and nagna “nude”

In the first Indo-European language, the sound of the consonant n meant “water”. An early reflection of mine on this theme was made when, during my studies of Sanskrit, I came across the term triveṇī, which indicates the place in India today known as Allāhābād\(^1\) where the rivers Gaṅgā\(^2\) and Jamunā\(^3\) merge with the legendary Sarasvatī\(^4\). It is made up of tri, the number “three”, and of veṇī, which means “intertwining” or “river current”, but also “two or more rivers that flow together into one mouth”\(^5\). I was struck by the phonetic-morphological affinity of veṇī with vene, the first term of the compound “Vene-zia” (the Italian word for Venice), and the perfect correspondence between the marine environment represented by triveṇī and that of the Venetian Lagoon, where there once flowed together different rivers. Consequently, I hypothesized a derivation of the word “Venezia” from an Indo-European compound made up of veṇī and a suffix such as –dā\(^6\), -dhā\(^7\) or –sa\(^8\). I ascertained that veṇī came from the root ve, “to weave” or “to intertwine”, the strong form of vi, “split into two parts”, which is a verb whose origin lies in the ancient root dvi, connected to dva, the number “two”\(^9\). I was able to connect the second syllable of veṇī, nī to the Sanskrit verb nī “to conduct”.

“Two or more rivers that form an intertwining of waters” seemed to me a lovely image to represent the lagoon where Venice arose. Not finding in veṇī a reference to the element of “water”, I set my research aside to await further confirmation. A new element

---

1 It is the ancient Prayāga, where the first sacrificial rites were performed in India. The name comes from the verb yaj, “to sacrifice”.
2 The River Ganges.
3 It is also called Jumnā.
4 In Indian mythology, it is the goddess of arts and letters, as well as of eloquence.
5 Monier Monier-Williams, Sanskrit-English Dictionary; p. 1014 (hereafter, MW SED).
6 It is the verb “to give” or “to offer”.
7 It is the verb “to place” or “to found”.
8 It is a derivative of the verb san “to acquire” or “to possess”.
9 Ve, “to weave”, means “weave of two threads”: the weft and the warp. Cf. the German we-ben, “to weave”, and the English we-b, “spider”: “the weaver”.

presented itself much later while I was looking something up in Monier Monier-Williams’ Sanskrit-English Dictionary under the heading nāga\textsuperscript{10}, a “snake” that lives in water, etymological origin obscure\textsuperscript{11}.

\textit{Nāga}, writes the author\textsuperscript{12}, likely comes from neither na + ga (“does not move”) nor from nagna (“nude”). I then reconstructed the word according to the rule of sam-dhi;\textsuperscript{13} na + aga and noted that aga could be a primary derivative of the verb \textit{ag}\textsuperscript{14}, “to move windingly”, on a par with \textit{aja}, “driver”, that comes from \textit{aj}, “to guide”. Aga, as the agent name, may be considered the subject that accomplishes the verb action and, it seemed to me, it was appropriate to represent the snake with the definition “moves windingly”. What still had to be cleared up was the additional meaning given to \textit{aga} by the prefix \textit{na}.

Since it performed a function of negation in Sanskrit, in order to represent the snake, and referring to its characteristic motion, it would be logical to state that “it does not move windingly”.

This was the very paradox before which attempts made by Indian and Western etymologists to explain the history of the word nāga\textsuperscript{15}.

To better understand it, I concentrated on the word \textit{nagna}, “nude”, which M.W. had made reference to concerning a possible

\textsuperscript{10} The \textit{Nāgas}, in Indian mythology, were snake-demons with a human face and chest above but the body of a snake below. It was supposed that they lived underground in the vastness of the primordial waters believed to sustain them. They were considered water snakes. Their king was \textit{Śeṣa}, a thousand-headed snake called \textit{Ananta}, “Infinity” (\textit{Nāgī} is the name of an aquatic snake-spirit that is the symbol of the primordial society concentrated in the ocean. Eliade, \textit{Yoga}, p. 351). In the \textit{Mahābhārata}, there is the story of \textit{Bhīma}, who, after being poisoned by the \textit{Duryodhanas}, was tossed into the water by them to drown. However, \textit{Bhīma}, once in the water, came down to the \textit{Nāgas’} home. They had him drink an elixir that rid him of the poison and made him as strong as ten thousand \textit{Nāgas} (M.W., “\textit{Religious Thought and Life in India}”, p. 322).


\textsuperscript{12} MW SED, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 525.

\textsuperscript{13} The euphonic fusion of two vowels at the end and beginning of two contiguous words.

\textsuperscript{14} MW SED, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{15} Another Indo-European term used in Sanskrit to represent the snake is \textit{sarpa}, from the verb \textit{sṛp}, “to slither”, constructed with the root \textit{sṛ}, “to flow”. The Latin \textit{serpens} can be nothing other than a derivative of it since \textit{sarpa} had already existed in the Vedic era long before the time it was formed in Latin.
relationship in meaning with nāga. The possibility was immediately excluded that it had come from the Sanskrit root naj\textsuperscript{16}, “to have shame”, because the latter, in all likelihood, had been invented by lexicographers with the aim of attributing the meaning of “shameful” to nagna, whose origin was unknown. The form agna of n[agna] aroused my curiosity about his analogy with akna\textsuperscript{17}, the past participle of the verb ac, “to go around a corner” or “to move around”. It brought to mind the terms used in many Indo-European languages\textsuperscript{18} to say “nude” and I realized that they were all more or less regular forms of past participles: nackt in German, naked in English, nu in French and desnudo in Spanish.

This reinforced my conviction that agna, though not proven, was an old Sanskrit past participle of the verb ag, capable of conveying the idea of a winding or zigzag movement carried out by the subject.

To trace back a possible common origin of the meaning of nāga and nagna, I put together the following outline:

1) the primary points of reference of both words are the verb ag “to move windingly” and the consonant n [na], of unknown value;
2) in nāga, aga seems to designate the name of the agent destined to move in a winding fashion, independently of whether the action was actually performed or not;
3) nagna, instead, seems to designate a winding act, agna, carried out by its author in an environment called n;
4) the prefix na of nāga [na + aga] cannot be considered a negative particle because “to go windingly” is the action carried out by the snake;

\textsuperscript{16} MW SED, op. cit., p. 525.
\textsuperscript{17} W.D. Whitney, “The Roots, Verb-Forms and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language”, p. 1 (hereafter, WDW).
\textsuperscript{18} The Indo-European that has been known until now is an artificial language that has undergone attempts at reconstruction by comparing Sanskrit and Persian, on the one hand, with languages from Europe and the Middle East on the other, with the aim of tracing it back to verb roots from a hypothetical mother tongue. In my opinion, what has come from this is a linguistic system that, though highlighting some phonetic, morphological and lexical elements originating from a common mother tongue, arrives at abstract and misleading reconstructive results (cf. J. Pokorny, “Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch” and A. Walde, “Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen”).
5) since *agna* represents a specific act carried out by the subject, such as to characterize its condition as “nude”, in *nagna* the consonant *n* cannot also represent the negation of such an act;

6) in both compounds the consonant *n* [*na*] must represent not the negation, but rather the condition or environment that the verb action is performed in.

At the conclusion of these six points, I annotated:

a) *nāga* is a subject, *aga*, predestined to move windingly in an environment known as *na*;

b) *nagna* is a winding act, *agna*, carried out by the subject in the same environment *n* [*na*] that it is habitually carried out in by *nāga*.

It sufficed to associate point a) with point b) in order to solve the linguistic mystery that had endured for millennia. That is, the consonant *n* [*na*], well before the birth of Sanskrit, had been the phonetic symbol of the element “water”.

“It moves windingly [*aga*] in the water [*na*]” and “it moves twistingly [*agna*] in the water [*n*]” had logically been the original meanings of *nāga*, “marine snake,” and of *nagna*, “nude”.

In the chapters that follow I will clarify the etymology of the Italian word “Venezia” and I will demonstrate that, in most of the oldest Sanskrit roots, the consonant *n* [*na*] was the Indo-European symbol for water.
II

Nakta “night” and Nakṣatra “constellation”

At the inception of the universe, according to Vedic cosmology\(^1\), primordial waters formed an immense nebula\(^2\) known in Sanskrit as salila\(^3\), arṇa, arṇava\(^4\), samudra\(^5\), or “ocean\(^6\)”.

The verses of the Rg-Veda\(^7\) recount that, during the evolution of

\(^{1}\) In what is referred to the Vedic period the Vedas, were composed: the Rg-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sāma-Veda and Atharva-Veda. This period also marked the composition of the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads.

\(^{2}\) RV, X, 129, 1-3.

\(^{3}\) Salila, “water”, comes from the verb sr, “to flow”, and also means “teardrop”. To understand the hitherto unknown etymology of the words “salt” and “teardrop”, we have to go back to the funeral ceremony known as salilakarman, “the ceremony of tears”, as cited in the “Mahā Bhārata”, during which the relatives of the deceased offered him libations of water made up of their own tears. If we break down salilakarman into sali and lakarman, we will discover the origin of both “salt” and “teardrop”.

\(^{4}\) Arna and arnava, “waves” or “sea”, come from the verb r, “to go or move toward”.

\(^{5}\) Samudra is made up of sam, “together” and udra, “water” (from ud “up above”) and means “set of waves” (und in Sanskrit means “to bathe”).

\(^{6}\) G.B. Tilak writes: “it is impossible to comprehend the true meaning of the legend of Vṛtra (the demon that was slain by Indra because he kept the waters from flowing, author’s note) without understanding the real nature and importance of the movements of the waters of the air as they were conceived of by the forebears of the Indo-Iranian people. As Darmesteter observed, it was believed that the waters of the sky and light flowed from the same source or spring and that they flowed in parallel fashion. The waters of the air caused celestial bodies to move, as did a boat that was dragged away by a river’s current or water flow. If the waters ceased flowing, then the consequence would be very severe since the sun, moon and stars would stop flowing and the world would be plunged into darkness”. Furthermore, “the ancient Aryans, as did the Hebrews, believed that thin matter, which filled the entire space of the universe, was nothing more than water vapor and that the motion of the sun, moon and other heavenly bodies had been brought about by those vapors, which constantly circulated from the lower celestial atmosphere to the higher and vice versa. This is the real key to explaining many Vedic myths” (The Arctic Home in the Vedas, pp. 194-197).

\(^{7}\) The Rg-Veda is the first text in the Indo-European peoples’ sacred literature that describes their culture and, in part, their history. Dedicated to a pantheon of deities of most ancient origin, it was orally passed down over many centuries before its 1,028 hymns were committed to writing. It was composed in different eras, approximately between 5000 and 1200 BC.
the universe, the cosmic waters partially met around the sun and, in part, they flowed together through the regions governed by the moon so as to form two celestial oceans, samudraus, one of which was luminous while the other was enshrouded in darkness.

From these oceans, the waters then fell to earth and formed the atmosphere and rivers.

Their observation of the daytime path followed by the sun, and by the stars at night, had enabled astronomers to understand the

8 RV, I, 23, 16-17
ambayo...... amūr ya upa sūrye yābhir vā sū ryah saha tā no hinvantv adhvaram

“may the waters gathered near the sun and those with which the sun is united propitiate this, our sacrifice”.

9 For more on the pre-Vedic and Vedic mythical conceptions as to the descent of the waters to the earth through the lunar forum and as to the cosmic moon-waters connection, cf. J. Hertel, “Die Himmelstore im Veda und im Awesta”; Kirfel, “Die Kosmographie der Inder”, p. 31; Hillebrandt, “Vedische Mythologie”, p. 361.

10 RV, V, 4, 10
ā sūryo aruhat šukram arṇaḥ... udnā na nāvam anayanta dhīrā āśṛvatīr āpo arvāg atiṣthan

“The sun rose upon brilliant waters...the wise men towed it as a ship across the ocean: the waters, heeding its commands, did here descend”.

11 The Ṛg-Veda often cites “the seven rivers”. These are five rivers in the Panjāb region together with the Sarasvatī and the Indus: Sindhu.

12 In Sanskrit, the word that means “astronomy” is jyotirvidyā or jyotisā. “Astronomer” is jyotirvid or jyotiṣa. Jyotiścakra is “ring of light” or the “zodiac”. These terms come from the root jyut, “to shine”, which jyotis, “light”, comes from since astronomy was considered the science of celestial lights. The original root was dyut, connected to div, “sky”, and to dī, “to shine”, which are all roots constructed with the Indo-European symbol for light, the consonant d. However, this symbol came into being during a later era since, at the dawn of Indo-European civilization, astronomy concerned the study of the cosmic waters that were led along their celestial paths by star clusters called naksatras, a word formed with the
rotating motion of the celestial vault that appeared to their eyes akin to the rotating motion of the waters of the two celestial oceans (cf. nāka).

The 24-hour day was thought to be made up of a period of rotation of the luminous waters, which the idea of “day” corresponded to, and of another period of rotation of the dark waters, which the idea of “night” corresponded to. The word for day, div, “breaks away [v] by flowing [i] from light [d]”, was constructed with the consonant d, “light”, while the night was designated by the consonant n, “water”, and with the verb ak, “to move by turning”.

To wit, one of the first terms used by the Indo-Europeans to designate the “night”13 was

nak

“the curvilinear motion [ak] of the waters [n]”.

However, with nak being a word of abstract action, with the meaning of an infinitive, naktata14 was subsequently preferred. It was a concrete action word with the meaning of a participle to represent a single act of rotation performed around the earth by the waters. Thus, Nakta meant “a motion of rotation [akta] of the waters [n]”. When the “celestial vault” or “firmament” had to be represented, the same formative criterion was followed. In this

ancient phoneme na, “the waters”, and with kṣatra, “ruling”. Therefore, astronomy was also called naksatravidyā, “science of the constellations”, which also meant “astrology” insofar as the earliest astronomers were also astrologists. Nakṣatrastūcaka was he who interpreted the stars, that is, “astrologer”.

13 The most-used term in the Rg-Veda to indicate “night” is rātri: “that which gives [rā] the stars [tr]”, (the phoneme trī, in my judgment, has been poorly interpreted).

14 Nakta, “night”, is frequently found in the Rg-Veda, especially in the adverbial form naktam, “at night”. The close link between night and the cosmic waters is very clearly underscored in the Rg-Veda:

RV, X, 190, 1

// rtaṃ ca satyaṃ cābhīdhāt tapaso dhy ajāyata / tato rātry ajāyata tataḥ samudro arṇavaḥ //

“The eternal Law and the Truth were born from fervor; thereupon were born the night and the ocean of the cosmic Waters”.

From my point of view, this connection had already been contained within nakta because the etymology of the word is “the motion [ak] of the cosmic waters [na]”.

27
in case, what was being dealt with was the permanent celestial circulation of the waters and not one of their roughly twelve-hour individual (apparent) rotations. Therefore, the nominal derivative of \( ak, aka \) was resorted to, which expresses the continuous performance of the verb action.

Thus was created the term

\[ \text{nāka} \]

\([na + aka]\) to represent the “nocturnal circulation \([aka]\) of the waters \([na]\)”, or “the ocean of dark waters \([na]\) and that of luminous waters \([ka]\)”. Moreover, in the conviction that the circulation of the waters was regulated by 27 or 28 clusters of stars, or “constellations”, astronomers divided the ecliptic into just as many parts and, thus, managed to follow the path of the Sun and the monthly revolution of the Moon around Earth.

To coin the term “constellation”, grammarians chose the word \( kṣattra, \) “governing”, a derivative of the verb \( kṣi, \) “to govern” or “to rule”, and had it preceded by \( na, \) the symbol of the waters, thus obtaining the word \( nākṣatra, \) “that which governs \([kṣatra]\) the celestial waters \([na]\)”. The term was passed on to Sanskrit with the meaning of “star cluster” or “constellation”, but its etymology was never clarified because the high priest \( Pāṇini^{15} \) had seen in the prefix \( na \) the negative particle “non” and, consequently, the true origin of the word had been lost.

---

\(^{15}\) \( Pāṇini, \) whose name represents a son of \( Pānin-a, Pāni-putra, \) descendant of \( Pān-in, \) is considered history’s most preeminent Indian grammarian. Living around the sixth century BC, he was the author of \( Aṣṭādhyāyī, \) an authoritative Sanskrit grammar in eight \((aṣṭa)\) chapters \( (adhyāya)\) with around 4,000 rules called \( Sūtras. \)
There are three Rigvedic cantos on the origin of the universe and all of them are found in the tenth book.

The 121st hymn, dedicated to Ka, which is the name attributed to Hiranyagarbha, the “Golden Seed”, will be the theme of the fifth chapter, while the 190th hymn will be dealt with in the chapter dedicated to the god Varuṇa.

Let us now observe the third of these hymns, the 129th, known as the Nāsadāśīyasūkta, “there was not non-being, nor was there being”:

1. nāsad āsīn no sad āsīt tadānīṃ nāśīd rajo no vyomā paro yat/ kim āvarīvaḥ kuha kasya sārman ambhaḥ kim ā sid gahanam ābhūram //

“In the beginning there was not being, nor was there non-being. What covered the unfathomable depths of the waters and how was and where was shelter? There was no atmosphere nor, beyond this, the celestial vault”.

2. na mṛtyur āsīd amṛtaṃ na tarhi na rātryā ahna āsīt praketaḥ / ānīd avatāṃ svadhayā taḍ ekam tasmād dhānyan na paraḥ kim canāsa //

“There was not death then nor immortality. There was no night. There was no day. The One lived in itself and for itself, without breath. Beyond the One, there was Nothingness1”.

1 When God created heaven and earth in the cosmos, according to the Old Testament (Genesis, 1), “darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” What relationship was there between God, darkness and the waters? And when the latter were actually all created remains a mystery. Yet, I believe that the linguistic analysis that I have performed in this chapter as to the relationship between Eka (the motion of ka), nothingness (na), and the dual nature of the waters (na, ka) – these entities are present in the Rigvedic
3. tama āsīt tamasā gūḥam agre ‘praketaṃ salilaṃ sarvam ā idam / tuḥyenaḥbhv apiḥitaṃ yad āsīt tapasas tan mahinājāyataikam //

“There was darkness, in the beginning, and more darkness in an unknowable continuity of waters. All that existed was a void without form. The One was born out of the power of ardor\(^2\).

According to the vision of the universe that the Vedic poet-seer describes in these verses, at the inception of the cosmos, an impenetrable nebula of primordial waters, ambhāh kim āsid gahanam gabhīram, formed an inscrutable ocean, apraketaṃ salilam, where the One had already been born, ajā yataikam, but lived without breathing, ānīd avātam. In that dark grouping of waters, other than the One, ekam, who had, moreover, not yet manifested, there was only nothingness, na paraḥ kim canāsa.

What, one asks, was the cosmogonic and metaphysical correlation between the waters, the One and nothingness? I believe that linguistic analysis can provide an answer.

If we consider the phoneme na to be the symbol of undifferentiated waters, we can deduce that from this was born the concept of negation, na, and, consequently, of nothingness (na...paraḥ kim canāsa), due to the impossibility of recognizing within them any entity (nonentity or nothing) or any one (non-one or no one). Only later, with the appearance of light in the waters, [ka],\(^3\) would Indo-

---

\(^2\) Tapas in Sanskrit means “heat” or “ardor”, but also, metaphorically, “deep spirituality” or “ascesis”. E. Burnouf, in “The Science of Religions”, demonstrated how it was the Āryans’ principle explaining movement, life and thought. J. Gonda, in “Change and Continuity in Indian Religion”, states that heat was the indication of a magical-religious manifestation. The original meaning of the Indo-European root tap was “to purify [p] from one end to another [t]”.

\(^3\) In Sanskrit, according to lexicographers, the word ka means “light” as well as “sun” (cf. MW SED, p. 240). Moreover, the Indo-European meaning of ka, “light”, is recognizable in the verb root kāś (ka + as, “to bind oneself to light”), which means “to appear”, “to manifest” or “to shine” in Sanskrit. Furthermore, it is with reference to light that, in my opinion, was born the verb kam, “to love”, to which are linked kānta, “beautiful”, and kānti, “beauty” (whose relationship to the idea of “luminosity” and “splendor” is surely borne out; cf. MW SED, p. 270). The memory of ka = light has remained in the Latin words cando,-ere, candor and candidus.
European thinking recognize within them the first being, *eka*\(^4\), the One: “light [\(ka\)] that rises [\(e\)] from the waters”.

And as from the nocturnal waters, *na*, was born the concept of the negative, in the same way from the luminous waters would be born the interrogative pronoun *ka*, in order to identify the “One” (who?) or the “entity” (what?), that were concealed within the depths of the waters covered in darkness.

The relationship between the cosmic waters, the One and nothingness now appears to be clear. Nothingness, *na*..., represents the waters as viewed in their inscrutable aspect, while the One, *eka*, represents the same waters seen at the moment of the rising of the light within them. It is a “creator” light, inasmuch as it renders the entire universe visible and recognizable.

The light of the sky and the day, *div*, rendered in Indo-European by the consonant *d*, is, instead, “created” light and would appear much later with the birth of the gods: *devaḥ*.

---

\(^4\) As early as Yāska’s *Nirukta*, the word *eka* “one” was thought to come from the verb root *i* “to go”, or also “to rise” or “to get up”, of which the vowel *e* is the strong form (*etṛ* in Sanskrit means “he who goes”). Therefore, *eka* is reconstructed with *e* + *ka*: “the rising [\(e\)] of light [\(ka\)]”. 

In Sanskrit, *ka* also means “water”: *ka-ja* was “born in the water” and *ka-da* means “gives water” or “cloud” (cf. MW SED, p. 240).
IV

*Kāma “love” and manas “mind”*

Let us return to the 129th hymn of the tenth book of the *Ṛg-Veda* in which, in the fourth stanza, the poet tells us of love and the mind:

\[\text{kāmas tad agre sam avartatādhi manaso retaḥ prathamam yad āsīt/sato bandhum asati nir avindan hṛdi pratīṣyā kavayo manīṣā//}\]

“In the beginning, love then rose, which was the first seed of the mind\(^1\). By peering into their hearts, the wise men in their wisdom discovered the link between being and non-being”.

According to Vedic interpretation, in regard to the One and nothingness present in the waters at the moment of Creation, what do the *kāma* and the *manas* represent?

The term *kāma* comes from the verb root *kam*\(^2\), “to desire” or “to love”, connected to the roots *kā* and *kan*, “to rejoice” or “to feel pleasure\(^3\)”, which is made up of, in my opinion, *ka* and the consonant

---

\(^1\) In the seventh chapter of the eleventh book of Metaphysics, Aristotle states: “God creates life, of which it is the principle, with the energy of the mind and effects creation as something that is loved”.

Many centuries before Aristotle’s time, the Vedic thinker who was the author of this verse expressed in poetic form the same thought: that is, life was created by *kāma* and *manas*, love and mind. *Kāma* and *manas* are refractions of the shining waters [*ka*] and of the dark waters [*na*] in continuous expansion [*brahman*] in the cosmos.

\(^2\) The conception of the *kāma*-salīla and of the *kāma*-samudra, that is, of the *kāma* seen as “ocean”, is found in the *Taittirīya brāhmaṇa* (II, 2, 6). *Kāma* is often seen as also being an aspect of *Agni, apāṃ napāt*, “son of the waters”.

In the *Ṛg-Veda*, *kāma* is compared to the desire of the water (V, 36, 1). In all likelihood, with the loss of the initial consonant *k*, from *kam* came the Latin verb “amo,-are”.

\(^3\) W.D. Whitney, in “The Roots, Verb-Forms and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language”, p. 17, states that *kam, kā* and *kan* are the same root.

It is interesting to observe that in the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* the close link is intuited between the *brahman*, of which the god *Brahmā* is the personification, and the luminous waters [*ka*], the vital breath of the primordial waters [*an*], and the space in which they expand [*kha*].

In the fifth paragraph of the tenth chapter of the fourth lesson, sacrificial fires indeed say to the devotee (*brāhmaṇcārin*) whom they are speaking to: “the *brahman* is the
m, symbol of the “limit”. Therefore, “that which defines [m] the shining waters [ka]”, or also “the measure [m] of the desire [ka] of the shining waters [ka]” well define the meaning of the word kāma. It is through the creative pleasure of kāma that eka, the One, invades with its light [ka] the impenetrable darkness of the primordial waters [na], and carries them away from the dominion of nothingness by making them visible.

On the other hand, according to what has been handed down to us, the kāma has always been connected to the waters⁴. The linguistic correlation between ka, “water” or “light”; Eka, “light rising from the waters”, and kāma, “joyous dimension of the shining waters”, confirms the grounding of this cultural tradition.

Now, if due to Eka’s desire the kāma appears to be the creative and reproductive faculty of the luminous waters, then what does the manas represent that the kāma rose from?

The term manas comes from the Sanskrit verb man, “to think⁵”. If we break down man into the two roots that form it, m, “limit”, and an, “start of the energy of the waters”, the meaning of manas will be “the measure [m] of the vitality of the waters [an]”, that is, “the dimension [m] of their breath [an]”.

If Eka and kāma thus have the faculty to make luminous and perceptible to our intellect and our senses the universe of na-sat (non-being or nothingness), then an and manas have the faculty of making it animate [an] as well as recognizable and measurable [manas].

The link between being and non-being, sato bandhum asati, which Vedic wise men had found in their hearts, nir avindan hṛdi pratīṣya kavayo manīṣā, is finally revealed to us: it is what is amid the luminous waters of the One, Eka, and the dark waters of

---

4 The daughter of Kāma and Rati (Revā) was called Trṣṇā (or Trṣā), “thirst”. Yāska, in the Nirukta, states that kam also means “water” in Sanskrit.

5 Which the Latin “mens” comes from.
nothingness, *na*.

It is not by chance that this fourth verse ends with the words *ka* (*vayo*) and *man* (*īṣa*), in whose roots *ka* and *an* there is enshrouded the mystery of the relationship between love and mind (*kāma* and *manas*) with the cosmic waters that gave rise to the universe and life.

The other verses of the hymn are as follows:

5. *tiraścīno vitato raśmir eśām adhaḥ svid āsīd upari svid āsīt / retodhā āsan mahimāna āsant svadāt prayatiḥ parastāt //*

“They were pulled through (the worlds), above and below. Some spread their seed, others their power. The creator was above, matter below”.

6. *ko addhā veda ka iha pra vocat kuta ājātā kuta iyan visṛṣṭīḥ /arvāg devā asya visarjanenāthā ko veda yata ābabhūva //*

“Who truly knows? Who can say when there was creation? And what was the cause of it? The gods came after its emanation. Who can say, then, where its origin lay?”

7. *iyāṃ visṛṣṭir yata ābabhūva yadi vā dadhe yadi vā na / yo asyādhyakṣaḥ parame vyomant so aṅga veda yadi vā na veda //*

“He who creation came from, may have decided on it himself. Or else not. He who watches from high heaven might know its origin. And perhaps not”.

As can be seen, this hymn ends with some questions and with a clear uncertainty as to the origin of Creation and the role performed by the Creator.

These questions and this doubt will open the way to Indo-European metaphysics by stirring the conflict between science and faith. They still exist even today, from the depth of Vedic myth, and they transmit to us their message of sensitivity and intelligence.
V

Hiraṇyagarbha “Seed borne by the waters” and Ka “the shining waters”

In the Nāsadāsīyasūkta, the Vedic hymn examined in the previous chapter, the light (eka) that awoke in the waters and the creative capacity (an) of the waters were still in a potential state.

In the rippling of the cosmic ocean, kāma and manas, the first-born children of eka and an, were purely ecstatic faculties. The same wise prophets, kavayos, who had scrutinized with intelligence in their hearts, manīṣā, were imaginary projections, psychic reflections of the waters. At the scene of the Vedic myth of creation, there was about to arrive, as borne by the primordial waters, the embryo of he who would generate the whole world of living beings and inanimate matter. His name was Hiraṇyagarbha, erroneously called the “Golden Seed” by everyone.

The entire 121st hymn of the tenth book of the Ṛg-Veda has to do with his coming to earth, his prerogatives, his powers and his actions. However, the hymn, curiously, is dedicated to Ka.

Before translating and commenting on the most important verses, I will attempt to solve the twofold linguistic problem at to the original meaning of Ka and Hiraṇyagarbha, without which the interpretation of the cosmology of the Ṛg-Veda could be, as it effectively has been, completely distorted.

I will begin by pointing out that the word Ka in Sanskrit is the interrogative pronoun “who?” that all the verses of the hymn, save the tenth and last one (in which the poet directly addresses Hiraṇyagarbha calling him Prajāpati¹, “Lord of the Creatures”), end with the following invocation:

kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema

¹ The name comes from the verb root jā (jan), “to generate”.

35
Most commentators on the *Rg-Veda* have considered *kasmai* to be the dative of *ka* “who?” and, thus, have translated the verse as follows:

“To which god shall we offer worship with our oblation?”

Now, apart from the fact that it appears to be highly improbable that the Vedic poet entitled his hymn with the interrogative pronoun “who”, the impression that one draws from the text is that, instead, the poet knew which god to worship and to offer his oblation to: *Hiranyagarbha*, as cited in the last stanza.

Here is where *kasmai* reveals what I believe it really is: the dative of the name *Ka*, which means “shining waters”.

This first mystery being in all likelihood solved, still to be explained is the term *Hiranyagarbha*.

From the time of the composition of the Vedic hymn dedicated to him all the way up to the present day, that is to say, for thousands of years, the word *hiranya* has been translated by Sanskritists as “gold”, which is why *garbha*, “seed”, became “golden seed”.

Actually, since the memory of the Indo-European symbol for water, the consonant *n*, had been lost in the Vedic period, nobody since then has ever had reason to think that gold had been so called because, as it was largely found in rivers, it was “borne”, *hira*[^3], by the waters, *n*, in which it would flow, *ya*[^4], and which it was found and gathered in.

Therefore, the original meaning of *Hiranyagarbha* was not the “Golden Seed” but rather “seed [*garbha*] borne [*hira*] by the waters [*n*] in which it moves [*ya*]”.

Here then are some stanzas of the hymn with the correct translation

[^2]: R.T.H. Griffith, “The Hymns of the *Rg-Veda*”, 1889; Sverni, Satya Prakash Sarasvati and Satyakam Vidyalankar, “*Rg-Veda Saṁhitā*”, 1987; A. Ludwig, “*Der Rg-Veda*”, etc. In the *Rg-Veda Saṁhitā*, 1888, H.H. Wilson correctly translates *kasmai* as “to the divine *Ka*”.

[^3]: *Hira* is connected to *hiri*, *hari*, *harit* and as such it is an ancient derivative of the verb *hr* “to take” or “to bear”.

[^4]: In Indo-European, *nya* means “in the water which it moves in”. With *ap*, “water”, in place of *n* it will become *apyä* in Sanskrit, “it moves in the water which it lives in”.

---

36
of kasmāi: “to the divine Ka”.

1. Hiranyagarbhaḥ sam avartatagre bhūtasya jataḥ patir eka āsīt / sa dādhāra prthivim dyam utemam kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema //

“In the beginning, Hiranyagarbha arose, born as the sole Lord of all created beings. He established the sky and the earth. To the luminous waters, the divine Ka, we offer up worship with our oblation”.

7. āpo ha yad brhatīr viśvam āyan garbham dadhānā janayantīr agnim / tato devānām sam avartatāsur ekaḥ kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema //

“In the time when the mighty5 waters came, containing the universal seed of Agni, then, from the spirit of the One arose the gods. To the divine Ka—luminous waters—we offer up worship with our oblation”.

With the coming of Hiranyagarbha, an extraordinary event would occur in the Vedic cosmogony: the birth of the gods, devānām, who were identified by the consonant d, symbol of the light with which in Sanskrit there had been created the word “sky”, div, and the word “day”, div. Thenceforth, it would be be the d of deva, “god”, that would make luminous, div-ino, the Indo-European world of living beings and matter.

8. yaś cid āpo mahinā paryapaśyad dakṣam dadhānā janayantīr yajñam / yo deveṣv adhi deva eka āsīt kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema //

“He, with his power, surveys the waters that contain the creative force and generate cosmic sacrifice. He was god of the gods: the Only One. To the luminous waters, the divine Ka, we offer up

5 Brhatīr, “mighty”, comes from the verb root brh, “to grow”, “to enlarge” or “to expand”. This is the same root that the terms brahman and Brama come from, which make reference to the expansion of the vital breath of the waters in the cosmos.
worship with our oblation”.

The creative force of the waters was contained in the root *an*, “the vital breath”. The cosmic sacrifice had its start with *Agni*, the god of fire. He too was son of the waters [*ni*] in which one moved windingly [*ag*]: *apāṃ napāt*.

9. *mā no hinsīj janitā yaḥ prthivyā yo vā divaṃ satyadharmaṃ jajāna / yaś cāpaś candrā brhatīr jajāna kasmai devāya haviṣā vidhema //

“Never can He harm us, He that is the generator of the earth and the creator of heaven and of real laws. He, who has generated the powerful and shining waters. To the luminous waters, to the divine *Ka* we offer up worship with our oblation”.

*Hiranyagarbha*, “seed borne by the waters”, the God of the gods, risen from the spirit of the One, *eka* (light rising from the waters) and, thus, called *Ka*, created the earthly waters in his own image, that is, *candrā*⁶, “shining”. Moreover, since on the Earth, by him created, the task of the waters will mainly be that of purifying the body and spirit, a holy act necessary for the achieving of mankind’s well-being and immortality, the name of the waters will also be formed with the consonant *p*, symbol of purity, and will become *āpas*:⁷ the purifiers.

10. *prajāpate na tvad etāny anyo viśvā jātāni pari tā babhūva /yatkāmās te juhumas tan no astu vayaṃ syāma patayo rayiṇām //

“O *Prājapati*, Lord of the entire human race, you alone, and no one else, has created and given life to all of these things. Grant us the goods we desire and for which we invoke your name. It is we who can be the lords of wealth”.

In the latter verse, the Vedic poet reveals the identity of

---

⁶ *Candra* is also the name of the Moon.
⁷ Plural of *ap* “water”.

38
Hiranyagarbha: he is Prajāpati, the Lord of all creatures. Thus, in my opinion, the hypothesis does not hold up that is propounded by those commentators on the Ṛg-Veda that had seen in the syllable Ka the interrogative pronoun “who?” and, thus, an expression of uncertainty as to the name of the god to invoke. This was an uncertainty that certainly did not subsist among Vedic poets. Indeed, ka was the name of the luminous waters, from which Hiranyagarbha had been born and in the name of which he had been recognized and worshipped.

The response to the mistake⁸ that all Sanskritists fall into, that of interpreting the appellative Ka given to Prajāpati as being the interrogative pronoun “who” or “what”, comes to us from the following passage from the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa in which it appears clear that the name Ka meant āditye, “bright as the sun” and not “who”:

TBr, 2, 2, 10
Prajāpatir Indram aṣṛjatānujāvaram devānām. taṃ prāhinot. parehi. eteṣāṃ devānām adhipatir edhīti. taṃ deva abruvan. kas tvam asi. vayaṃ vai tvacchreyāṃsah sma iti. so abravīt. kas tvam asi vayaṃ vai tvacchreyāṃsah sma iti mā devā avocann iti. atha vā idam tarhi Prajāpatau hara āsīt, yad asmin āditye. tad enam abravīt. etan me prayaccha. athāham eteṣāṃ devānām adhipatir bhaviṣyāmi. ko ahaṃ syām ity abravīt. etat pradāyeti. etat syā ity abravīt yad etad braviṣīt. Ko ha vai nāma Prajāpatiḥ⁹.

---

⁸ This same error was made thousands of years later by German and English grammarians, who also confused the phoneme ka, which in Indo-European and Sanskrit (in aka and ud-aka) meant “water,” with the interrogative pronoun of the same name ka, which in Indo-European and Sanskrit meant “who?” or “what?” Thus, with the use of their own interrogative pronouns, there came into being, respectively, the terms Was-ser and w(h)at-er to represent water.

⁹ This text reveals to us the true identity of Hiranyagarbha: he is Prajāpati, “Lord [pati] of the creatures [prajā]”. The hymn is dedicated to Ka because he was born in the same cosmic waters in which was born Eka, the One, who in the Vedic cosmogony represents “the rising [e] of light [ka]”. Therefore, Ka, meant “the Shining One”. 
“Prajāpati created Indra as the last born among the gods and sent him to reign over them. The gods said to Indra: “Who are you? We are worthier than you”. Indra offered this response to Prajāpati, who at that time shone like the sun [āditye], and said to him: “Give me your splendor, Prajāpati, and I shall become the king of the gods”. “If I give it to you”, replied Prajāpati, “Will I (still) be Ka\textsuperscript{10} the “Shining One?” “You will be as much as you say: truthfully, Prajāpati, your name is really Ka, the Shining One”.

\textsuperscript{10} The Upaniṣads offer us further proof that ka, other than being the interrogative pronoun “who,” was also the appellation bestowed upon Prajāpati, meaning “the Brilliant One”. In the Brhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad, (first lesson, second brāhmaṇa) the brahman was called ka in reference, it is said, to the root arc, “to shine”, which ar-ka, “the Sun”, came from. In the Chāndogya-upaniṣad (tenth chapter of the fourth lesson), the brahman is once again called ka, since, it is said, he is kha, “ethereal space” or the “sky”, where the sun reigns with its light. We know, on the other hand, that Prajāpati is the (masculine) personification of the (neuter) brahman, or rather, he is the god Brahmā. Therefore, Prajāpati-brahman was called Ka inasmuch as he/it was a manifestation of the creative “light” of the sun.
VI

Nṛ “man,” jan “to generate” or jñā “to know”

In the 121st hymn of the tenth book, the Rg-Veda reveals a second name for Hiranyagarbha: Ka, “Shining waters”, which the poet’s offerings and worship are for. Plus, a third name is also revealed: Prajāpati, “Lord of the Creatures”. In the first chapter of the code of Manu¹, dedicated to the Creation, it is stated that it was the Supreme Being, Svayambhū, “he who exists for himself”, to place Hiranyagarbha in the waters² to then be reborn as Brahman³. Thus, Svayambhū and Brahman are other names for Hiranyagarbha.

We also know that the god Brahmā⁴ was called Nārāyaṇa because he had been born and lived in the waters (nārāḥ). Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa are other names for Hiranyagarbha.

Moreover, we know that the Puruṣa⁵, the cosmic man that the Rg-Veda dedicates the entire 90th hymn of the tenth book to, was the father of Virāj⁶, who was the ancient personification of the celestial

¹ It is the name that was given to a mythical first representative of the human race, also called Svāyambhuva due to being created by Svayambhū.
² Manu, I, 8.
³ Manu, I, 9.
⁴ Manu, I, 10.
⁵ The Puruṣa, as he appears in the Puruṣa-sūkta canto of the Rg-Veda, is a cosmogonic figure, a male creative principle, the primordial man that encompasses the totality of the universe within himself. Upon his sacrifice, the Brahman was born from Puruṣa’s mouth, from Rājanya’s arms, from Vaiśya’s thighs and from Śūdra’s caste’s feet. It was from his dismembered body that, according to the Rg-Veda, the four castes of India were born.
⁶ Virāj expresses in Sanskrit the meaning of “majesty” and “sovereignty” and the name can be both masculine and feminine. It is usually understood as being the generative male power even if, in AV, VII, 9-24, it is considered to be a cosmic power of female character.
waters, with *Puruṣa* then to become her son. *Puruṣa* is also another name for *Hiranyagarbha*. The conclusion cannot be anything but the following: *Hiranyagarbha* is the fulcrum around which revolve Vedic cosmogony, metaphysics and theology, so that the cosmic waters [*n, na*], which all the main figures of Vedic mythology come from in his name, are revealed to be the real and only *causa efficiens* of the universe.

*Hiranyagarbha* is the supreme principle of creation and initiator of the cosmic functions, the gods of which make up the one God, through which in material reality there is manifested the spirit of the One, *Eka*, risen from *Ka*, the “shining waters”.

I will now attempt to demonstrate that man too, *nṛ* or *nara* in Sanskrit, “arrives [*ṛ*] from the primordial waters [*n*]”, and that the god of the gods, *Prajāpati*, who had been born and lived in them, had acquired from them his capacity “to generate”, *jan*, and “to know”, *jnā*.

***

In the *Ṛg-Veda*, the cosmic waters were called *āpo mātaraḥ*, “mothers”, and are defined as *viśvaya sthātur jagato janitrīḥ*, “generators of all mobile and immobile things in creation”.

They are considered to be *bhīṣajo mātṛtamā*, the “most maternal physicians”, because they contain “curative balms”, *bheṣajam*.

---

In “*Indian Theogony*”, Sukumari Bhattacharji advances the theory that *Virāj* represents the cosmic waters in which *Puruṣa* was created.

7 In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I, 1, 6, 1-2, it is written that “in the beginning, this universe was water, nothing more than an ocean of waters...from *Hiranyagarbha*, after a year, was born the *Puruṣa*: he is *Prajāpati*”.

8 *RV*, X, 9, 2.

9 *RV*, VI, 50, 6.

10 *RV*, VI, 50, 7.

11 The gods’ doctor was *Dhanvantari*. He had emerged from the waters of the boiling cosmic ocean, *samudramatana*, by holding in his hands a cup of *Amṛta*, the magical beverage that conferred immortality. He was the founder of the Indian school of medicine, *Āyur-Veda*, “holy knowledge of vital energy”. Another name given to him was *Divodasa* because the waters, *Dasa’s* wives, were his subjects (*RV*, I, 32, II; V, 30, 5; VII, 85, 18). *Divodasa* was the sovereign that founded the great empire of the *Bhāratas*.

12 *RV*, I, 23, 19.
and the *amṛta*\(^{13}\), the “nectar” that bestows immortality: *apsu antar amṛtam*\(^{14}\).

They grant mankind *mahe raṇaya cakṣase*\(^{15}\), “the great happiness of perfect consciousness”.

Being the first thing created, the waters “know the origin of heaven and earth”, *viduh prthivyā divo janitram*\(^{16}\).

The special powers, and the prerogatives, attributed by the Vedic poets to the “divine” waters, *apo devīr*\(^{17}\), can be summarized as follows:

a) the waters lie at the origin of life;  

b) they hold universal knowledge.

If we examine the verb roots that Indo-European grammarians used to render the meanings of these faculties:

*jan* “to generate” (a);  

*jnā* “to know” (b);  

we will note that it is possible to reconstruct them in the following way:

\[ j + an; \]

\[ j + nā^{18}; \]

---

\(^{13}\) The word comes from the verb root *mr*, “to die”, which *mṛta* is the past participle of and which, therefore, means “non-mortal” or “immortal”. The ancient Greeks called this nectar *ambrosia*, from *ambrotos*, “immortal”. If in place of the form *mbro* we put the original root *mr*, we will notice the perfect correspondence between *a-mṛ-ta* and *a-mbro-tos.*

\(^{14}\) RV, I, 23, 19.

\(^{15}\) RV, X, 9, 1.

\(^{16}\) RV, VII, 34, 2.

\(^{17}\) RV, I, 23, 18.

\(^{18}\) In the cluster *jn*, the dental *n* becomes palatal.
where the root *an*\textsuperscript{19} is the verb “to breathe” or “to live”, the consonant *na* is the symbol of the waters and the consonant *j* expresses straightforward rectilinear motion.

The meaning of *jan*\textsuperscript{20} and *jñā*\textsuperscript{21} was, thus, respectively: “it comes [*j*] from the vital breath of the waters [*an*]”, which gave rise to the idea of “to generate”, and “the waters [*na*] in their forward motion [*j*]”, which the idea of “to know\textsuperscript{22}” comes from since it is a motion to be made throughout the entire universe.

The reconstruction of the meaning of the word *nṛ*, “man”, is just as simple:

\[ n + r \]

in which the verb root *r* indicates the action of “to rise\textsuperscript{23}” and the consonant *n* is the symbol of the element “water”.

*Nṛ* meant, therefore, “he who rises from the waters”. The analogy between *nṛ* and *nya*, “that which moves [*ya*] in the waters [*n*]”, tells us that mankind, in its origin, was similar to *Svayambhū*, *Brahmā*, *Prajāpati* and *Puruṣa*.

As the first Indo-European populations viewed it, mankind also sprang from the cosmic seed borne by the celestial waters: *Hiranyagarbha*.

\textsuperscript{19} It is the root of the Latin *an-imus* “soul”.
\textsuperscript{20} Note that the *j* of *jan* is soft as with the Latin *genere*.
\textsuperscript{21} Here the *j* of the cluster *jñ* is hard, as in the Greek *gno*, “to know”.
\textsuperscript{22} The Latin verb *geno*, *ere*, “to generate,” comes from the root *jan*. The root *jñā* gave rise to the forms (*g*)*no*, “to know”, and (*g*)*na*, “to be born”. See the Latin (*g*)*nosco* and (*g*)*nascor*, whose homonymy is explained by the close link they have to the forward motion of the waters [*j* + *na*]. In (*g*)*nascor*, the reference to the advancing of the waters (*j* + *na*) evidently regards the moment in which, at the end of gestation and just prior to childbirth, the waters that the fetus lives in exit from the maternal womb. In their forward movement [*j*], the waters [*na*], on the one hand, acquire knowledge of the entire universe [*jñā*] and, on the other hand, give birth [*jan*] “to all things mobile and immobile in creation” (see *na-tus* and *na-tura*). In Sanskrit, the existence of the root *j* + *na* with the meaning of “to be born” is not borne out, but an Indo-European root *n* + *as* existed and also derived its meaning from the motion of the waters.
\textsuperscript{23} See *iyarti vācam*, “he raises his voice” (RV, II, 42, 2). *Iyarti* is the third person of the present tense of the verb *ṛ*. With the meaning of “to rise”, the Indo-European root *ṛ* came to Latin, creating the verb *orior-īrī*, “to rise” or “to be born”, which *origo*, “origin” or “source”, comes from.
VII

*Napāt* “grandson” and *naptu* “Neptune”

In order to clarify the heretofore unknown etymology of the Sanskrit word *napāt*, “grandson”, and to demonstrate its relationship to the waters, I must go back to the most ancient notes on the law of a religious nature that regulated hereditary succession during the Vedic age, notes that we find in the RV, III, 31, 1-2:

śāsad vahnr duhitur naptyaṃ gād vidvān ṛtasya didhitim saparyan /pitā yatra duhituḥ sekam ṛṇjan saṃ śagmyena manasā dadhanve //

1. “Without a male child, but with a daughter, the father who is wise and obedient to the ritual order\(^96\) trusts in his grandson and, in order to accomplish his daughter’s impregnation, pays homage to his son-in-law’s sexual power; and in this way does he obtain solace with a glad heart”\(^97\).

na jāmaye tānvo riktham āraik cakāra garbhaṃ sanitur nidhānam / yadī mātaro janayanta vahnim anyah kartā sukṛtor anya ṛndhan //

2. “The son (upon the death of the father) did not give his sister a share of the father’s wealth: he (the father) had left her a womb to have a child by her husband’s seed.

When parents bring a pair of children (of different sexes) into the world, the male must perform sacred rites (with the father’s property)\(^98\), while to the female go lavish gifts.

Even though considered the authentic source of law\(^99\), the *Ṛg-Veda*
is not, however, entirely comprehensive of the laws that regulate the performance of funeral rites in honor of the dead.

To our immense good fortune, one of India’s great merits is that of having passed down to us Indo-European religious traditions dating back to the worship of the dead, which has cast light on the original nexus between the birth of religious spirit, the performance of funeral rites and the legitimization of the exercise of power.

Therefore, it is worth considering, beyond the Vedic text of family institutes called Sapiṇḍa and Samānodaka in Sanskrit, terms that denoted the two communities in which their components were linked, for their whole lives, to the fulfillment of the juridical-religious precept of making offerings to the dead of rice flatbread or flour, piṇḍa, and libations of water, udaka dāna, to feed them and refresh them during their otherworldly trip toward bliss and immortality and to keep them far from the kingdom of the underworld, which was populated by evil demons.

The duty of periodically dedicating funeral rites to one’s ancestors fell upon the firstborn son who, on the death of his father and the taking on of this obligation, became the legitimate heir to the family fortune.

However, as the new pater familias, he was expected to help his relatives just as his father had done.

---

is sacred by its nature and its sources are the Vedas, tradition, Smṛti, and authentic interpretations of laws given by teachers from Vedic schools. These laws, in more recent times, were gathered into codes known as Dharma-sūtras and Dharma-śāstras, the most famous and important of which is that of Manu (Mānava Dharma- śāstra).

I wholeheartedly agree with B.G. Tilak that the Indo-Europeans’ original homeland was not India but a land located much farther to the north, in the Arctic Circle (see “The Arctic Homeland in the Vedas”). And it was there, and not in India, that the first Indo-European religious traditions were born.

The worship of the dead was the most ancient expression of religious sentiment. The “link”, which the Latin verb religo,-are refers to, would thus be understood as having to do with dead forefathers well before it had anything to do with the divine.

Sapiṇḍa means “having in common the offering of rice”.

Samā udaka means “having in common the offering of water”.

Called Put. From which seems to derive the Sanskrit term putra “son”: “he who saves [tra] from Put”.

The dead, in the absence of these offerings, could become a Preta, “evil spirit”.

46
In the community called *Sapiṇḍa*, the link joined seven generations: three ascendant and three descendant with respect to the head of the family.

In the community called *Samānodaka*, the link to the performance of the rites instead connected all the family’s generations from its first origins until its eventual dying out.\(^{106}\)

It appears clear, from the different duration of the link, that the offering of water to the dead was considered more important than offering food.

It was *udaka dāna*, then, that was the primary nexus that linked the descendants – sons, grandsons and greatgrandsons – to their ancestors in the hereafter and that, passed down to the descendants, through ritual functions,\(^{107}\) the investiture to exercise power within the family and to oversee its patrimony.

So, we can finally explain the etymology of the Sanskrit word *napāt*, “descendant”, whose origin has hitherto remained unknown due to the meaning of “son” attributed to it in Vedic literature\(^{109}\) and only later also “grandson” and “great-grandson”, as if *napāt* did not indicate an exact degree of kinship but denoted a particular function carried out by one of the descendants.

If we correctly consider the term to be a compound made up of the roots *na*, “water”, and *pat*, “to govern”\(^{110}\), it will appear clear that the

---

\(^{106}\) So it is written in *The Code of Manu* (fifth chapter, 60th paragraph). According to said source, the link extended over 14 generations (MW SED, *op.* *cit.*, p. 1160).

\(^{107}\) There were also other religious duties to be observed on a daily basis with the use of water and which went back to the set of acts of devotion called *Sandhyā* in Sanskrit. Before sunrise, one had to sip water several times as a sign of purification: *āsamana*. One had to then pour water on one’s head as a sort of self-baptism: *mārjana*. Upon the rising of the sun, one had to make a gift of water three times: *arghya dāna*. Finally, at the closing of the morning ceremonies, refreshing water was offered to the gods, wise men and dead forefathers: *tarpana*.

Moreover, at least three baths a day were required: the *tri-snāna*.

\(^{108}\) Inheritance by last will and testament did not exist.


\(^{110}\) The root *pat* of *napāt* is considered to be a strong form of *pat*, denominative of *pati*, “lord”. *Pāt* could be a derivative of the root *pā*, “to protect”, but in this case the meaning would not change either.
function performed by *napāt* originally referred to\(^\text{111}\) funeral rites involving offerings of water to the dead, *udaka dāna*\(^\text{112}\), whose carrying out legitimized *de jure* the celebrant to succeed the deceased in the overseeing of his property: whether or not he was a father, grandfather or great-grandfather.

So, it is easy to recognize the nexus between the Sanskrit verb root *pat*, “to govern”, and the Latin *potis*, “that which has authority”, and to also read in the Latin *nepos*, “he who has authority over the waters”.

If we recognize, then, in *ptu*\(^\text{113}\) a derivative of the root *pat*, we can also reconstruct the Indo-European compound *naptu*\(^\text{114}\), “superintendent of the waters”, that, with the addition of the suffix *nus* (of *dominus*, *tribunus*, etc.), will give us the Latin name *Neptunus*, “Neptune”, the god of the sea.

I believe that it is precisely because of the derivation of the principle of authority from the celebration of purifying rites in honor of the gods and dead forefathers that Indo-European grammarians chose the consonant *p* of the root *pū*, “to purify”, and of the root *pitr*, “father”, the purifier *par excellence*, to express the concept of “power”, apparent in the Sanskrit term *pati*, “lord”, and in the Latin *potestas*, “authority”.

---

\(^{111}\) It is highly probable that the term *napāt*, originally intended to denote the descendant that had the task of performing the religious rites of offering of water to the dead, later indicated a kind of “magistrate [*pati*] of the waters [*na*]”, with more general duties.

\(^{112}\) The purpose of the Vedic rite of oblations to dead forebears, *udaka dāna*, was to save them from death and, in the limbo in which they had ended up, to defend them from evil demons by freeing them from the bonds that prevented them from enjoying the bliss of eternal life in the celestial region located across from the sun.

\(^{113}\) I believe that the form *ptu* appeared in the *Māitrāyani Samhitā*. Whitney considers it, even if dubiously, a derivative of *pat* (op. cit. p. 94).

\(^{114}\) In Avestan too, *napta* is correlated to water and means “moist”. In “Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes”, vol. I, p. 232, E. Benveniste reconstructs a noun “*neptu*” that should mean “moisture” or “aquatic element”.

48