

**Viktor Rydberg's
Investigations into Germanic Mythology
Volume II**

**Translated and Annotated by William P. Reaves
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15.

The Primeval Smiths.

36) It has already been stated that in Germanic mythology, primeval smiths contribute to the adornment and perfection of the world's creation. They form different groups: Mimir with his smiths, Ivaldi's sons, "swarthy elves" and "dwarves." In the beginning they stand in the best relationship to the gods and forge the finest precious objects for them, but later a breach occurs between the gods and certain smiths that afflicts Creation with severe suffering and threatens it with ruin. The Germanic myths have all these features in common with the Vedic myths.¹ Later, I will return to a most remarkable story about a rising enmity between the gods and the primeval smiths and the results of this enmity.

37) One among the circle of *Rigveda's* smiths, although not of divine birth, has high god-rank, and because he is simultaneously the source of religious wisdom, sacred ancient hymns, prayers and sacrifices, as well as being the guardian of the mead-well in the underworld, he occupies a high position in *Rigveda*, and becomes the highest omniscient god after the end of the Vedic period and into the Brahmanic epoch. There, he still retains his character of primeval smith, who artistically unites creation (*Rigv.* X, 72, 2), gives the sun-disc her brilliance (*Rigv.* IX, 28, 5), adorns her with rays (*Rigv.* IX, 97, 31) and sharpens heaven's stone for Indra. Because his activity is compared in other places with a weapon-smith's, he probably was one in the epic songs as well. However, his significance as a primeval smith is much less prominent in *Rigveda* than his character of priestly bard and sacrificer, in which capacity he becomes the model and patron of the bards' status, and later of the priest caste. The synonyms, under which he is celebrated, are Manus, Soma, Brihaspati and Brahmanaspati, and the myth about him is, as I shall

¹ Carla O'Harris has pointed out a close analogue to the Ribhus and Alfar in the Greek Telchines. Their myth shares many points of contact with the myth of the Sons of Ivaldi as reconstructed by Rydberg. According to Strabo, *Geography* 14.2.7, the Telchines were the first to work iron and brass, fabricating the scythe for Chronos (and the trident for Posideon, according to Callimachus, Hymn IV to Delos). They excelled in workmanship but were maligned by rival workmen. Statius, *Thebaid* 2.265 speaks of their "friendly rivalry in skill" with the Cyclopes. Strabo depicts them as sorcerers, who poured the water of the underworld river Styx, mixed with sulphur, upon animals and plants in order to destroy them. Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historia* 5.55.1, says the Telchines nurtured the god Posideon, whom Rhea had committed to their care; they were wizards, jealous of teaching their arts to others, who could summon clouds, rain, snow and hail at will, as well as change their natural shapes. One of them was named Lykos (Wolf). According to Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 7.365, their evil eyes blighted everything, and, angered, Zeus drowned them in the flood. They are brothers alternately four, nine, and twelve in number. After them, nymphs are called Telchiniae.

later demonstrate, exactly the same as the myth about Mimir, the primeval smith, the source of fimbul-songs, and the guardian of the mead-source.

38) Tvashtar, "artisan," is an epithet in *Rigveda* that is applied to many persons, but especially one, who from the beginning is adopted among the gods as their weapon- and jewelry-smith, admired for his skill and patronized even by Brahmanaspati, whose finest tool, an axe, he ground (*Rigv.* X, 53, 10).²

The other primeval smiths constitute a group of three brothers, who are usually called *Ribhus*, but also *Âyus*, and *Anus*, after the foremost smith in the group who is called *Âyu* and *Anu*, and especially is also named *Ribhu*. The names *Âyu* and *Anu* have been preserved through time as belonging to an exceptional smith. In *Völundarkviða* 2, *Völund* is called *Anund*, and that he is identical to the *Ajo* mentioned in the *History of the Langobards* (and *Aggo* by Saxo) is demonstrated in the first part of this work.³ The meaning of the name *Ribhu* is uncertain. It is usually translated as "artistically skilled" (see Fick and Roth)⁴ and Fick *Wörterbuch* III, 28 points out as possible an etymological connection between this word and the Norse elf, *álfr*.⁵ *Völund* is an elf-prince, and can be called *álfa vísi* (*Völundarkviða* 13 and 32).⁶ As I shall show later, the myth about the brothers *Völund*, *Egil*, and *Slagfin* is found again in *Rigveda*.

39) The Vedic, like the Germanic, primeval smiths confer useful and beautiful works of art on the gods. In Vedic as well as Germanic mythology, it is probable that among the wonderful things possessed by the gods, not one was mentioned that was not crafted by one of these artisans. The sun-disc or the sun-car, the grass and the flowers are also described as products of their skill. The feats of the Vedic and the Germanic smiths are reminiscent of one another. For the twin-gods, the *Asvins*, the *Ribhus* make a living wagon-ship, in which they fare, independent of the wind, in all directions through the air and on the sea. For the gods, *Ivaldi's* sons make the ship *Skidbladnir* that always has a

² This actually occurs in verse 9, Griffith: "Tvashtar, most deft of workmen, knew each magic art, bringing most blessed bowls that hold the drink of Gods. His axe, wrought of good metal, he is sharpening now, wherewith the radiant Brahmanaspati will cut."

³ See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 15, 108, 109, 113.

⁴ August Fick (1833-1916), author of *Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen* ["Dictionary of the Indo-European Languages"], 1874. Walter Rudolf von Roth (1821-1895), co-author with Otto von Böhtlingk of the seven volume Sanskrit-Dictionary (the so-called "Petersburger Wörterbuch"), published 1855-1875; editor with William Dwight Whitney of *Atharvedaveda-Sanhitā*, Berlin, 1856 and translator of *Der Atharvaveda*, 1875.

⁵ This connection has been affirmed by Edgar C. Polomé in *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*, 1997, s.v. elf, and Ursula Dronke, *Poetic Edda*, Vol. II (1997), p. 261. Polomé writes: "ON *alfar*, 'elf', OE *ælf* (NE>elf), OInd *rbhū-* artistic, learned; artisan, artist; orderer of time; one of the group of the gods. Perhaps also belonging here is the Old Church Slavic *rabŭ*, 'servant'. The apparent agreement of Germanic and Indic would suggest PIE antiquity. Etymologically, the word appears to be related to Latin *albus* 'white' and Hittite *alpā-* 'cloud', originally as 'shining one' or the like." Dronke writes: "The etymology of the word *álfar* is disputed; the connection with Sanskrit *Rbhús* being variously rejected or accepted. The coincidence in function between the Norse elves and the Indian *Rbhús* lends weight to the argument for a common origin of the words." She lists four points of semblance between the Germanic elves, and the *Ribhus*: (a) they make divine equipment for the gods (b) they have joined the ranks of the *Aesir* (c) they have an important winter sacrifice devoted to them, the *álfablót* (d) they are associated with light.

⁶ "leader of elves." In connection with the *Ribhus*, Ursula Dronke writes: "I would suggest that the titles of *Völundr*, *álfa lióði*, *vísi álfa*, relate to an old tradition in which *álfar* were subtle smiths before the popularity of the dwarfs as underground metal workers made the elves' title forgotten," [*Poetic Edda* Vol. II, p. 262].

favorable wind, can hold all the gods, but also fold up like a cloth and be placed in a pouch. From an empty hide, Brokk and Sindri make the boar Gullinbursti; from an empty hide, the Ribhus make a cow. Tvashtar forged one of the lightning weapons, of which the thundering Indra avails himself; Sindri made the younger hammer with which the thundering Thor fells his giant foes. Both mythologies ascribe to their smiths the ability to make many things of one thing that are identical to the first. Of *one* horse, the Ribhus make two, and of a wonderful goblet that Tvashtar sent the gods, the Ribhus make four copies. On the other side, Sindri and Brokk forge the ring Draupnir, from which drop rings of identical weight, and Völund has made a ring from which hundreds of other rings have their origin.⁷ When Loki steals the hair of Sif, the dis of vegetation, the sons of Ivaldi make locks of gold that grow like other hair for her. The Ribhus spread vegetation over territory transformed from desert, and because it follows to liken the earth's vegetation with Sif's hair, this amounts to the same thing (See *Rigv.* VIII, 80, 5 where the earth's vegetation is likened to hair).⁸ Ivaldi's daughter Idun has in her possession the Germanic gods' means of rejuvenation, presumably invented by her brothers.⁹ The Ribhus invent a means of rejuvenation (see below).

16.

Primeval Smiths and Swan-maidens.

40) In the Vedic and Brahmanic mythic literature, as in the Germanic, swan-maids appear in closest connection with the primeval smiths.

Völundarkviða relates that when the great smith Völund and his brothers Egil and Slagfin come to the Wolfdales and build themselves a house by the Wolfsea, three swan-maids fly from the south through the Myrkwood to the same dales and land by the water's shore, where they see the brothers' house. Early one morning the brothers found three women sitting on the shore and spinning precious flax; their swan-guises lay beside them. The swan-maids were their relatives (two were their half-sisters, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 110, 113). One of them pressed Egil in her white arms; the second embraced Slagfin; the third laid her arms around Anund's (Völund's) white neck. They remained with their brothers in the Wolfdales eight winters. During the eighth, they became homesick, and in the ninth winter, they flew away. Slagfin and Egil left the Wolfdales in search of their swan-maids. Völund, when he was captured by Nidhad and the Njars, still expected his beloved to return.

In the Indic godsaga, the same primeval smith who bears the Völund-name Âyu is the son of a swan-maid, Urvaçî.

There, the swan-maids are partially called by the more general designation *gnas*, "procreator," and partially with the more specialized *apsaras*, "water-dis." Their swan-guises called *âtayo bhûtvá*, after a waterfowl *âti*, are dedicated to the wind. In *Rigveda*,

⁷ *Skáldskaparmál* 43 cp. *Völundarkviða* 8, 9, 11, and 14. On this point, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 87.

⁸ Verse 6 is clearer than 5 on this: "Make all of these grow crops of hair, you cultivated field of ours, my body, and my father's head." [Griffith]. The same image occurs in *Bundehesh* 9, 3. There the plants are said to spring up like "hair on the heads of men."

⁹ Idun is identified as a sister of the sons of Ivaldi in *Hrafnagaldur Óðins* 6. For evidence of the Sons of Ivaldi creating a means of rejuvenation, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 114.

the smith Tvashtar has *gnas* as inseparable companions, and when he becomes the enemy of the gods and flees and hides himself far away from them, swan-maids accompany him into his exile (see no. 32).

Rigveda X, 95 contains a conversation between the swan-maid Urvaçî, Âyu's mother, and his father Purûravas. The myth in its entirety, if even changed by time, is given in *Çatapatha Brâhmana* XI, 5 translated by Max Müller in *Oxford Essays* (1856) and by Albrecht Weber in "*Indische Streifen*," pp. 16-19.¹⁰ Purûravas is a mortal who is loved by the swan-maid Urvaçî and chosen by her as husband, but he is informed in advance that they must part if she ever sees him naked, because such a sight is not permissible among *gnas*. They live together for a long time, and she has the son Âyu with him. One night it happens that she sees him naked by a flash of lightning and then she vanishes, but with a promise to return. Thereafter, the legend relates the conditions under which they are reunited. The *Rigveda* hymn and the legend agree in that the swan-maid had fallen in love with Purûravas and voluntarily made him her husband. "Purûravas, by desire I come to you, and therefore make you my body's ruler" (X, 95, 5). It is also clear from *Völundarkviða* that it is the sisters' love for their brothers that drive them to fly through the Myrkwod into the inhospitable and uninhabited Wolfdales and stay close to the house that the brothers had built for themselves there, for upon their reunion they press their relatives and lovers in their embrace. Thereafter, their longing is strongly emphasized in the song, when it allows them, and not the brothers, to take the initiative on that occasion. This needs to be pointed out particularly, because *Völundarkviða* has been misunderstood on this point. Under the influence of Christian poems, some have assumed that Völund and his brothers stole the swan-guises from the swan-maids and forced them to remain with them.¹¹ But this is a younger, as well as an obvious, invention of Christian times and is usually accompanied by the addition that the swan-maids (as heathen beings) were killed by those who stole their feather-dresses from them.¹²

Long into the middle ages, the German sagas preserved the memory of the ancient myth about Völund the smith's family-connection with water-dises (swan-maidens). *Thiðreks Saga af Bern*, chapter 57,¹³ relates that King Vilkinus fathered the giant Vadi, Velint's (Völund's) father, with a mermaid (*sjöjungfru*). The poem "*Rabenschlacht*" says that when Völund's son Vidga (Wittich), pursued by King Dieterich, could not escape, a *meerminne*, Frau Wâchilt, who was one of Vidga's ancestors, appeared and hid him in the depths of the sea. The Swedish version of *Thiðreks Saga af Bern* says that when Widecki, pursued by Dietrich, jumped into the sea, "then to him came a mermaid (*havfru*)," his grandfather's mother, and took him and carried him "to Zealand, where he remained for a long time." These mermaids (*sjöjungfrur* and *havsfurur*) are the mythology's water-dises and swan-maids, *Rigveda's Apsarases*.

17.

¹⁰ The same tale is translated in the more recent *The Wonder That Was India* by A. L. Basham (London, 1954), pp. 405-7.

¹¹ [Rydberg's footnote]: As Wieland does in the story of "*Friedrich von Schwaben*."

¹² This remains the most common interpretation. For a scholarly review of the analogues, see Ursula Dronke, *Poetic Edda*, Vol. II, pp. 258-9.

¹³ The original reference reads, *Vilkinasaga*, chapter 18.

The Ordered Universe a) The Nine Worlds.

41) After the gods and the primeval smiths arrange the cosmos, the entirety amounts to a universal structure,¹⁴ well-suited to its purpose and built like every other building, from the bottom up, in the direction in which the world-tree grows.

Germanic cosmology divides the universal structure into nine worlds or world-regions (*níu heimar*), but the separate regions cannot be named with certainty. It would seem as if only the number nine itself was fixed, and that this number applied also to the subdivisions of the world-regions. While *Völuspá 2* speaks of nine worlds in its all-inclusive sense, the old giant in *Vafþrúðnismál 43* speaks of nine "heimar" down below Niflhel, these being regions of punishment. Conversely, nine heavens are mentioned and called by name.¹⁵

Likewise, Vedic cosmology divides the universe into nine, that is to say three times three, world-regions, but its subdivisions never seem to be the same. Usually three earths, three atmospheres, and three heavens are spoken of (compare Bergaigne II, 120 ff; Zimmer, p. 357-359),¹⁶ and the three earths are represented as lying one beneath the other. There exists a lower world (*avamā*), a middle-lying (*madhyamā*), and an upper world (*paramā*), the one where human beings dwell during their mortal life and which corresponds to the Germanic Midgard.¹⁷

Between these earths, depicted as plates, are found atmospheres. At least one is spoken of as being between the upper earth and the middle earth, so that one distinguishes between "heaven's atmosphere" (*uparam*) and the atmosphere below the earth (*pārthivan*), *Rigv.* IX, 22, 5; *Rigv.* III, 30, 2; I, 62, 5; IV, 53, 3, exactly as the Teutons distinguish between "upper heaven" (*uphimmínn*, *úfhimil*, *uppheofon*), which is the atmosphere above us, and the heaven existing under the earth. In Christian times in the North, the use of heaven in the plural often occurs, as in the expressions *stíga til himna*, *himnum að*, *hér og á himnum*,¹⁸ which are a legacy from heathendom and do not derive from the New Testament's usage of *ouranos*, also in plural form.

42) In *Rigveda*, the lowest earth is the kingdom of eternal darkness, "Nirrti's (the evil dead's) womb," *Rigv.* VII, 104, 9, 11, and, ever since sin came into the world, it is the haunt of the damned, *Rigv.* X, 95, 14. Likewise, among the Teutons, the nine realms of punishment lie lowest of all, namely under Niflhel, the northern part of the middlemost earth-plate. From Niflhel, which is the forecourt to the actual realms of punishment, a tunnel leads down to them. (See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 75-78). In Niflhel live the spirits of sickness (see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*,

¹⁴ *världsbyggnad*, literally "world-building."

¹⁵ *Nafnapulur 100* refers to "nine heavens" and names the first *vindbláinn* ("wind-dark"), *heiðþyrnir* ("clouded-brightness"), or *hreggmímír* ("storm-Mimir"); the second *andlangr* ("extended"), the third *viðbláinn* ("wide-dark"), the fourth *viðfeðmir* ("wide-embracer"), the fifth *hrjóðr* ("coverer"), the sixth *hlýnir* ("twin-lit"), the seventh *gímír* ("fiery or jeweled"), the eighth *vetmímír* ("winter-Mimir"), and the ninth *skattyrnir* ("rich-wetter") [*Skáldskaparmál 75*, Faulkes tr.].

¹⁶ See *Rigv.* IV, 53, 5 which reads: "Savitar thrice surrounding with his mightiness mid-air, three regions, and the triple sphere of light, sets the three heavens in motion and the threefold earth, and willingly protects us with his triple law." [Griffith tr.]. See also *Rigv.* I, 34, 8; I, 108, 9; II, 27, 8; III, 56, 8; V, 60, 6; VII, 87, 5; IX, 113, 9, among others.

¹⁷ In Germanic mythology, Midgard is the middle world, situated between heaven and Hel.

¹⁸ *stíga til himna*, "ascend to the heavens"; *himnum að*, "towards the heavens"; *hér og á himnum*, "here and in the heavens."

Vol. I, no. 60) In the Vedic mythology, the spirits of sickness also have their home in the vicinity of Nirrti, *Rigv.* X, 165, 4.¹⁹

43) The heavenly lights, which make their revolutions in creation, do not visit the atmosphere above the third earth. When they perform their period in the "upper heaven" and set in the west, they make their way through the atmosphere that is lying over the middlemost earth and closest below the upper earth. Here walks Sûrya (the sun) when night envelops the upper earth; when the black half of day descends into the lower heaven, the light half of day rises up into the higher atmosphere, *Rigv.* VI, 9, 1.

The middlemost earth-plate, which in this manner shares day and night alternately with the upper earth-plate, is the dwelling place of Soma, Savitar, and other gods, as well as the revered goddess Night, and her sisters—the dises of the rosy dawn, the *Ushas*. There the horses of the sun are buckled into their harnesses anew each morning. There also are the three holy world-wells: the three Somas, the three *hvápta*. The middlemost earth-plate is identical to the Germanic underworld's kingdom of bliss and, with its atmosphere, constitutes an integral part of "the heavens," when the expression is specifically taken, as often happens in *Rigveda*, in the sense of the worlds of the gods and of bliss, independent of position above or below the upper earth, and it stands in connection with the divine dwellings and the blessed regions above our atmosphere.

44) The connection is a bridge. In *Rigv.* IX, 41, 2 the bard prays: "May we reach salvation's bridge, the difficult to reach, after the godless enemies are vanquished!" The assumption is that it is also from this bridge, "a bow-shaped way," that Agni, *Rigveda*'s Heimdall, watches human beings. The bridge is called "the Ribhus' (nature's artisans') way."

In the Iranian documents, the bridge is called *Chinvad Peretu*, "the judges' bridge." Its bridgehead, like that of its Germanic counterpart Bifröst, rests on the underworld from which it stretches up into the highest heaven, past and outside of the upper earth-plate. To cross the judges' bridge, one must die. The pious as well as the godly walk one and the same path down to the underworld where the ends of the bridge are found (*Vendidad*, Fargard 19, 29). This is in complete agreement with Germanic mythology.²⁰ The name "judges' bridge" refers to one of its functions: it serves as a necessary part of the journey for the purpose of the judgment on the dead (see further). The gods also fare daily over Bifröst in order to judge.²¹

18.

The Ordered Universe b) The World Mill.

¹⁹ The subject of this verse is a messenger of death in the form of a bird, which is called the "envoy of Nirrti," the envoy of Destruction, in verse 1, and an envoy of death, an envoy of Yama, in verse 4. Kaegi writes: "*Rigv.* X, 165 is for the purpose of warding off injury, probably death, announced by a dove (? *kapota*) ... In verse 4, beside the *kapota*, the owl is mentioned as a messenger of death, in which function it is also known in the German popular superstitions." [R. Arrowsmith tr].

²⁰ For Rydberg's account of Germanic cosmology, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 56 & 93. An illustration of the cosmology can be found in Vol. I, no. 65, as well as in my translation of *Fädernas Gudasaga* ["Our Fathers' Godsaga"], pp. xiii-xiv.

²¹ *Grímnismál* 29, *er hann dæma ferr*, "when he [Thor] goes to judge", and 30, *er þeir dæma fara*, "when they [the Æsir] go to judge."

45) In the first part of this work, I presented the forgotten ancient myth of Lodur-Mundilföri's Grotti-mill, the enormous world-mill that grinds the bodies of the primeval giants and thereby procures nourishing topsoil for the earth and rotates the heavens, regulates the tides and, through the stones grinding against one another, generates the holy fire—the mill that ground peace, good-will, happiness and wealth during the age of innocence.²²

The myth belongs to the Proto-Indo-European era and the same god, Savitar, who in other respects corresponds to Mundilföri, does so also in his role as the master of the world-mill.

The first element of the name *Mundilföri*, as I previously pointed out (*Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 81), is a variant of the word *möndull*, mill-handle, which never occurs in Old Norse literature except when used of the handle by which a handmill is set in motion. Mundilföri is thus "the one with the mill-handle, who causes the handmill to turn." The word *möndull* goes back to the Indo-European *mantâ*, mill-handle, from the root *mat*, *mantati*, to turn round, to rotate, in Sanskrit *math*, *manthati* with the same meaning.²³ In *Rigveda* VIII, 46, 23 the epithet *math*, *mathra*, "the rotating," "the turning" is used of horses that spin a wheel around.²⁴

In the hymns of *Rigveda*, the grain-grinding handmill is never mentioned; however, without doubt it was well known and used. In its place, there often occurs another handmill: the soma-mill, the soma press that was the tool necessary for the offering and between whose stones the juice of the soma-stems was extracted. The *Rigveda* hymns are, with extremely few exceptions, liturgical hymns sung at offerings and the numerous paraphrases, "impressions," and pictures that occur in them, contain elements that are collected from the *epic* mythology to apply in *liturgical* meaning. There the epic world-mill that grinds nourishing meal and generates the holy fire naturally becomes a liturgical world-mill that extracts the world-nourishing soma and the fiery, intoxicating juice dwelling within it. The epic mill's handle, *manthâ*, becomes the liturgical mill's handle, and the former's "roaring" stones become the latter's. The liturgical world-mill in its turn becomes the model for the small soma-pressing tool that is required for the daily offering conducted at home. The epithet that belongs to the former

²² *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, nos. 79-83. This finds support in modern scholarship. See Clive Tolley, "The Mill in Norse and Finnish Mythology", *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research* 24 (1994-95), 135-56 and Ursula Dronke, *The Poetic Edda*, Vol. II, commentary on *Völuspá* 5/1-4, p. 116-17. Tolley cites the first volume of Rydberg's work, and closely mirrors his argument drawing additional analogues from Finnish and Indian mythology. Dronke discusses the evidence relating to *Mundilföri* in greater detail, citing Tolley.

²³ In his *Altnordisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *möndull*, Jan deVries lists a number of modern European cognates as well as confirms the connection with the Sanskrit (*altindisch*) *manthati* meaning "rühren" (to set in motion) or "drehen" (to rotate), and *manthâ-* meaning "rührlöffel" (stirring spoon). His source is Julius Pokorny's *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1959).

²⁴ Bergaigne (III, 7) writes: "The root *manth*, in *Rigveda* always means, directly or via illusion, an action similar to that of churning; it may be kindling friction fire with two pieces of wood or it may be the very identification of Soma-pressing with fire-production which consists of pressing out the Soma juice between two stones. Evidently there is an allusion to this last-mentioned operation in a text relating to the descent of the celestial Soma, IX, 77, 2: 'He whom the eagle has *churned* (i.e. extracted by churning) from heaven,' and in I, 93, 6 where the same myth is compared with the myth of the descent of fire: 'Mātariśvan brought the one (Agni): the eagle *churning* (extracted from the mountain with churning wings) the other (Soma) from the mountain (or 'from the stone').'"

is applied to the latter. Thus, in the hymns, the stones that are used with these, despite their insignificant play and noise, are called "roaring," because the epic-liturgical world-mill's are; and the whisk with which the extracted juice is mixed is called *manthâ*, "mill-handle," because it serves as the epic-liturgical world-mill's great *möndull*. Thus, when the sacrificial hymns speak of the everyday soma press, there occur a number of allusions to the liturgical world-mill, with whose work their own is analogous in a small way.

In *Rigveda* hymn X, 94, we find a direct account of the world-mill itself — one that even Bergaigne, without knowing the Germanic myth about this mill, found, since he points out that the description pertains to an enormous "celestial" mill.²⁵ The mill's stones are mountains (verse 1): they grind a branch that comes from the world-tree (some cosmogonic being? v. 3). The earth roars when the stones grind against one another (v. 4). In one of them is a place (the mill-eye?) fixed for the water that whirls dancing down into it. With this, one compares the Germanic world-mill, built over the Hvergelmir fountain, through whose mill-stones the ocean's water rushes up and down. In verse 13, it says that it broadcasts seeds as the tiller does his seedcorn. Ten enormously strong creatures, symbolized as bulls, who are harnessed to its handle, keep the mill continuously in motion, without aging, and sing so that heaven and earth hear it (v. 6, 7). What they grind are soma-mead, power, and wealth. This is such an entirely apt description of Germanic mythology's world-mill, that the only disparity that deserves to be pointed out is that those who, singing, pushed the world-mill were nine instead of ten and are definitely said to be giantesses.

The Vedic world-mill, like the Germanic world-mill, is built among "the subterranean," *Rigv. X, 175*.

He who sets the stones in motion is Savitar (*Rigv. X, 175, 1, 4*). *Rigv. X, 100, 8, 9* calls on him to divert illnesses with both the millstones from them who invoke him. The Germanic world-mill also has the power not only to produce good, but also to ward off evil (*Hér skylli engi öðrum granda, tils böls búa, né til bana orka*, etc. *Gróttasöngur* 6).²⁶ "Joyous, young, and wise," Savitar tends his soma-mill "with arms of gold" and "in the vat of the atmosphere wets both hands with *ghrita*" (the melted butter that is mixed into the soma juice), *Rigv. VI, 71, 1*. Savitar "sets the three heavens and the three earths in motion, he both rouses and sends off to sleep, he rules both the mobile and the immobile, days and nights," *Rigv. IV, 53, 5-6*.

The Vedic myth about the world-mill still survives in the Indic stories about the amrita-mill (the ambrosia-mill). Gods and giants, says the story, took a mountain, moved it down into a sea of milk, tied a giant serpent around the mountain and spun it in a whirl until the sea's milk was churned into *ghrita*, out of which happiness, abundance, science and the arts arose, and finally even amrita, the juice of immortality.²⁷ Thereafter, the gods and the giants enter into battle for it (as for the mead in the Germanic *godsagas*). In connection with the world-mill, which regulates the motion of the great waters in both the

²⁵ See Bergaigne I, 199-200.

²⁶ "Here no one shall harm another, or plan evil, or plot murder," etc.

²⁷ The most popular account of this story appears in *Bhagavata Purana* (also known as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*) Canto 8, chapters 6 and 7. In summary: "The Devas, or gods, and their opponents, the Asuras, made a truce, and joined together in churning the ocean to procure amrita, the drink of immortality. They took Mount Mandara for a churning-stick, and, wrapping the great serpent Sesha [or *Vāsuki*, the king of snakes] round it for a rope, they made the mountain spin round to and fro, the Devas pulling at the serpent's tail, and the Asuras at its head." John Fiske in *Myths and Myth-makers*, 1872.

Germanic and the Vedic mythologies, the well Anahita in the Iranian documents should be mentioned. It corresponds to the Germanic *Eikþyrnir*, the reservoir above Valhall, which receives all of the water vapor rising from the well Hvergelmir and releases it again into Hvergelmir as *vafur*-charged rain.²⁸ Anahita stands in the same receiving and re-gifting relationship to the subterranean waters, Vourukasha (the three wells under the world-tree), as *Eikþyrnir* to the well Hvergelmir.

19.

The Ordered Universe c) Heavenly Lights and Periods of Time.

46) It says in *Rigveda* VI, 9, 1, that "the light and the dark halves of day roll through both of the atmospheres." This occurs through the agency of Savitar, the lord of the world-mill, with which he sets them in motion. The concept that night should represent evil, which is based on theories of nature-symbolism, is fundamentally wrong in regard to the Indo-European myth-cycle. Although darkness, the opposite of light, more or less prevails while the night makes its journey through the upper atmosphere, the Indo-Europeans nevertheless distinguished between the two and regarded night as granting coolness, rest, and the power of regeneration, and considered it a noble being, worthy of adoration, adorned with moonlight and the splendor of stars. Night is adopted into the circle of the gods and has divine dignity after the world-creating *regin öll, ginnheilög goð*,²⁹ give her a name and demarcate her area of activity (*Völuspá* 6). From a Norse hymn, the following invocation has been preserved in the song about Sigdrífa: "Hail Day! Hail Day's sons! Hail Night and Nipt! Behold us with gentle eyes and give us victory! Hail Aesir, hail Asynjes! Hail the most useful Earth!" "Sleep-joy" is the byname she receives in *Alvíssmál* 30.³⁰

Atharvaveda contains hymns to Night, which describe her as mankind's protectress against the dangers that lurk in the darkness. This explains most clearly the relationship that the Indo-Europeans considered to prevail between the darkness and Night. When darkness falls over the earth after sunset, Night comes from the underworld's kingdom of bliss, following the darkness in step and warding off its harmful powers. She is the enemy of demons, of stalking wild beasts, of robbers and thieves. She is the friend of homes and of Savitar, the god who dispatches her. Lovingly, she adorns the firmament with stars. She is invoked to deliver human beings into the rosy dawn and the day, free of sin. The *Ushas*, the discs of the rosy dawn, are her sisters, and she herself is an *Ushas* (*Rigv.* X, 127) in the broadest sense of the word. Night and *Ushas* are praised together in many places in *Rigveda*, such as I, 186, 4; II, 31, 5; VII, 42, 5. They are described as "heavenly," smiling, beautiful women.³¹

²⁸ Regarding "vafur," see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 36. Also see footnotes **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

²⁹ "all the gods," "the most holy gods."

³⁰ *Svefnigaman*, her name among the elves.

³¹ Bergaigne (I, 250) writes: "Dawn and Night are divine young women, VII, 2, 6; X, 110-6, who have smiling faces, III 4-6, they are divine daughters of heaven, X, 70, 6, and compared to two brides, III, 122,2. One has a black form the other, Dawn, has a brilliant form. They walk one after the other and are described as coming back to life, I, 62, 8. They are called the 'mothers of the law' I, 142, 7; V, 5, 6; and the stretched warp on which they weave II, 3, 6, is suggestive of the celestial sacrifice."

47) Tacitus mentions as custom among the Teutons that they do not count by days as the Romans do, but by nights.³² He adds: "Night seems to lead the day." Many passages in the Old Norse literature confirm Tacitus' statement. In Iceland, this usage still endures. The lawbooks *Lex salica*³³ and *Sachsenspiegel*³⁴ attest to the same custom; so too the German expressions *Weihnachten*, *Fastnacht*³⁵ and the English *sennight*, *fortnight*.³⁶

This way of reckoning also existed among the Iranians and the Vedic peoples. *Avesta* counts by nights, *Vend.* 18, 61, *Yasna* 61, 29. *Rigveda* contains passages that refer to the same custom, and Zimmer (*Altindisches Leben*) remarks correctly that this has its root in the cosmogony of the Proto-Indo-European era.³⁷

48) Germanic mythology also has its *Ushas*, its dises of dawn, and regards them as sisters of Night. The Germanic Night's father is Narvi and, in the first volume of this work, I demonstrated that Narvi is identical to Mimir and, in the medieval sagas, to Gudmund, lord of the glittering-plain (Vol. I, nos. 45 and 85). Saxo says that the subterranean king, Gudmund, has twelve daughters, beautiful to behold. The Icelandic Gudmund story confirms this: Gudmund has a daughter, herself the twelfth, who is accompanied by eleven virgins dressed in red on horses with glittering golden tack, who carry a splendid tent (*Helga Þáttur Þórissonar*).³⁸ In Norse mythology, Night herself is the wife of Delling, the elf of the dawn. Her red-clad sisters, riding on gold-equipped horses, are thus relatives of the elf of dawn, and then one cannot escape seeing them as dises of the rosy dawn, if one attaches any meaning to them at all. The Vedic *Ushas* are also clad in red (*Rigv.* IV, 51, 9)³⁹ and come on gold-glittering horses (*Rigv.* III, 61, 2). Some of *Rigveda*'s most beautiful songs are devoted to them.

³² [Rydberg's footnote]: *Nec dierum numerum, ut nos, sed noctium computant; sic constituunt, sic condicunt: nox ducere diem videtur*; "Neither in reckoning of time do they count, like us, the number of days but that of nights," *Germania* 11 [Thomas Gordon tr.].

³³ One of the earliest lawbooks drawn up by a "barbarian" king for his Teutonic subjects. It is thought to date from the reign of Clovis 486-496. Known as the Salic law, it went through several redactions, the last being that of Charlemagne, circa 800 AD.

³⁴ "*The Saxon Mirror*," a book of legal statutes compiled by Eike von Repgow in 1235 AD, and published in German and Latin. It set the standard for lawbooks in Northern Europe for the next 300 years.

³⁵ The German names for the Christian holidays Christmas and Shrove Tuesday.

³⁶ A sennight equals one week. A fortnight equals two weeks.

³⁷ All of the references in this section in fact occur on pg. 360 of Zimmer's text. He adds Caesar's *The Gallic War*, Book VI, 18, which reads: "They [the Gauls] determine all periods of time by the number, not of days, but of nights." [H.J. Edwards tr.]. Rydberg does not cite the passages from *Rigveda* that Zimmer cites perhaps because they are less than convincing. The strongest of these is *Rigv.* X, 129, 3 which speaks of all things being enveloped in darkness before night and day were divided. Most often in *Rigveda*, Night and Dawn are named together as sisters.

³⁸ One of the *Fornaldarsagas* translated in *Seven Viking Romances* by Penguin Classics, pp. 276-281. The dawn-imagery is clear: "Suddenly a heavy mist came over the forest... then Helgi saw twelve women come riding through the wood, all of them on red-colored horses and wearing red costumes. They dismounted and all their riding gear shone with gold. One woman was far lovelier than all the others, and they were in attendance upon this great lady. They put their horses to graze, then the women set up a splendid tent, with stripes of alternating colors and embroidered everywhere with gold. The points of the tent were ornamented with gold, and on top of the pole which stood up through the tent there was a great golden ball," etc. [Pálsson and Edwards tr.].

³⁹ In Ludwig's translation (9), the *Ushas* are described as having "red bodies" (*rotem leib*). Griffith translates this as "radiant bodies." There, the "undiminished colors" of the *Ushas* are described as

The word *ushas* is related to, or more correctly, is the same word as the Old High German *óstar* and the English *Easter*. The Germanic form stands in complete phonetic equivalence with the Indic. Easter (*Påskén*) still bears the designation *Oster* in Germany, and the month of April, "the month of the year's dawn" is still called *Ostermonat*, as in Charlemagne's time.⁴⁰ The Church historian Bede says that the Anglo-Saxons worshipped a goddess *Eostra*,⁴¹ after which the month of April was called *Esturmonath*. Grimm assumes that she was "the divinity of the radiant dawn, of upspringing light,"⁴² because her feast became the feast of the resurrection to the Christians and because, since heathen times, bonfires were lighted on Easter and water that was collected on Easter morning was considered to be particularly holy and healing. For the reasons cited, I consider Grimm correct on this point. It is certain that the word *ushas* in Germanic form has been preserved among the Teutons as a mythological concept; this is evident from the goddess *Eostra* reported by Bede and the circumstances cited by Grimm. Also this concept refers to a being who stands in connection with the idea of nature's reawakening out of a long or short torpor, winter's or night's. And the Norse tradition shows that these Germanic *ushas*, the red-clad dises on gold-equipped horses, were Gudmund-Mimir's daughters and Night's sisters. The holiness and healing power of the water collected on Easter morning is connected with the myth about the morning dews, the honey dews. Lif and Lifthrasir live through the ages on the dews that drip down from Yggdrasil into the dales of the underworld, and the same dew drips over Midgard from the dises' horses coming from the underworld in the morning.⁴³ That Bede speaks of *one* goddess *Eostra*, while the Norse speaks of twelve sisters, contains nothing contradictory. In *Rigveda*, we find exactly the same circumstance. One of the Vedic dises of dawn is singled out as a representative for the group, and receives her special hymns, as *Rigv.* I, 48; I, 49; I, 124; III, 61, while all the sisters, the *Ushas*, are celebrated in other hymns, as I, 92; IV, 51. And in *Rigveda* the group's representative, the most prominent of the dises of dawn, provides the life-sustaining, curative honeydew, or mead-dew, *Rigv.* III, 61, 5; I, 92, 13; IV, 45, 7.⁴⁴ It is this representative of the *ushas*-group, we find again in the goddess *Eostra*.

The hymn-fragment in the song about Sigrdrífa celebrates "Day and Day's sons, Night and *Nipt*." *Nipt* means female relative. The word as it stands here undoubtedly refers to one of the female relatives of Night worshipped by the Teutons.

49) When Night completes her journey under the upper heaven and the red light of dawn appears on the eastern horizon, celestial singers strike up a hymn to the divine powers, according to *Rigveda* III, 7. According to *Hávamál* 160, the dwarf "People-watcher" (*Þjóðreyrir*) strikes up a song which sends strength to the Aesir, prosperity to

"concealing the gigantic might of darkness with radiant bodies bright, pure, and shining." In *Rigveda*, Dawn is frequently described as "red," as in IV, 52, 2, IV, II, 16, and others.

⁴⁰ In English and in German, the name of this holiday is derived from the name of the ancient goddess. In other European languages such as Swedish and French, the name of the holiday is derived from the Hebrew "pasha," to pass over, reflecting the Biblical connection to the Jewish Passover.

⁴¹ *De temporum ratione*, ch. 13.

⁴² *Deutsche Mythologie*, XIII, 7, Stalleybrass Tr.

⁴³ See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 74 (cp. *Vafþrúðnismál* 14, *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* 28).

⁴⁴ The last reference, IV, 45, 7, should read IV, 51, 7

the elves and wisdom to Hroptatyr (Odin), in front of the doors of Delling, the elf of the rosy dawn.

50) Afterwards, the red light of dawn drives the sun up into heaven. The sun is depicted by the Vedic Aryans as more masculine (*sura, surya*) than feminine. From this, one must not draw the conclusion that the epic mythology of the *Veda*-Aryans was unclear on this point. Overall, of course, it can be said that the more one studies their mythology as a *godsaga*, in other words as a connected narrative or a narrative about beings in whose existence as definite personalities their worshippers seriously believe, the more the fog that the meteorological mythologists spread over it dissipates. As such, the sun for the *Veda*-Aryans was what it was for all people in all times: a glittering moving disc in the heavens with wonderful powers. It is this power that is worshipped, personified, and by degrees, through epic treatment, becomes gods and goddesses with independent personalities — this, centuries before the oldest mythological documents that survived into our time. Many of these personified solar powers were thought of as masculine, others as feminine. Under the influence of language, the concept of the sun as female has become predominant among the Teutons where she is a sun-disc, daughter of Mundilföri, the keeper of the world-mill.⁴⁵ In *Rigveda*, the feminine concept of the sun represented by the sun-disc Sûryâ, in full agreement with Germanic mythology, is the daughter of the world-mill's keeper, Savitar (*Rigv. X, 85, 9*; compare *Atharvaveda VI, 82, 2: XIV, 2, 30*).⁴⁶

51) As such, the sun-disc is called "the wheel of eternal order" (*Rigv. I, 164, 11*), the incessantly rolling (*Rigv. I, 164, 2*),⁴⁷ whose "axle never heats up or burns" (*Rigv. I, 164, 13*). In Norse poetry, the sun is called *fagrahvél*, "fair wheel" (*Alvíssmál 16*). Likewise, the moon is *hverfanda hvél*, "whirling wheel" (*Alvíssmál 14*). Attached to the wheel, one imagines an unseen horse-drawn wagon in which the sun-disc drives on her prescribed way. The circumstances to which *Rigveda* refers, that "the axle never heats up or burns" or that the horses and the sun-disc can withstand the heat, is explained in Norse mythology by specific mechanical devices affixed to the horse and wagon (a bellows⁴⁸ and shield, *Grímnismál 37, 38*).

52) The sun's and the moon's paths in space are subject to ambush. The strongest desire of monsters is to seize them and rob the gods' creation of light. Two monsters in particular covet Sol and Mani. In *Rigveda*, one is partially called the thief of light (*svarbhânu*), partially the thief of rain (*svavrishiti*), and on occasion has darkened the sun so that "living beings were bewildered, as if unfamiliar with the area" (*Rigv. V, 40, 5*). The other monster is Raha, spoken of in *Atharvaveda XIX, 9, 5* as a swallower of the sun

⁴⁵ [Rydberg's footnote]: The Proto-Germanic designations for the sun: **sauila* and **sunnan* are both feminine. **Sauila* is connected with Sanskrit *sva* and Zend *hvare* which are masculine.

⁴⁶ *Rigv. X, 85, 9*: "Soma was he who wooed the maid: the groomsmen were both Asvins, when the Sun-God Savitar bestowed his willing Surya on her Lord." [Griffith tr.]; *Atharvaveda VI, 82, 2*: "By what road the Asvins carried Sûryâ, daughter of Savitar, by that Bhaga said to me, do thou bring a wife"; *XIV, 2, 30*: "The gold-cushioned vehicle, bearing all forms, did Sûryâ, Savitar's daughter, mount, in order to great good-fortune." [Whitney tr.].

⁴⁷ The actual meaning here seems to be "never aging." Griffith has "undecaying"; Ludwig: "*unalternde*," unaging; Geldner: "*niemals altersschwach*," never decrepit.

⁴⁸ The word found in *Grímnismál 37* is *ísarnkol*, which the LaFarge/Tucker *Glossary to the Poetic Edda* defines as "*ísarn-kul* n. (?) iron cooling or -coolness; iron-cold breeze (created by bellows)?" Notably, for this definition they cite Svend Grundtvig's translation of the *Elder Edda*, 1874, a source Rydberg knew, and Finnur Jónsson's review of Hugo Gering's *Glossar zu den liedern der Edda*, in ANF 14, 1898.

and moon, at least one of them appears as a wolf, *vrika*.⁴⁹ (Compare Darmesteter to *Rigv.* VIII, 55, 8).⁵⁰ In *Grímnismál* 39, the same monster wolves occur with the names Sköll and Hati, Hrodvitnir's son. The latter, in troll-guise, will swallow the moon shortly before the world's destruction (Compare *Grímnismál* 39 with *Völuspá* 40).

Avesta knows the same demons under the common name, *daêva Varenya* (Heaven's demons).

53) Among all Indo-European people, the Moon was the original time-measurer and time-organizer, naturally at the side of Night, who divides day from day. For this reason, the phases of the moon and its quarters have been given names fairly early. *Völuspá* says of the creating *regin*, *ginnheilög goð*, that they, when arranging the world, went to their judgment-seats and gave names to Night and the phases of the moon for the purpose of counting years: *nátt ok niðjum nöfn um gáfu ... árum at telja*. Already in *Rigveda* the phases of the moon are given names and each has received a moon-dis, who bears the name of a phase. Their names occur in *Rigv.* II, 32, 8; V, 42, 12.⁵¹

In Vedic mythology, as in Germanic mythology, the moon is a storage-place for a precious mead-treasure. On that point, see below.

Nights of the new moon and nights of the full moon are considered particularly important among the Vedic Aryans; special hymns are devoted to them in the *Atharvaveda*. So too among the Teutons. Tacitus (*Germania* 11) says that they held their assemblies, *cum aut inchoatur luna aut impletur*,⁵² when they considered the times most propitious for handling questions and decisions. The Goth Jordanes (chapter 11) speaks of the moon's convenient and inconvenient influences.⁵³ To this day, the new moon among all Germanic people is considered a favorable time for certain ceremonies and for others, the full moon.

54) Of constellations through which the moon passes, at least one has retained its ancient common name, specifically the constellation *Tishya*,⁵⁴ the Old Bactrian *Tistrya*,⁵⁵ a name that phonetically corresponds to the Norse *Pjazi*, *Thjazi*, whose eyes Odin and Thor fixed in the heavens. *Tishya-Tistrya* is, like *Thjazi*, a famous mythic personality whose position exhibits similarities with his. (See further).

⁴⁹ The correct reference is *Atharvaveda* XIX, 9, 10. However, the reading, and therefore the meaning, is uncertain.

⁵⁰ In *Ormazd et Ahriman*, p. 70, Darmesteter refers to a race of demons in the *Avesta* named *daêva Varenya*, literally "the demons who seize the sky," which he compares to the name of the Vedic demon *Svar-bhānu*, the demon "who seizes the sunlight." Darmesteter identifies them as serpents; In *Rigv.* VIII, 55, which invokes Indra, they are likened to wolves: "Even the wolf, the savage beast that rends the sheep, follows the path of his decrees." [Griffith tr.] Geldner who refers to the same verse as VIII, 66 (675) translates it as: *Wie der wilde Wolf, der das Scaf würgt, wartet er auf seine Zeiten*, "like the wild wolf who chokes the sheep, he awaits his time." Ludwig, who refers to the verse as 611 (VIII, 57) translates it as: *sogar der wilde wolf, der die schafe hetzt [raubt], ist bei seinen [des offerers] werken da*, "even the wild wolf, which rushes [robs] the sheep, is there by his [the sacrificer's] works."

⁵¹ In *Rigv.* II, 32, 8, they are: *Sinivâlî*, *Gungû*, *Râkâ*, *Sarasvati*, *Indrânî* and *Varunânî*; In *Rigv.* V, 42, 12: *Sarasvatî*, *Brihaddivâ*, and *Râkâ*. Zimmer discusses this topic in greater detail, *Altindisches Leben*, p. 352.

⁵² "either at new or at full moon." [Church and Brodribb tr.]

⁵³ "*istum lunae commoda incommodaque*."

⁵⁴ *Vishnu Purana* 4, 24 predicts: "When the Sun, the Moon, *Tishya*, and the planet Jupiter are together in the same house, the Age of *Kryta* (or *Satya*; an age of purity) will return." *Tishya* is a star in the Constellation Cancer.

⁵⁵ A Persian god associated with *Sirius*, the Dog Star. He leads the armies of *Ahura Mazda*. The fourth month and the thirteenth day of the month are devoted to him.

55) The divisions of the year follow the moon-phases among the Asiatic Indo-Europeans and the Teutons, as the word month (*mās*) itself states. Twelve shifts from new moon to new moon form the year, and to every year twelve "nights" are added near the winter solstice in order to bring the year into agreement with the sun's position. "The twelve nights" are considered holy among the Teutons. After the investigation that Albrecht Weber conducted on the matter, this regulation of the year can be considered to have originated from the Proto-Indo-European era with the greatest probability. (See further).

56) The year is divided into three seasons: winter, spring, and summer. Winter leads the seasons. The Scandinavians count by winters. The Goths likewise: the Gothic translation of the New Testament writings says that Jesus was twelve "winters" old when he taught in the temple. The eastern Indo-European forefathers counted that way before the Vedic time. One finds evidence of this in *Rigveda*, where the word *hima*, winter, has already lost its original meaning, and is used for the concept year. The representatives of the three seasons were originally the three Ribhus, to which I shall return. Tacitus mentions a peculiarity among the Teutons of his time, that they recognize three seasons and leave Autumn without a name: *auctumni perinde nomen ac bona ignorantur (Germania 26)*.⁵⁶

20.

The Ordered Universe d) Midgard and the Upper Heavenly World.

57) According to *Rigveda* and the Iranian documents, the uppermost of the three earth-plates — the one that became the abode of our race after the creation of man — is bordered on one side, which is not the north, by an ocean from over which Agni, the god of pure fire, came to mankind (see below). The earth has different climates: the south is warm; the north is cold. The human world's northern border is a powerful river "with distant shores and a thousand currents" (*Avesta 14, Warharan Yasht 29*).⁵⁷ On the other side of this river dwell demons and the powers of winter, the enemies of creation. In *Rigveda X, 108, 2*, the river is called Rasâ, and, in the Iranian documents, Ranha, which phonetically is the same word. It is on Rasâ's waves and by its shores that the Vedic heroic-gods and heroes, Indra, Brihaspati, Kutsa, and Pushan fight against the forces of destruction and protect creation, by Ranha, that the Iranian mythic heroes battle violently with misshapen giants and demons. The concept is completely Germanic. The same river separating Midgard from Jötunheim is called Hrönn and Elivagor, and is the stage for Thor's, Egil-Örvandil's, and Thjalfi's battles against the forces of winter.⁵⁸ The Indo-Iranian Rasâ-Ranha is, like Hrönn, a terrible and danger-filled waterway that rushes forth with its "thousand currents" roaring (which the name *Rasâ* says), where witchcraft makes

⁵⁶ "The name and blessings of autumn are alike unknown." [Church and Brodribb tr.].

⁵⁷ "in the Rangha whose ends lie afar, whose depth is a thousand times the height of a man." [Darmesteter tr.].

⁵⁸ For evidence of this, see *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 108.

passage unsafe. So have the Teutons also described their Hrönn, which is called *Gandvik* because of its bewitched nature.⁵⁹

58) High over the earth, in the upper heaven, are the homesteads of Vâta-Vâju, Indra, and the other gods, especially the warring gods of the atmosphere, the heroes of the Vedic divine-epic. Located there are also the homes of the Iranian divine powers, surrounded by a wall to defend against the Ahrimanic monsters' attack (*Bundehesh* 15).⁶⁰ In the same place, the Germanic epic's gods of battle have their homestead in Asgard, protected by a wall against the hostile giants.

59) Inside, there lie glorious divine castles. One of them, mentioned in *Yasna* 57, 21, has a thousand pillars and is lit from within. Outside, it is decorated with stars.⁶¹ Another divine mansion mentioned in *Rigveda* has a thousand doors.⁶² Gods do not dwell there alone. Human heroes, who made themselves worthy to be the gods' table companions after death, share delights with them in their halls, where they are surrounded by "the lovely" (i.e. beautiful dishes) and gladden themselves with mead and, *Rigveda* says, with "metrical song." The Iranian documents call this heaven "the home of songs," "the house of hymns" (*Garô-nemâna, Vendidad, Fargard* 19, II, 32, 36). Poetry and song occupy the same place here as in Valhall, and the divine mansions in Asgard are comparable to the Indo-Iranian divine palaces in splendor and size. Valhall with its shield-laid roof and with its polished golden mail, has 540 floors and 540 doors. Outside of Valhall, the golden grove, Glasir, grows.⁶³ Asgard's golden halls cast reflections over the plains before them. Inside, Valkyries fill mead-horns for Einherjar, who delight in song and string-playing with the gods.

60) Foremost among the celestial singers, mentioned both among the Vedic Aryans and the Iranians, is Kavi or Kāvya Uçanâ. *Kavi* means seer, prophet, skald.⁶⁴ *Kāvya* is the son of wisdom, the gifted skald. He is the finest of all skalds (*Bhagavad Gîta* 10, 27), and at the same time a lively warrior, brother-in-arms of Indra, the Vedic Thor, *Rigv.* I, 130, 9. In the Vedic Olympus, he occupies the same place as does Bragi in

⁵⁹ In regard to *Pórsdrápa* 2:6, Eysteinn Björnsson comments: "*Gandvik* ('Magic Bay') seems to have indicated the White Sea, and more generally, the Arctic Ocean. Mythologically, it is equivalent to the great river, or ocean, which was seen to separate the world of men (Midgard) from the world of Giants." And in regard to *Pórsdrápa* 5:7-8, he adds: "The expression *fnæstu eitri* 'snorted/spewed poison' immediately brings a serpent to mind. The serpent can only be Jörmungandr himself, the Midgard worm, who lay on the bottom of the sea, surrounding the earth. ... *Eitr* (venom) is sometimes used to mean 'deadly cold'; thus, we have an extremely good example of the poet's art, the icy Arctic Ocean, which tumbles forth with waves of hail, is likened to the Midgard serpent, who spews (snorts) a venom of deadly cold. It can be assumed that the great serpent's head was placed in the North, since his *eitri* is equivalent to the power of ice, which Thor braves during his crossing."

⁶⁰ The reference actually occurs in *Bundehesh* 6, which Rydberg quotes in this chapter. (See below).

⁶¹ "We worship Sraosha the blessed, whose house stands with its thousand pillars, as victorious, on the highest height of high Haraiti, self-lighted from within, star-studded from without." [L.H. Mills tr.].

⁶² *Rigv.* VII, 88, 5: "Varuna, thou glorious Lord, I have entered thy lofty home, thine house with a thousand portals." [Griffith, modified].

⁶³ In *Skáldskaparmál* 42, Snorri writes "In Asgard in front of the doors of Val-hall there stands a tree called Glasir, and all its foliage is red gold, as in this verse where it says that *Glasir stands with golden leaf before Sigtyr's* [Odin's] *hall*." [Anthony Faulkes tr.]. *Glasir* ("glassy") is probably a name for Yggdrasil, cp. *Fjölsvinnsmál* 24, *Veðurglasir*, and v. 28, *Aurglasir*. See footnote **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

⁶⁴ [Rydberg's footnote]: The word *kavi* has its root in *sku*, out of which our Swedish *skåda* developed. The *Kavi* is a "seer," a prophet.

the Norse. The name *Bragi* has Indo-European mythological roots and designates the same concept as Kavi. Scherer (*Anz. f. dtsh. Alt.* 4)⁶⁵ has pointed out that in *brahman* exists the ancient Indo-European common designation for skald and priest, and with this designation is connected the Norse Bragi and the Greek *Βραγχος* (*Brankos*). That even Bragi was described as a brave warrior, although the myths of his exploits have vanished, is undoubted. The name, used as an appellative in the plural, *bragnar*, means heroes. The Norse skalds, who roused the warriors with song before a battle, during which they stood with the standard bearer in the king's shield-wall, must have been represented by a heroic god in Olympus. The *Poetic Edda* speaks of Bragi's sword and horse.⁶⁶ At the god's feast with Aegir, he is the first who speaks to the intruding Loki: he shows him the door, and Loki retaliates by defaming him as a cowardly warrior. Because Loki lies and defames all of the gods and goddesses which he engages in verbal sparring, and accuses Thor himself of cowardice (*Lokasenna* 60, 62), one should not attach importance to this charge, since surely on that occasion, Loki alludes to events where Bragi appeared as a fighting god: *þú ert við víg varastr ok skjarrastr við sko*, "in war, you are the most wary and the shyest of shots!" (*Lokasenna* 13).

61) The Einherjar in the Iranian and the Vedic Olympus delight themselves not only with mead and song in the company of lovely dises, but also in armed duels and by participating with the gods in battles against demons in defense of creation. Likewise, they also work for the good of their surviving relatives and descendants on earth. What *Rigveda* relates in many places (I, 164, 30; X, 15, 2; X, 56, 5; X, 15, 3 and many more) of the accomplishments of the heroic fathers of the heathen time, *pitrī*, *pitaras*, in this regard, Kaegi has summarized in the following words: "Those who have become immortal look down on the mortals and protect their children here on earth. In the earth's atmosphere, through the entire airspace they travel, and where one prepares sacrifice and invokes them, there come the holy, faithful, and wise fathers with help and blessings to the mortals. They bring power, wealth, and descendents; they hear, help, console; and they fight bravely and heroically in battle."⁶⁷

These fathers also belong to the Iranian faith. Under the name *fravashis* (protectors) and *urvano* (souls), they are mentioned and praised as heavenly hosts. *Avesta* celebrates "the power, the majesty, the goodness and kindness of the just protectors (*fravashi*), the strong, the victorious, who come with help, the just, strong spirits" (*Avesta* 13, *Frawardin Yasht*).

"They, the just protectors," it says further, "give powerful help in great battles (against the forces of evil)." They are "strong," "rich in victory" and assist Ahuramazda, the highest god, in his battle with demons. If they did not "the empire would go to the demons, the living world would go to the demons, and Angra-Mainyu (Ahriman) would not yield to Ahuramazda's blows." (*Avesta* 13, *Frawardin Yasht*, 13).

Bundehesh, Chapter 6, 2 tells of an attack that Ahriman and his demon-hosts made against the Iranian Asgard: "The gods' heaven stood ready to fight, like a warrior, clad in his armament. The heaven took up the battle and fought Ahriman, until Ormazd

⁶⁵ This is probably Wilhelm Scherer writing in *Anzeiger für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur*, a quarterly published from 1841-75, and under the title *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum und deutsche Litteratur* since 1931.

⁶⁶ *Lokasenna* 12.

⁶⁷ Adolf Kaegi, *Der Rigveda*, pp. 97-98. (pg. 71, in the R. Arrowsmith translation).

had built a strong bulwark that went from heaven to heaven and enclosed them. The warriors and the just *fravashis* rode on horses with spears in hand, as close as hairs on a head, watching behind the bulwark." Ahriman, in addition, realized his powerlessness.

Iranologists Martin Haug and James Darmesteter have both seen and pointed out the identity of the *fravashis* and the *einherjar*. As a matter of fact, in the Norse account of Asgard with its *einherjar* and valkyries, its mead and song, its care of human beings and its battles with demons, not a single distinguishing and important feature is found that is not rediscovered in the Iranian and Vedic descriptions of the same heaven. The Iranian *einherjar* also take part in the last battle against evil before the destruction of the world.

As far as the *doppelgangers* of deceased ancestors were concerned, every one in the North was firmly convinced that they cared for their family and their descendants (See *Investigations into Germanic Mythology*, Vol. I, no. 95) and were active for the good of the clan, although as a rule *doppelgangers* were otherwise objects of fear.

62) The Vedic gods performed sacrifices in heaven (*Rigv.* X, 2, 1 and many other places). This might seem like an odd idea, since to whom or what would they sacrifice? The same oddity occurs in *Völuspá* 7, where the gods themselves build temples and sacrificial altars: *þeir er hörg ok hof hátimbruðu*.⁶⁸ The mutual basic idea receives its explanation in *Rigveda*. Sacrifices are not a sign of humility but essentially a reinforcement of power, since the sacrificer gives it to the owner of the offering. The gods sacrifice to one another, in order to strengthen one another in the battle against the enemies of the world; even higher gods sacrifice for this purpose to lower gods and invoke them. The concept has been preserved in the reformed Iranian religion; *Avesta* allows Ahuramazda, the highest, all-powerful, and all-knowing god, to say that he himself has worshipped and invoked Vaju (Odin) and Vaju encourages Ahuramazda also to invoke him under his byname, when he fights for Ahuramazda's sake, no doubt so that through this invocation he will be strengthened and enlivened.

⁶⁸ "They who built the high-timbered altar and temple." [Eysteinn Björnsson tr.].