

Vedic & Egyptian Affinities.

August 2005.

1. Argument. There are more than 20 motifs/themes exhibiting close affinities in the religious texts of the Vedic and Egyptian peoples. Some like the Sungod's boat (§11), the Water as a primal cosmogonic element (§5), the Cow of plenty (§21) and the sacred Bull (§22) are common to the Mesopotamian culture too (Kazanas 2005). Some are quite extraordinary and occur only here with some weak echoes in other Indoeuropean branches: the lotus-born one §3, the eye running off §4, etc, including many elements in the famous Isis-Osiris tale §16-18. These affinities are close and suggest either a common origin for both cultures or cross influences. However, most of the motifs, including the Isis-Osiris and Yama tales, have correspondences in other IE¹ traditions: this fact suggests that the motifs are inherited in the Vedic texts and not borrowed from Egypt. Thus we must conclude either that Saptasindhu, the land of the Vedic people, influenced Egypt or that both cultures derive or borrow from a third unknown one. The former case is difficult to determine as there is no firm evidence for an early contact between Egypt and Saptasindhu. Consequently, without entirely ruling out the possibility of Vedic influences on Egyptian culture we must assume a devolution from an older unknown civilization (§30ff).

2. Introductory. Direct connexions between India and Egypt are not attested in any period before Hellenistic times, in other words, before Alexander's thrust into NW India in 328 which thereafter opened up traffic between India and Egypt. In fact, direct maritime trade between India and Egypt is attested only in the second half of the 1st cent BC – after Hippalus discovered the periodic changes of the Indian monsoons (Miller 1998). This was through the port Berenike, founded by the Ptolemies in the 3rd century and later used extensively by the Romans; it was located on the Egyptian Red Sea coast, about 500 miles south of Suez. We may conjecture that, much earlier, after reaching eastern Africa by c 1000 (if Hromnik 1981 is correct), Indian merchants sailed north, along the African coast, then along the south coast of Arabia, then through the straits of Aden and up into the Red Sea; for this there is, of course, no textual or archaeological attestation. It is well attested that there were Indian communities in Egypt in Roman times (Sedlar 1980: 81). Indeed, these may go back several centuries to the period when Indians served as soldiers in the Persian armies that conquered Egypt in 525 in the reign of Cambyses. Even earlier (long before Buddhist, Jain and Ājīvika mendicants wandered so far in the west, according to McEvilley's extravagant conjectures, 2002), some Mitannis and Kassites, apart from the princesses who married Tuthmosis IV and Amenhotep III, could have come into Egypt in the mid-second millennium. Earlier still, the Hyksos 'rulers-of-foreign-lands', who invaded Egypt c1670 and established in the north region Dynasties 15 and 16, may have been Indoaryans (David 1993: 145), but this is uncertain. We may even hypothesize that the Indian merchants, who had established their colonies in Mesopotamia in the Sargonic period c 2300 or

1 Abbreviations.

AB = *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* ; *AU* = *Aitareya Upaniṣad* ; *BD* = *Book of the Dead*; *Bibl* = Bibliography; cent = century ; *CT* = *Coffin Texts* ; *CU* = *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* ; *GEL* = See *Bibl* ; *GM* = See *Bibl* ; *GPA* = See Bibliography ; *IE* = *IndoEuropean* ; *ISC* = Indus Sarasvati (=old 'Indus Valley') Civilization ; *JIES* = *Journal of Indo-European Studies* in *Bibl* ; *KU* = *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* ; *L* = Latin ; *Lth* = Lithuanian ; *MM* = See *Bibl* ; *MSD* = See *Bibl* ; *MU* = *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* ; *NE* = Near East(ern) ; par(s) = paragraph(s) within a section/spell of, e.g., *PT* ; *PIE* = ProtoIndoEuropean ; *PT* = *Pyramid Texts* ; *S* = Sanskrit ; *SB* = *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* ; *TB* = *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* ; *TS* = *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (of the Black Yajur Veda) ; *TU* = *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* ; *VI* = See *Bibl* ; *VS* = *Vājasaneyī Saṃhitā* (of the White Yajur Veda).

Helps to the reader. sign § = section or paragraph in this study, unless other ; sign [...] = square brackets indicating my own intervention in citations ; sign > = becomes ; sign < = derives from.

even c 2400, could have driven caravans across the Arabian desert to Egypt.²

However, all these considerations, apart from being largely hypothetical, suffer from a major drawback and cannot explain the undoubted similarities of more than twenty religious ideas, themes and motifs in the Indian and Egyptian cultures. Even if all the early contacts are shown to have actually taken place, they are too late. At the latest, the first *Pyramid Texts* are dated c 2400-2350 but they are at this time so developed and evidently so taken for granted by the Egyptians that we must allow them several generations up to 200 years and perhaps more. This brings us to c 2550, the date when the very earliest Indo-Mesopotamian contacts are evidenced. Now, although Osiris himself is not attested epigraphically before c 2450, goddess Hathor is and consequently Horus (Hart 1995: 14). Thus some version of the Osiris-Isis-Horus legend was current in early dynastic times c 3000-2700. The early Vedic texts, including the early *Brāhmaṇas* belong to a period before 2800, and the *RV* well before 3100 (Kazanas 2005: §2, n1). Consequently, Egyptian ideas could have influenced early Vedic concepts only if there had been contacts at c 3200, and Vedic ideas could have influenced Egyptian concepts through contacts at c 2800. In the present state of our knowledge, we must rule out any significant contacts before 2400.

In these circumstances all we can (speculatively) state is that Indic ideas could have influenced Egyptian concepts contained in texts later than the *PT* – the *Coffin Texts* perhaps and, more certainly, the *Book of the Dead*. But here we meet two difficulties. First, many concepts in the *CT*, *BD* and other literature, are demonstrably copies or developments of concepts already largely present in the *PT*. Second, most of the significant Egyptian parallels to Vedic concepts are found in the *PT*. Before going any further, let us examine the major correspondences.

Here also, as I did with Vedic-Mesopotamian cross influences (2005b), I shall seek IE parallels for the Vedic motifs. Wherever such IE parallels are found, then the Vedic motif should be taken to be inherited from the PIE period and therefore not (necessarily) indebted to the Egyptian culture.

Mythological Parallels

3. The Lotus-born one is an extraordinary and, as far as I know, unique motif, common to both cultures.

In *PT* 264 Sungod Re rises with a gleaming lotus flower at his nostril. In *CT* 197 this “redolent flower” is identified with Re, the great god within the flower, and worshipped as god Nefertum in Memphis (Hart, 16). In the iconography the child Sungod rises out of the lotus-flower (Hart 16; Silverman 31).

In the Vedic tradition, long before the legend of Brahmā, Creator-god, arising from the lotus on Viṣṇu’s navel, as the latter lay on the serpent Śeṣa on the Primeval Ocean, in the *Ṛgveda* we meet at least twice the lotus-blossom as a matrix. First, hymn VI 16, 13 says that Agni is brought forth by rubbing from within the lotus in the sky: this is probably an image for the flash of lightning. Second, VII 33, 11 says that the great seer Vasiṣṭha is born from a lotus upon which the gods placed the sperm-drop (*drapsa*) of Mitra-Varuṇa by means of the divine holy-power (*brāhmaṇā*). Agni, the Firegod, is of course often identified with the sun; this theme continues in the Yajurveda texts (eg *VS* XI 29; *TS* V 2, 6, 5) and *ŚB* VII 4, 1, 8-9 and X 5, 2, 6. The motif of the child and the lotus is found again in the *VS* II 33 (the boy wreathed with lotuses).

A somewhat different tale comes from the Irish Celts: here, king Math and his magician

2. Various artefacts from the ISC found in Egypt (and indeed Cyprus and Crete) and assigned to the late 3rd millennium are too meagre and do not necessarily suggest direct trade-exchanges. Even McEvelley admits that the extant archaeological evidence (some mummies at Lothal and cotton sheets in Egypt) for Indo-Egyptian direct contacts is inadequate and resorts to similarities of ideas (pp 259-260), most of which are so tenuous and implausible that I have not examined them.

counsellor Gwydion conjure out of the oak-flowers the maid Blodeuedd (=she of the flowers) who becomes the wife (unfaithful later) of Lleu, the bright hero (Rees 1995: 50-51)³. In Scandinavia, three gods, Odin, Vili and Ve, raised out of an ash-tree and an elm the first pair of human beings, Ask and Embla (Crossley-Holland 1993: 5). In Greece, Aphrodite, born of the sea-foam out of the blood of the genitals of Ouranos, is said in a later variant legend to have sprung from a scallop- or cockle-shell (Kerényi 1982: 70); but another old legend says she is daughter of Zeus (or Ouranos) and Dionē, the goddess within the oak-tree (GM 50). Then in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (144-5) the third race of men spring out of ash-trees. Obviously, the idea of a flower-born or tree-born deity or human is not uncommon in IE mythology, even if the lotus is confined to the Indoaryan branch.

4. The Creator's eye running off is, for me, an even more startling mythologem.

The *Puruṣa Sūkta* (RV I, 90, 13) says that from the eye of universal Man was generated the sun and from his mind the moon. In many RV hymns we read that the sun is the eye of gods: of Viṣṇu in his third stride, I 22, 20; of Varuṇa I 50, 6; of Mitra (and Varuṇa) I 115, 1, VI 51, 1, etc. In VII 77, 3, Uṣas, the Dawngoddess, is said to bring the eye of the gods and lead on the beautiful white horse. In the Funeral hymn X 16, 3 the eye of the dead man goes to the sun. In AB III 2 we read "The eye comes into existence first when man comes into existence" and gets perfected with reciting a hymn to Mitra-Varuṇa. In *Kauṣītaki Br* 29, 1 we read this curious passage: "they say 'The eye came; it was a serpent; thus did poison come to the priests; he [ie the priest] used these (verses) connected with (Soma) the purifying, and repelling poison, in praise'." There are many other images and motifs regarding the eye in the Yajur Veda (White and Black) but the most relevant one is in *SB XIII 3, 1, 1-2*: here, the eye of creator-god Prajāpati swells, falls out and becomes the horse; by means of the Aśvamedha, the horse-sacrifice, during which a horse is let loose to wander then is brought back (cf RV VII 77, 3 above), the gods restore it to its original place and thus Prajāpati becomes complete again. This passage is repeated almost verbatim in *TS V 3, 12*. In several places in this Saṃhitā of the Black Yajurveda the eyes are connected with the sacrificial rite (I 1, 13; II 6, 2; VI 1, 5; 4, 10 etc).

In the Scandinavian tradition the Vanir cut off wise Mimir's head and sent it to the Aesir, who preserved it and lord Odin gave it power of speech for prophesying. Thus far we have the familiar IE theme "the severed head", like that of Celtic Bendigeidfran's head, Greek Orpheus's head, and Vedic Dadhyañc's head (Kazanas 2001a: 282). Then, to gain additional wisdom, Lord Odin placed his eye as a pledge on Mimir's well (*Edda*, 17). Here we have again an eye that is removed and, since it is given as a pledge only, may return to Odin, the All-father. In Greece, again, Lamia, beautiful daughter of king Belus (son of god Poseidon and Libya), had the gift of *removing and replacing her eyes at will* – a gift bestowed on her by Zeus; later she became a terrible blood-sucking, child-eating demonness, *emp(o)usa* (GM 205, 189; GEL). Thus the motif can be said to be IE. (For more one-eyed figures in IE legendry, like the Greek Cyclops, Vedic Rudra, Irish Cu Chulainn, etc, see Das 2002 with references.)

The Eye of Horus appears frequently in the *PT*, the eye which Seth damaged during their fighting and was restored by Thoth's wisdom. This is identified with the Solar Eye repeatedly. The mythologem under discussion appears in *CT 80* and in later texts: Atum speaking says, "the human beings who came forth from my eye which I sent out while I was alone with Nu in lassitude". Commenting on this T.R. Clark writes: "Initially God seems to have had only one Eye – a mysterious entity which is separable... and is sent out... to seek Shu and Tefnut who... are lost in the immensity of the Abyss. The Eye finds them and brings them back to their father who proceeds to regenerate them as the life and order of the universe" (pp 45-7). A slightly different version appears in a later text (*Bremner Rhind Papyrus*, with material from c 1200): "My Eye

3 See also Kazanas 2005b: §7.

followed them [ie Shu and Tefnut] for many ages,/ they departed from me... they brought back my Eye with them./ Whereupon I rejoined my limbs. I wept over them--/ and thus mankind came into existence from the tears that sprang from my Eye./ Then it became enraged against me, when it returned and saw/that I had put another in its place,/ replacing it with a brighter one” (Clark, 91). Then the Eye is transformed into a cobra on God’s forehead – as it does on the Pharaoh’s forehead defending him (ibid, 92). There are other variants and details but I would stress the separation of the Eye and its return making the High God whole again; also its identification with the Sun (CT, 342: Clark, 95-6).

In both traditions the Eye seems to represent the sun and the Creator’s vision of the whole world. In both it gets detached then is brought back and the Creator is made whole again. The Vedic texts present the Eye as a poisonous serpent (=the “evil eye”) to be repelled through praise and the purifying power of Soma that brings a transformation in the priests; in the Egyptian text it gets enraged then transformed into a cobra and placed on the forehead. Some scholars regard the asvamedha-sacrifice as the (annual) renewal of the sun (Kak 2002a: 51-2). The similarities are many and close.

5. Water is a primal source in the Heliopolitan cosmogony of Egypt (David 2002: 81ff; Lesko 1991: 88ff). Out of and in this unlimited Water, Nun ‘father of the gods’, arose Atum/Re who engendered Shu and Tefnut, then came the other gods and the Cosmos.

In the Veda, the One indescribable Source of all is not water but That One *tad ekam* (RV X, 129). But water appears as the celestial ocean which surrounds earth in several RV hymns (III, 1, 12; VII, 49, 3; etc), and X, 121, 7-9 mentions ‘high waters’ *āpah... brhatih*, perhaps symbolizing the state of unmanifest energy (= *tamas, salila, tuchya* in X, 129, 3) from which manifestations arise. AV XII, 1, 8 says that the Earth *pṛthivī* is floating upon the water-flood *arṇava* and that she herself was originally *salila* (=water? fluctuating energy? see Kazanas 2004; p30, §V). However, another view is given in RV X 82, 5-6. Here, in st 5, the Waters *āpah* received the ‘first seed’ *gārbham prathamām* (but we are not told whence) and in them “all the gods saw one another”. Then, in st 6, the gods are said to ‘come all together’ *samagachanta* therein. The implication is that at this cosmogonic stage the gods are all united/combined within the Waters (or within the “primary seed” in the Waters) and then emerge as separate individualities⁴. So, here, the parallel to the Egyptian concept is fairly close. But later texts say that “Verily, in the beginning this [world] was water” (SB XI 1, 6, 1).

However, this theme also is IE. In Greece, Homer records an old tradition that Ōkeanos (=Ocean) is the primal progenitor of gods (*Iliad* 14, 200; cf also 14, 244) and surrounds the world on the shield of Achilles (ibid: 18, 607). This idea may, as some claim, come from NE sources. But a similar concept is found in the Scandinavian *Edda* (pp 10-11): here, “at the beginning of time, when nothing was” except “the mighty gap” Ginnugagap, the celestial rivers (see parallel with the RV, §25) flowed into this “gap” or “void”, became ice (natural in that northern region) and thence arose Ymir, the cosmic person from whose dismemberment all the creatures were produced. Then in Celtic myths, Manannán is son of the Ocean (Lyr) and himself god of the sea(s) spawning offspring everywhere and giving immortality to the gods (Crossley-Holland, p 189; Rees, pp 31, 39, 139).

In Mesopotamia, cosmogony began when Apsu ‘freshwater’ and Tiamat ‘seawater’ mingled (MM 233).

4. Here Th. McEvelley brings in Mesopotamian and Egyptian creation myths and finds that the “waters wherein all gods are gathered together ... is a forbear of Anaximander’s Infinite in which opposites lie mingled” (p 302). This may be true in a sense, but the rigvedic gods are not exactly “opposites” and in the RV hymn, st 6, the seed, the water and gods and all other things, arise from and rest upon the navel of the Unborn One *ajāsyā nābhau*.

6. Creator's seed-spilling. The *PT* 527 says that Atum proceeded to masturbate and from his ejaculation were born Shu and Tefnut. This act, *CT* spell 152 says, happened while Atum was still in the Water-abbyss and *CT* 80 explains that Shu is Life and Tefnut is Order. In another text (*PT* 600) Atum spits out Shu and coughs out Tefnut, but this we put aside.

In *RVI* 71, 8 we read that “When *tejas* (=energy, heat, lustre) filled the Lord of men for increase, Dyaus (=the Skygod) laid down the bright seed (*suci rétas*) that was spilt”; with this Agni created a host of youths (the Angirases or Maruts). This motif of seed-spilling, sometimes combined with incest, is fairly frequent in post-rigvedic texts. (e.g. *AB* III, 33-4; *SB* VII, 5, 2).

7. Separation of heaven and earth. Writes Clark: “Shu is both light and air, and as the offspring of God he is manifest life. As light he separates the earth from the sky and as air he upholds the sky vault” (p 45). Indeed, in *CT* IV, 235, Shu himself addresses Atum-Re saying “I am that star which came forth... I am that space which came about in the waters, I came into being in them, I grew in them”. This is how manifestation comes about together with the separation of sky and earth. Shu and Tefnut generate the next pair Nut and Geb, Sky (fem) and Earth (masc). It was thereafter the function of Shu (with the help of 8 spirits) to keep Sky and Earth apart – who, it is hinted in some spells, were in an incestuous sexual union, or perhaps formed an androgyne, a bisexual entity.

Here Vedic Indra resembles Shu. True, he does much more than the Egyptian god but he covers perfectly Shu's three attributes or functions. In the *RV* several gods are said to hold up the sky (Agni IV 6, 2; Varuṇa and Mitra V 62, 3 and VI 70, 1; etc), but Indra is both aerial and solar. He generates heaven and earth (VIII 36, 4) and stretches them apart (VIII 3, 6). He supports heaven (III 49, 4; etc) filling all space between earth and heaven (IV 16, 5; etc) and this is his aerial aspect – in that he occupies *antarikṣa* the atmosphere and in that he has Vāyu, the wind-deity, for his car (IV 16, 5). In his solar aspect he generates the Dawn (III 31, 5; etc) and the Sun (II 12, 7) and, indeed, is the Sun Sūrya (IV 26, 1; etc) naturally dispelling darkness with his brightness (VI 17, 5). He is also called *Savitṛ* the one who impels life and action (II 30, 1) and “Lord of all that moves and breathes” (*vīsvasya jāgataḥ prāṇataś pātiḥ* I 101, 5). Indra is an IE deity (Das 2002; Kazanas 2001a).

In other IE legendry there is no clear account of the separation of sky and earth. Only in Hesiod's *Theogony* Earth and Ouranos (=Skygod) mingle and generate gods, then separate; and then Kronos, one of their children, castrates Ouranos who subsequently fades out of the picture (White: 866-944). In the same work, Atlas supports the sky standing at the western borders of the earth (White 116).

PT spell 509 mentions “the ramparts of Shu”. One of Shu's symbols is “the four pillars of heaven” (Budge 1988: 148); spell 76 of the *CT* says that Shu “bound together the ladder of Atum” and made eight *ḥeḥ* (=supporting divine spirits) “from the emanation of his limbs” to hold up “the chambers of the sky” (Lesko, 94). Indra supports the luminaries in heaven (I, 6, 1-3) and has the group of 8 Vasus (VII 10, 4 and 35, 6) as well as the Maruts for assistants (V 42, 6) but also Soma in supporting heaven with a pillar *skambha* (IX 74, 2); the Sun (with whom Indra is identified) also holds heaven and earth in place “with imperishable pillars” *ajārebhiḥ skāmbhanebhiḥ* (I, 160, 4).

8. Eight divinities is an unusual group-number but we find them in both cultures.

We met above, the 8 *ḥeḥ* who helped Shu support the sky in the Heliopolitan theology. The cosmogonic version from Hermopolis in the south has creating agents which are 8 spirits of the primeval Abyss of Nun – the Ogdoad. In *PT* 301 only two pairs are mentioned but later texts give four pairs (Lesko, 35; Clark 55).

In the Vedic tradition also we have a group of 8 *vasus* (=the bright ones) connected with light and Agni. Here the names, which appear in post-Vedic texts (see MSD under *vasu*), are of

no significance and no rigvedic mythologem relates to them. But there are also the 8 *ādityas*, sons of Mother Goddess *Aditi*. These are sometimes 6 (*RV* II 27, 1) and once 7 (*IX* 114, 3) but the later Vedic texts make them 12 and identify them with the months. The hymn *AV* VIII 9, 21 and the *TB* also give them as 8 – Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman, Indra, Bhaga and so on; of the eighth one, Vivasvan or *Mārtāṇḍa* (=the Sungod) we shall speak anon. Here Aditi and Nun correspond.

In *PT* 301 the two pairs Niu and Nenet and Amun and Amaunet are said to protect the gods (see also Lesko 1991: 94). In *RV* II 27, 4 the *Ādityas* support what moves and stands and protect the whole world and the god-power itself *asurya*.

Since the number eight is not found much in significant motifs in other IE mythologems (Gk, Gmc etc) here we may assume an independent development in both cultures.

9. The Cosmic Egg is another interesting motif – appearing also in Greek Orphism. The Ogdoad swimming in the primordial Ocean Nun created, according to the Hermopolitan tradition, an egg from which sprang the Creator-god. There are different versions of the tale in different spells and in one of them (*CT* 223) it is closely linked with Shu as air and light: “I am that egg which was in the Great Primeval One [=Nun], I am the keeper of that great support that separates Geb from Nut.” Other references to the Egg are present in the *CT* (e.g. 714) and the *BD* (e.g. 85). In *PT* 408 the speaker (=pharaoh) requests that “you two... may give birth to me, who am in the egg”. It is not said who the two are nor whether it is the Cosmic Egg; but we can assume that here the King identifies himself with Shu or Re breaking out of the egg.

In *RV* X 72, 9 Aditi brings the eighth *Āditya* last: he is *Mārtāṇḍa* ‘sprung from a dead egg’ that is Vivasvan or the Setting Sun who will be reborn anew, for the life and death of other creatures too. Hymn X 121, 1 says that in the beginning [of manifest creation] rose *Hiraṇyagarbha* ‘the golden embryo’, the one manifest Lord of what came to be. A later passage in *SB* XI 1, 6, 1-2, says: “Verily, in the beginning this [world] was water... The waters desired a way to be reproduced... When they were heated up a golden egg was produced... In a year’s time... *Prajāpati* [=Lord of creatures, Creator-god] was produced therein... He broke open this egg...”

The Mesopotamian culture has no trace of a Cosmic Egg. We find one only in Orphism in Greece (see *GPA* §8), but since this appears in texts of the fifth century and after and since it does not appear in other IE traditions (Slavic, Germanic etc), there can be no certainty that this motif belongs to the IE heritage; the Greeks could have borrowed it from Egypt. On the other hand, since the name *Orpheus* is cognate with Vedic *ṛbhu* (and Germanic ‘elf’) and the severed head (of Orpheus) is also an IE motif, perhaps the Cosmic Egg is part and parcel of the general Orphic mythology and so an inherited motif. R. B. Onians cites the Finnish *Kalevala* where the cosmic Egg is thrust upon the waves by Watermother *Ilmatar* (1988: 177). The difficulty here does not seem insoluble. No early direct contacts are attested between the Finnish and the Greek or Egyptian peoples. But Finno-Ugrian has many loanwords from Vedic (*V nāma*, *F nime* ‘name’; *V udhar*, *F utar*, Mordwin *odar*, Čeremis *vodar* ‘udder’; *V svasar*, *F sisar*, Mord *sazor* Čer *šuzar* ‘sister’; *V vasana*, Hungarian *vaszon* ‘garment, cloth’; *V surā*, Hung *sör* ‘strong drink’; *V chāga*, Mord *seja* ‘goat’; *V sata*, *F sata*, Lapp *cuotte*, Mord *saco* ‘100’; etc: all from Burrow, 1973: 23-7, who writes of the Indo-Iranian common period following the Aryan Immigration/Invasion Theory).⁵ So I am inclined to think that the Finns borrowed the ‘cosmic egg’ from the Veda.

5 This Theory has bedevilled Indology since about 1850. It stated that the Indoaryans formed a unifary race with the Iranians and came from the Steppe into Iran then Saptasindhu ‘the land of the 7 rivers’ in NW India and Pakistan 1700-1500. Some other scholars and myself have been arguing against this theory (known as AIT) positing 4500 as the very latest possible date, if that, and a *RV* in the early 4th millennium BC; the Iranians moved out of Saptasindhu into their historical habitat and so, perhaps did the other IE branches (see §31). (Kazanas 2002a with references).

10. The sun-bird. We have just mentioned *Mārtāṇḍa* who, in the Veda is the sun about to set and then be reborn next day “for procreation and death” (*prajāyāi mṛtyāve*: *RV* X 72, 9) – his own as well as other creatures’. In *VII* 63, 5 the sun is likened to a flying falcon; in *V* 47, 3 he is called a bright-red bird (cf also *I*, 164, 14 and 26; also *X*, 123 and 177). This motif may be IE since we find an echo of it in the Celtic tradition in Ireland, where the “bright hero” Llew (possibly the older Britannic Lugh, god of light) flies in the sky as an eagle (§71).

In Egypt, Atum is essentially unmanifest and manifests as the Sungod Re, appearing under many names and titles (for morning, midday and late afternoon); in this he is called *Kheprer*, or *Khepri* the one who crawls across the sky and is signified by the scarab hieroglyph (Clark, 41; Silverman 1991: 36-7). Like *Mārtāṇḍa* who is also the skybird (born out of the dead egg), Atum as Re manifests as the Bennu-bird Phoenix (dying and being reborn) to herald the visible creation (Clark, 37, 39, 79; Hart 1995: 16-7).

This image may be an instance of independent indigenous development in both traditions.

11. The Sungod’s boat. In Egypt the theme of Re travelling across the sky in a boat is a major and complex one. Other gods are also in the boat, especially the Heliopolitan ones (Isis, Osiris and so on) and the soul of the devotee often aspires to embark on it. Otherwise, both Mesopotamian and Vedic texts have it and it was examined in Kazanas 2005b: §20. In *RV* VII 88, 3-4 sage Vasiṣṭha sails with Varuṇa in the god’s boat; *RV* VI 58, 3 shows god Pūṣan, the glowing aspect of the Sun, to sail in the sky-ocean with his fleet of golden ships; and *AV* XVII, 1, stanzas 25, 26 have the Sungod moving with his 100-oared boat. The motif appears also in Greece (Kazanas 2005b: §20; Onians 1998: 255)

12. The enemy serpent threatening or upsetting the natural order is a worldwide motif: it is part of the mythologem ‘god/hero slays serpent/monster’, common to almost all IE branches – and to Mesopotamia.

In Egypt several texts, *PT*, *CT*, *BD*, *Book of Am-Duat* (Hart, p 54; Hornung 1999: 38) etc, refer to Re who has to fight and overcome the hostile Serpent “the Slippery One” in his journey through night. The motif is depicted frequently in the iconography of tombs and the vignettes of papyrus-texts.

In the Veda the hostile serpent/dragon, embodying darkness or evil, is represented preeminently by Vrtra whom Indra slays and releases the waters. It is a very common theme and will not detain us in IE traditions (Apollo against Tiphoeus, Thor against Midgar-serpent, etc). But it has two other aspects that deserve some attention – as below.

13. The Fair Enchantress. Spell *CT* 154 says that once the Serpent surprised Re and ensnared him by assuming the form of a fair curly-haired maiden. No further details are given but this (lost) legend belongs obviously to the genre of the enchantress or temptress. This motif probably belongs to a world-wide motif: we find it both in Mesopotamia and in the Vedic culture. In *Gilgamesh* the wild man Enkidu is created by goddess Aruru out of a divine image infused into clay to be a match for king Gilgamesh. The king hears of the wild man’s existence and sends a harlot to seduce him which she accomplished thoroughly over a week (*MM* 56). In the Vedic Tradition, in both epics (*MBh* III, 110-3, and *Rāmāyaṇa* I, 65, 16) a young seer Ṛṣyaśṛṅga is seduced by a whore for different reasons and in different circumstances. But much earlier, in *RV* I.179 Lopāmudrā eventually seduces her aging husband Agastya who would not respond to her approach while in *RV* X, 10, Yamī attempts but fails to seduce her brother Yama. Thus the theme is well attested in Indic texts.

14. The wise, creative Serpent. In Egyptian texts, the Serpent was originally an aspect of the High God co-existing with him in the Waters of Nun. *PT* par 1146 says “I am the Provider-of-Attributes, serpent with many coils” and *CT* IV 321 says “I bent right round myself, I was

encircled in my coils, one who made a place for himself in the midst of his coils". *BD* spell 175 says that Atum will destroy all that he has created and will become again "the Old Serpent who knew no man and saw no god." Another text, the *Bremner Rhind Papyrus*, says that the High God created snakes and worms in the Primeval Waters (Clark, 91); this is supported by *CT* 98 which says that these were formed in the Creator's eye and represent the original forms of the morning stars.

In the Vedic texts there is no such cosmogonic Serpent. On the other hand, there must have been a complex legend about a divine, benevolent Serpent *ahi*. In the *RV* there are several references to a deity *ahi budhnya* who is born in and rests at the bottom of the waters (VII 34, 16). It is generally agreed that the waters are celestial or atmospheric and that Ahi Budhnya is an aerial deity. It should be noted that Agni in the midair is called a raging *ahi* (I, 79, 1). Ahi Budhnya is probably the basis for the post-Vedic thousand-headed *Śeṣa* which lies on the Waters and upon which rests *Viṣṇu*. But there are several intermediate references. A notable reference occurs in *AV* hymn VIII 10, 29: it mentions a serpent deity *Takṣaka* 'fashioner/creator'. Then, we find oblations offered to serpent deities (eg *VS* I 5, 4; etc) and the striking statement "the serpents are these worlds" when *SB* VII 4, 1, 25ff explains the *Sarpanāma* (=Serpent-names) formulas. So there could well have been a complex Serpent mythologem now lost; even so, the surviving details show many correspondences with the Egyptian motifs.

The serpent/snake is of course a common motif in the IE traditions.

15. Creation through the Word. The Egyptian texts speak of creation taking place through the Word and sound – a doctrine taken up early by the Judaic tradition where in *Genesis* God creates the worlds by speaking. *CT* spell IV 321 which mentions the Serpent and its coils together with Atum adds that the High God devised "the utterance" whereby manifestation will come about. But a more complete description is in the Memphis Theology where god Ptah is the mighty Great One who created all gods through speech and pronounced the names of all things (Lesko 1991: 95-6).

The idea of creating through the Word is, of course, prominent in the Vedic tradition. In *SB* XI 1, 6, 3, when *Prajāpati* emerged from the Cosmic Egg, he spoke: the sound *bhūḥ* became the earth; the sound *bhuvah* became the atmosphere; the sound *svah* became the sky. In *VS* III 1, 1 *Prajāpati* creates different classes of creatures through desire, penance and speech. And *RVI* 164, 35: *brahmāyaṃ vācāḥ paramāṃ vyóma* 'this holy-power is the highest heaven of *Vāk*, [goddess of] Speech'. This *sabdabrahman*, or this Logos doctrine, as it is generally known (from John's Gospel I, 1), acquires great prominence in the *Upaniṣads* and post-Vedic literature. But *Vāk*, the deity of Speech, is already quite prominent in the *RV* (X, 71 and 125; VIII, 100, 10-11; I, 164, 35).

16. Osiris-Asura and Yama. While the name of Osiris *ausir/wsir* and Vedic *asura* have phonetic resemblance, it is impossible to find any Vedic *asura*, god or demon⁶, who resembles Osiris in the slightest: none of them is killed and reborn to become King in the realm of the dead. However, there are striking similarities between Osiris and Yama.

1) Yama is the son of *Vivasvat* (=aspect of the Sungod) and *Saraṇyū* (*RV* X, 17, 1), daughter of *Tvaṣṭṛ*, a god who shapes forms (*RVI*, 188, 9; etc).

2) He has a twin sister *Yamī* who approaches him erotically wanting to have his child but is repulsed (*RV*, X, 10; see above §13).

3) There are two more twins, the horse-deities *Asvins*. The later texts *Nirukta* and *Bṛhaddevatā* tell how *Saraṇyū* disappeared after the birth of Yama and Yamī taking the form of a

⁶ Initially the word *asura* meant 'lord, high-god' but later (even in the later hymns of the *RV*) it came to denote a demonic being. It is connected with *Ahura* 'Lord' in Iranian and probably with *Aesir* (plural), the gods in the Scandinavian lore.

mare but Vivasvant found her, became a stallion, mounted her and thus were born the Asvins. (A fifth brother, Manu, survivor of the flood, can be disregarded for the purposes of our comparison here.)

4) Yama dies. The Vedic texts give no details but one hymn suggests that he gave up his body in some sacrificial act for the sake of the gods (*RVX*, 13, 4).

5) In *Maitrayaṇī Saṃhitā* I, 5, 12, Yamī mourns her brother and is unable to forget him. (Time was then one endless day [=eternity?].)

6) The gods create night so that Yamī can forget, and she does so as ‘tomorrow’ *svastana* comes about [= measured, linear time?].

7) Yama is the first mortal to find the path to immortality (*RVX*, 14, 1-2) and become King of the dead in heaven.

8) He has two dogs *sabala* ‘brindled’ and *styāma* ‘black’ (*AVVIII*, 1, 9) who guard the path and watch the dead who come to his realm (*RVX*, 14, 10-12).

9) He and the gods drink together beside a tree in *RVX*, 135, 1.

Now, the Osiris legend has affinities with every one of these nine points. But before indicating them, I should stress that Yama is a thoroughly IE figure. His name appears as Yima in the Iranian *Avesta* where he is king of an underworld paradise; in later Iranian texts he has a twin sister Yimeh and from their union emerge the first humans. As ‘Ymir’ the name appears also in the Scandinavian *Edda*, where he, as a Cosmic Person, is dismembered by gods and his parts become parts of the world. His mother *Saraṇyū* appears in the Mycenaean religion as *Erinus* and in later Greek legendry as the Arcadian *Erinus* (Kazanas 2001a). The latter was goddess Demeter in the form of a mare trying to eschew Poseidon’s erotic harassment but he became a stallion and from their union were born a noble horse and a daughter (Kazanas 2001a: 283). In Greek legend we also find the two pairs of twins one of the females being beautiful *Helenē* (Helen of Troy) whose name also may be cognate with *Saraṇyū*. Her two brothers, Castor and Poludeukes, are semi-divine heroes, sons of Zeus, who save people from shipwreck and aid their sister when she is in danger; one of them is expert with horses – like the Asvins. Then, just as the Asvins accompany *Sūryā*, the Sungod’s daughter to her wedding, so the (Sky-)god’s sons *Dievo Sūnelai*, in the Baltic tradition, save from drowning the Sunmaiden and escort her to safety. The twins and the horse-motif appear also in Slavic, Germanic and Celtic myths. The only major motif missing in the other IE branches, except Iranian, is Yama’s kingship in the realm of the dead. Even in this area, the Greeks have a detail, if the name of the watchdog *Kerberos* in Hades is cognate with Yama’s dog *Sabala*.

17. In the corresponding Egyptian cult, Osiris is indeed the king in the realm of the dead and the Foremost of the Westerners, i.e. of those who enter the Afterlife or Netherworld in the Western Horizon (*PT* pars 759, 1298). Like *Saraṇyū*, his grandmother Tefnut ran away from her brother-husband Shu and her father Atum and disappeared in the Primeval Waters so that Atum sent his Eye to find her (§4). Then, there are the two deities, Wepwaet, the wolf-god opener of the path, and Anubis, the jackal-headed god, who escorts the dead to the Judgment Hall. But there are four major differences:

a) Osiris is a vegetation-god as well, connected with the Nile inundation and the rejuvenation of the plants. Here, there may be a remote affinity with the tree where Yama and the gods meet and drink (above, point 9).

b) Osiris does marry his twin sister Isis and, after she recovers and revivifies his corpse, she conceives their son Horus. Here, we have some intriguing details. It may be, as Macdonell suggests on the basis of the Iranian legend (1898: 173), that in the original IE tale brother and sister did unite but that the *ṛigvedic* seers innovated and cleared Yama of the guilt of incest; this is supported by the fact that in *RVX*, 135, 1, Yama is addressed as “our father”, which, unless it is

a mere metaphor, implies that Yama had as his progeny the human race – a fact acknowledged in later texts (e.g. *TS* VI, 5, 6, 2). On the other hand, neither Osiris nor Horus are in any Egyptian text said to generate mankind.

c) There is no equivalent of Seth, the evil brother, nor of Nephthys, another sister, in the Vedic legend.

d) Osiris is King in the Netherworld and represents the night-aspect of the Sungod, whose creative day-aspect is Re, while Yama is king of the dead in the luminous and highest region (*RV* X, 14, 8; IX, 113, 7-9; also *AV* IX, 5, 1-8; XI, 4, 11; XVIII, 4, 3) and is clearly connected with the radiant day-aspect of the sun (*RV* I, 83, 5 and 163, 1-3). Here, points 5 and 6, above, bring in the creation of night and ‘tomorrow’ in the Veda. This motif seems to be connected with the Osiris legend, for *BD* spell 17 has Atum, identifying with Re (“I was Atum... I was Re...”) say, “To me belongs yesterday, I know tomorrow”; here the gloss adds, “What does it mean? As for yesterday, that is Osiris [;] as for tomorrow, that is Re”.

18. An additional link at this juncture is provided by Varuṇa. Apart from the Sun and Agni, Yama is closely associated with this god too. Thus they are both the horse in *RV* I, 163, 3-4, which is also the sun; then, on reaching heaven, the dead see these two kings, Yama and Varuṇa together (*RV* X, 14, 7).

Varuṇa is not only the High God of moral order. Often in conjunction with Mitra, he is also connected with the sun (*RV* I, 24, 8; VII, 87, 1-5; etc) and the seasons and months (I, 25, 8; VII, 66, 11). Streams, rivers and waters generally flow according to his ordinances (II, 28, 4, V, 85, 6; VII, 64, 2), he is surrounded/clothed with waters (VII, 49, 3; IX, 90, 2) and, of course, bestows abundant rain (V, 63; 85, 3-4; VII, 64, 2). In I, 24, 7 he sustains the Tree which has roots above and branches-rays downward, the Tree of Life or the *Axis Mundi* or Cosmic Tree; through this and bedewing the earth and pasturage, he is evidently linked with fertility and vegetation. He also encompasses the nights (VIII, 41, 3) and in post-rigvedic texts he is especially connected with the night (*TS* II, 1, 7, 4; VI, 4, 8, 3) while Mitra with the day.

Thus Varuṇa supplies those traits of Osiris which are missing in Yama. And, of course, Varuṇa is an *asura* (*RV* VII, 65, 2; VIII, 25, 4) and furnishes the possible linguistic connexion with the name *Wsir* ‘Osiris’.

19. What can we make of all this information?

We cannot say that the Vedic Tradition borrowed from the Egyptians. Varuṇa is well established in the *RV* and appears in the Avesta as Ahura Mazda while his name is cognate with Greek *Ouranos* ‘Sky-god’. Yama appears in *BkI* and *BkX* of the *RV*, i.e. the middle and late strata – not in the early hymns. But, then, the mythology associated with him is so well attested and widespread among the other IE traditions, Iranian, Greek, Baltic and Scandinavian, that we cannot entertain the notion of Vedic borrowing even as a remote possibility, unless the transmission from Egypt occurred before the dispersal of the IndoEuropeans – a notion equally difficult to accept.

Did the Egyptians borrow, then? This seems possible but not easy to demonstrate. The only indication supporting such a transmission from the Veda to Egypt is the fact that, as we noted (§2), there is no archaeological or epigraphical evidence for the existence of Osiris before the *PT* or, say, 2500. The serious difficulty here is that we have no evidence for any direct contact between India and Egypt at so early a date; another consideration is that even if Osiris is an importation, since the Osiris legend in the *PT* is so well established that it appears in fragments comprehensible to the Egyptians themselves, the importation must have taken place much earlier, perhaps c 2700 or 2800. It is possible that at, say, c 2700 the Yama-Varuṇa-Asura concepts came to Egypt and were grafted onto the cult of a local deity combining the attributes of vegetation and inundation. But this is pure speculation.

Another conjectural alternative is that the various Yama-Varuṇa-Asura-Osiris concepts started long long ago as a single mythologem common to Egyptians and IndoEuropeans then developed indigenously along divergent lines. But then could the absence of evidence for Osiris for several millennea before the *PT* be fortuitous?... As this seems highly improbable, the issue remains, at present, irresolvable.

20. The Falcon. Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, holds little interest for our purposes, but the Falcon with which he is identified is of interest. Even while pregnant, Isis describes the foetus in her womb as a falcon: “A falcon is within my womb” (*CT* 148). In iconography Horus is invariably depicted with the head of a falcon and the bird becomes another emblem for kingship found, in iconography, perched on the shoulder of some pharaohs. The same *CT* spell says Horus as the Falcon reached the end of the horizon having passed the gods of Nut [=the sky] and gone further than the gods of old. Thus this god-bird brought “the ways of eternity to the twilight of the morning”. Having gone beyond the power of Seth who represents the disruption of “cosmic order” (*ma'at*), the new king has put disorder under his feet heralding a new dispensation. (See Clark, 213-7.) However, the Falcon is at first a messenger carrying news of Horus to his father Osiris in *CT* 312. Here it is also said to be Horus’s soul and thus becomes a generalised symbol for the soul (Budge 1988: 90).

In the *RV* also we find a bird which flies to heaven: it is the *syena* ‘hawk, eagle’ or *suparṇa* ‘the bird of strong wings’ or ‘of fine feathers’. (See the discussion about the Mesopotamian and Vedic eagles in Kazanas 2005c, §§ 5-7.) This bird fetches the drink *soma* from heaven (especially in IV 26 and 27 but also in other hymns, eg VIII 95, 3; in III 93, 6 from a mountain). The bird brings the drink to Indra usually. In IV 26, 4 the drink is brought to Manu, the progenitor, and in IV, 19, 13 it is brought to the seer Vāmadeva; here some scholars think the Falcon represents Indra. In VII 15, 4 the falcon is identified with Agni – probably as the sun. In IX 67, 14-5 it is the drink Soma itself (and the god) that is identified with the *syena*. In X 92, 6 the Maruts (and perhaps the Rudras) are described as the *syenas* of Dyaus, the Skygod. In X 114, 5 the bird *suparṇa* is said to be one but the poets devise many images in speaking of it. The Vedic bird is thus a bird in its own right but represents several deities and the One which appears as many. Hymn IV 26, 1 provides another aspect suggesting a more complex legend. The *syena* is guarded in 100 *purs* (=magic strongholds, hard as metal), imprisoned by demons, as some think (Geldner, vol 2, 455) but the bird somehow does break free and fetches down the Soma. The complete legend is lost to us.

Later Vedic texts continue to refer to the Soma-bringing bird (eg *VS* VI, vi 32). One of the shapes of the altars is that of a falcon and *TS* V 4, 11 says: “[The sacrificer] who desires the sky should pile in hawk shape; the hawk is the best flier among birds; verily becoming a hawk he flies to the world of heaven”. Then, *SB* XII 7, 1, 6 says that the *syena* is the courage in Indra’s heart; so in XII 3, 4, 3-4, the sacrificer prays that the falcon will bear him to well-being. The *AU* II 1, 5 takes the *RV* IV 26, 1 and interprets the image of the falcon as the spirit of the seer Vāmadeva which is imprisoned in the womb *garbhe* yet breaks free and attains liberation.

The falcon is a common bird in Egypt and India so its use as a poetic image and religious symbol may have developed independently. But that it should, in both cultures, develop into a symbol for a god (Egyptian Horus, Vedic Indra/Agni), for a messenger (bringing joyful news in Egypt, bringing exhilarating soma in India) and for the soul going to heaven, must be more than a coincidence. We find no such (triple) symbolism in Mesopotamia or the related IE legends (Kazanas 2005: §5ff); but the IE pedigree of the bird cannot be doubted.

21. The Cow. The heavenly Cow-Mother-Goddess *mḥt-wrt* has greater prominence in Egypt than in Mesopotamia, the cow being one of the oldest sacred animals there. The Cow-goddess best known to us was Hathor. The spots on Hathor’s image of spotted cow were the stars in the sky.

Hat-Hor or *Hwt-Hr* means ‘Mansion-of Horus’ and this suggests that this name at least was later than Horus. Hathor as well as Isis suckled Horus in some texts and this act shows that she was identified with Isis; indeed, she was identified with numerous goddesses (Budge, 1988: 228-32). In *The Destruction of Mankind* (Lesko 109-111; Clark 181-5) Nut herself becomes a cow and takes on her back Re who is now aged and tired of the world; in this same text the Eye assumes the form of Hathor and proceeds to slay mankind. A later hymn (in Hathor’s temple at Dendera) praises both cow and goddess: “O beauteous one, O cow, O great one,/ O great magician, O splendid lady, O gold/queen of gods!” (Lichtheim, vol 3: 108).

The Vedic (and Mesopotamian) Cow-goddess was examined above, in Kazanas 2005b, §22: Āditi the mother of the gods Ādityas is a cow in *RV* I, 153, 3; *VS*, XIII, 43 etc; a cosmic cow appears in *RV* I, 80, 3 and III, 55, 1, etc; a cosmic cow appears in *RV* I, 80, 3 and III, 55, 1, etc. (A cosmic cow appears in the *Edda* and nourishes universal man Ymir; it appears in Iranian legendry also.)

22. The Bull. The worship of the Bull was common in Egypt at all periods and practically in all districts. Classical sources refer to two cults: the Apis-Bull in Memphis embodied Osiris, Ptah and, later, Seker, god of the Memphis underworld; the Mnevis-Bull of Heliopolis embodied Re and Osiris. Both cults went back to early dynastic times but there were others (Budge, 73-5).

The Vedic (and Mesopotamian) Bull was examined again in Kazanas 2005b, §21: gods Agni of fire (I, 40, 2, etc) and Indra of thunder and lightning (I, 32, 7, etc) are described as ‘bull’. The bull appears in Iran, Greece and elsewhere as a sacred animal.

23. Dog, Jackal, Wolf. The Dog, worshipped at Cynopolis was often confounded with Anubis, the jackal-god. The latter conducted the souls of the dead; he was the official embalmer and Guardian of the Scales on which were weighed the hearts of the dead in the Hall of Judgment of Osiris. Then there was the Wolf-god *Wepwaeet* “the opener of the Roads” who assisted Anubis in guiding the souls.

In the Vedic tradition the jackal is hardly ever mentioned (eg. *RV* X 28,4; *VS* XXIV 32). The wolf is mentioned more frequently but is to be kept off (eg. *RV* X 127,6; *VS* IX 16). As regards the Dog, this animal had no divine aspect as such nor a cult. But Indra had Saramā, which pursued and located the thieves of cattle and then Indra recovered the animals (*RV* X 106); Saramā is not expressly said to be a bitch in the *RV* but is so taken by subsequent texts (*Nirukta* XI 25). However, *RV* has two more dogs, those of Yama the guardian of the dead in heaven (*RV* X 14, 10-12). Descendants of Saramā, with the epithet *Sārameya*, they are called *Sabala* ‘brindled’ and *Syāma* ‘black’: they guard the path of the dead to Yama’s abode (§16, end). “It is possible that they were conceived as going among men, and taking to the abode of death [in heaven] the souls of the dead” (Keith, p 406).

24. The Ram or Goat. In Egypt, it seems, ram and goat were regarded as one and the same for cultic purposes. There were two Ram-gods, one at Mendes (Tet or Busiris, at the Delta) and one at Elephantine (first Nile-cataract, south). Because of their strength and virility the sacred animal at Mendes, Hermopolis and Lycopolis were used by women for sexual intercourse (Budge, 1988: 75). The Ram-god at Elephantine was from early times worshipped as the Ram-headed god Khnum who was portrayed as a Potter-god fashioning mankind out of clay. But before this, he was also a Water-god who was said to bring the Nile into Egypt (Budge 173-4).

There is no distinct Ram-god in the Veda, but Indra is several times called “that much invoked Ram” (= *meṣa*: *RV* I 51, 1; 52, 1 etc). In addition, there is *aja ekaṣṭā* usually rendered as ‘One-footed Goat’, which does not mean much exactly, but this deity is five times invoked together with Ahi Budhnya, the Serpent of the Deep, and once (*RV* X 66, 11) with the ocean, river Sindhu and floods. So this deity may have been connected with the waters. More important, however, is its connection with *aja* ‘the Unborn One’ or “goat” who established the six regions of

space (I 164, 6) and holds Earth (I 61, 10) and Heaven (VIII 41, 10) and has all the worlds supported on its navel (X 82, 6).

25. Nile-Sarasvatī: river in the sky. L H Lesko cites a hymn to the Sungod in which the god is praised for having “placed a Nile in the sky / that it might descend for them and make waves upon the mountain” (1991: 108). R O Faulkner writes of “the celestial river, equated by the Egyptians with the Milky Way” (1985: 90).

The Indoaryans also had their celestial river, Sarasvatī, which was also the “best river” (*RV* II 41, 16) on earth and flowed pure “from the mountains to the ocean” (VII 95, 2). But she was also a great goddess and hymn V 43, 11 invokes holy Sarasvatī to flow from high heaven while VI 61, 11 says that she has filled the firmament. The Greek and Scandinavian mythologies have celestial rivers, so it is an IE motif.

26. The Pit of Nonexistence. J Baines, Professor of Egyptology at Oxford, wrote (1991: 151): “Old Kingdom sources are compatible with belief in a judgment [after death]... Belief in a judgment might therefore have been integral to religion in all accessible periods.” Indeed, several decades earlier Wallis Budge had written: “The Memphite theologians speak of a celestial court which preceded that of Re or Osiris, for they tell us that the earth-god Geb sat in judgment” (1988: 280). Clark cites spell *CT* 312 which changes an older text “before the Divine Court which sat down to judge in the presence of Geb” into “before the Divine Court which sat down to judge before Geb (*earth*) and Re (*sun*)... on earth and in the sky” (Clark, 164: my italics showing the addition). But Osiris had already become the great Judge of the dead. In the Hall of Judgment close to the Scales sits the monster Am-mit with head of crocodile, body of lion and backside of hippopotamus: it would gobble up any condemned person, body and soul. But there were also hells in the Underworld where the damned were immersed in pits of fire and consumed out of existence. To quote Baines again: “Evil people who are found wanting in an ethical judgment after their death are cast out of creation” (ibid 129).

RV hymn VII 104 is a prayer to gods Indra and Soma to punish evil-doers, sorcerers and fiends. Stanza 9 prays that seducers and corruptors be delivered to the Serpent *ahi-* or to the “lap of Annihilation” *nīryter upāsthe*. Stanza 3 wants the evil-doers hurled into “the pit, the bottomless darkness” from which they will not come up again. Similar references are found in II 29, 6, IV 5, 5, IX 73, 8-9 and X 152, 4. There is no explicit mention of Judgment but only some such action would have sent the good to heaven and the wicked to the pit. Judgment is mentioned overtly in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* VI 5, 13. *SB* XI 2,7, 33 correlates the sacrificial altar with the Balance in the other world and advises the sacrificer to touch the right edge of the altar so that his good deeds will go into it and rise with the oblation. Hell is mentioned explicitly in *AV* XII 4, 36 *nāraka-loka-* and in hell goes a murderer in *VS* XXX 5. Punishments and tortures in hell are depicted in *Kauṣītaki Br* XI 3 and *SB* XI 6, 1 (people being cut up or eaten up).

27. Afterlife in Heaven. Here we shall ignore mummification. Otherwise, first the Pharaoh, then the nobles and later commoners aspired to unite with God – but always a particular god: Re in his barque, Osiris, Horus, Amun, even Khnum; or being in some god’s company, or among the stars. (Eg see spells *PT* 215 king-Atum; 250 king-Sia; 412 king among the stars, Orion, Sothis, Morning Star, etc; *CT* 42-3 king-Osiris; 75 king-Shu; etc; for Khnum, *BD* 36; etc.)

As regards the Vedic tradition, we saw earlier (§20) that the man who aspires to go to heaven should, apart from anything else, sacrifice with a falcon-shaped altar. Many passages in the *RV* (and later texts) indicate that, except for the evil-doer, the soul goes to Yama’s abode in heaven (X 14, 8), to the Sun or among the stars. Thus the ancestral Fathers “adorn the sky with the constellations” (*RV* X 68 11); those who practised *tapas* ‘penance, austerities’ have gone to heaven or to the Fathers who guard the Sun (X 154, 2 and 5); and the liberal givers dwell with the Sun (X 107, 2). But, of course, in the Vedic Tradition we find also reincarnation and

divinization or Selfrealization with true immortality (Kazanas 2005a).

28. There are, in fact, **many more parallels** that could be cited. The realm of magical practices in both cultures provides spells against snake-bites, diseases and other calamities: both used ritual, the elements of fire and water, amulets and plants and figurines. There is also the annual rejuvenation of the king and of the Sungod (in Egypt Amun-Re). Then, there is the concept of Cosmic Order, *ma'at* in Egypt and *ṛta* in Saptasindhu as well as the actual social structure and the scales weighing in Afterlife good and bad deeds; and so on. However, a detailed discussion of all these points (which I leave for a future study) would add many pages to this study without helping us to understand better whether, and when, there had been early contacts between the two cultures and any cross-influences.

29. One more point needs to be made. Attempts appear at times to connect Indic languages (sanskritic or dravidian) with Old Mesopotamian or Egyptian. In the next section 30 I refer to a paper on Vedic and Mesopotamian cross-influences in which I examined some of these alleged linguistic affinities and showed them to be wrong. Here I shall advert to an article by B. Z. Szalek (2005) who lists parallels between Old Egyptian and Tamil or Telugu, both of which are comparatively recent, not to say modern, dravidic languages. Apart from several duplications which make the items look many more than they actually are, the list contains Tamil *muti-ya* 'to die' which is obviously linked to S \sqrt{mr} , *mṛtyu*, *mriyate* 'dying, death, is dead' etc; *piri-ya* 'to depart' which is linked to S *pre* or *pra-yā* 'depart, go forth'; *tapi*, *tapana* 'be hot, heat' which are linked to S *tap*, *tapana* 'burning, heating'. All three Sanskrit roots (and stems) have perfectly matching IE correspondences: S *mṛ* = Gk *a-mbrot-o*, L *mors*, *mortius*, Lth *mirtis*; etc. S *-i*, *yā* = Gk *eisi/eiti*, L *it*, Lth *eiti/joti*, Irish *ath*, etc. S *tap* = L *tepeo*, Irish *tē*, Slavic *top-lu*, etc. Thus here also borrowing by the Indic peoples must be ruled out.

30. My earlier discussion of Indo-Mesopotamian parallels (2005b)⁷ showed that, contrary to hitherto prevalent theories, it is rather the Mesopotamians who were culturally influenced in the main, although influences in the other direction should not be ruled out, particularly as regards iconographic material. It may be argued, that such a conclusion is based on unacceptably early dates arbitrarily given to the Vedic texts and that this does not stand in the mainstream view of the AIT and a *RV* composed c 1200-1000. Such an argument, however, ignores two important facts. First, the evidence for the early dates is strong and convincing, in contrast to the AIT which, in truth, has not a solid leg to stand on – other than mechanical repetition. Second, the nature of the parallels themselves. To take the first example of the horse-sacrifice (§4), only obstinacy and prejudice would insist that the Veda borrowed. The Veda has a rich horse mythology which is totally absent in Mesopotamia; moreover, it is attested in various forms in other IE traditions but is lacking in Near Eastern ones. Other IE mythologems are that of the eagle ascending to heaven (§§5ff), the Flood (§11) and the dismemberment of a divine being (weak in Greece but strong in Scandinavia: §22). My close analyses of these mythologems and others, like the bull (§ 22), the cow (§ 21) or the origin of kingship (§ 30), show that the Vedic legends contain no distinctly Mesopotamian elements. All these pieces of evidence demonstrate clearly that the Veda is not the borrower. Then, there are the tell-tale pieces of the Mesopotamian text *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* (§§ 33, 39) and the transmission of the peacock (§ 38). Moreover, Berossos tells us that the ancient arts and sciences were not discovered by gifted Mesopotamians but were brought from elsewhere; his figure of 432000 years for a Great Year (§ 18) stands arbitrary and isolated, while it forms a valid detail in the larger Indic system. Thus, if there was borrowing (and obviously there was), then the borrower was Mesopotamia – first c 2600, perhaps, and then c 1600.

⁷ The references §4 etc, below in this section, are to this publication.

31. The situation with Egypt is different. Some of the parallels are remarkable and unique, like ‘the lotus-born one’ (§3), ‘the eye that runs off’ (§4), ‘the Cosmic Egg’ (§9) or the Yama-Osiris correspondences (§ 16ff). Then, egyptologists admit that the sudden birth of an almost full-blown culture in Egypt ushering in the Pyramid Age presupposes a previous period of development in the centuries, say, 3000-2700, yet no traces of such development have been found (David 2002; Emery 1991). On the other hand, the simple culture in Saptasindhu and its development into early, mature and late ISC shows, according to all specialist archaeologists, an uninterrupted continuity from at least the early 5th millennium to mid-sixth century. Thus, since the Vedic people had knowledge of mathematics and astronomy (Kazanas 2005b: §§34-7) which found expression in the material culture of the ISC, one is tempted to suggest that the influence for the sudden outburst of the Egyptian civilization came from Saptasindhu, especially since no other comparable culture is in evidence in the late fourth millennium. But precisely here both archaeological and textual evidence fail us in not indicating any direct contacts. We are left only with speculation that, perhaps, some Indoaryans, in obedience to the dictum in *RVX*, 65, 11 that they should spread the Aryan laws/usages all over the earth *áryā vratā visrjānto ádhi kṣāmi*, went to Egypt for this purpose. However, future archaeological work may present a new picture in Egypt.

32. There are other speculative alternatives. It is always possible that the Egyptians developed their own civilization within a few decades through sheer native inspiration. We could moreover follow those writers who offer evidence that the Sphinx was sculpted in the 11th millennium (Bauval & Hancock 1996; West 1993) and that that culture lay dormant with few unobtrusive expressions for some seven millennia. But then we still have to account for the parallels in their own and the Indoaryan religious concepts and legendry. These are not two or three isolated motifs or images that could come to anyone: they are many and some of them quite remarkable. So there must have been a contact of some kind some time before 2700.

In the recent 1990s CE, Indian marine archaeologists discovered on the seafloor of the Gulf of Cambay certain stone-structures and many artefacts suggestive of a large town that had been submerged: this was dated at c 7000. That a town-port might have existed there and then, and sank into the sea because rains and floods caused a rise of the sea-level is not impossible, nor that contacts with other cultures including Egypt took place at that period. But many serious archaeologists doubt the dating and, indeed, the submarine ruins may be of a much later date (Hancock 2002: 169-197; Kazanas 2005b: §11, n10). We must await fresh evaluations and, perhaps, fresh data; for we must have in mind the *RV* which knows of no large urban structures but does know of the domesticated horse and of copper-metallurgy. Since there is no evidence for horse-domestication and copper-smelting much before 5500, this date sets the upper limit for the bulk of the *RV*, at least in the form we have it: earlier dates suggested for the *RV* are not at present tenable.⁸

Another alternative is to suppose a more or less unified PIE cultural continuum extending in the 8th or 7th millennium from Saptasindhu to the Pontic Steppe with various non-Indo-European

8. Copper objects (pins, knives, beads) have been found in S-E Anatolia, Syria and S.Iran from c 7000-6500 but without any evidence of smelting, only hammering and perhaps melting (Saggs 1989: 197-8). Even if we allow knowledge of melting (not smelting) to the *RV* and this sets an upper limit c 7000-6500, **we still have to meet the limit of the domesticated horse**. The spoked wheel poses no problem; for Vedic *ara* could well have denoted segments of a solid wheel rather than separate spokes. The different words for ‘spoke’ in the IE branches (e.g. Gk *aktis*, L *radius*, Gmc *spāce/spēke/speihha*) suggest that the spoke as we understand it was developed after the dispersal of the IE speakers. The technology for a separate-spoke wheel might not have been developed before 4000-3500 but we cannot theoretically preclude carts with solid wheels in the 5th millennium or even earlier.

speaking peoples moving in and out of this at different dates (Kazanas 2003). This widespread culture had contacts and exchanges with the near East from the Caucasus and Anatolia down to Egypt before breaking up and the different branches going to their respective historical habitats. Others again might prefer Out-of-India movements at different moments of that distant past (see also Hock 1999), although such movements cannot be easily traced archaeologically and linguistically to the N-W extremities of Europe – except for the Gypsy migration in historical times (Fraser 1995). Personally, I lean towards the last view since the difficulties for any other PIE locus of dispersal are many more and greater (Kazanas 2003).

However, all this speculating is not particularly fruitful. We simply have to rest with the admission that we do not know – unless and until new data appear. But, on the basis of the present state of our knowledge, we can state with confidence that, as regards the parallels discussed, the Vedic Tradition did not borrow from Egypt any more than from Mesopotamia. Rather, if anything, it is the other two cultures that borrowed.

33. What I find most noteworthy in the study of these three ancient civilizations is the presence of the One as the First Cause or Primal Source of all phenomena. This presence is nowhere explicit and certain in the Mesopotamian texts but, nonetheless, as Bottéro noted, it is inferable from some of them (2001: 74); it is clearly discernible as Atum or Nun in the early Egyptian texts (Assman 2001: 119); it is, of course, clearly articulated in the *RV* and, moreover, in later Vedic texts – even amid the kaleidoscopic multiplicity of deities (see Upanishads and Kazanas 2005). It is not easy now to explain why this knowledge of the One Primal Cause was forgotten or gradually covered over by polytheism in the Near East. One can only speculate that it seems easier to worship one divinity, or many, having definite form(s) in natural phenomena and thereby being more readily approachable, than one unmanifest, inconceivable and therefore unapproachable Power. It seems also that in the IE branches as well as in the Near East the oral tradition was not so efficiently organized as in Saptasindhu. Both in the linguistic and the cultural areas the Vedic Tradition retained many more inherited elements than the other IE branches (Kazanas 2001, 2002a, 2005c). As stressed earlier, the Egyptians and Mesopotamians obviously turned their attention to the more concrete aspects of culture, buildings, artefacts and iconic representations, whereas the early Vedic culture was more concerned with theoretical (mathematics and astronomy) and spiritual (the Unity of Being) considerations.

It is obvious, then, that when religiophilosophical thought was formulated in proto-historical times, at least as we find it in Saptasindhu and the Near East, it contained both polytheism and monism (or monotheism). Since there is no earlier textual attestation of polytheism exclusive of monism, the latter cannot be said to be a “development” from polytheism, animism and the like, as experts in these fields claim. On the contrary, on the basis of the evidence presented in the foregone discussion, I propose that modern notions (very popular in the 20th cent) about shamanism, fetichism, animism, polytheism and other beliefs found among “primitive” or “aboriginal” people do not represent truly early beliefs but rather offshoots (devolutions or degenerations) of a more ancient system having as its primary principle the Unity of Being, clearly illustrated in the first phase of the Vedic Tradition. Consequently, iconographic and other archaeological material from the cultures of the Stone Age (see Rudgley 1998) might be much more correctly interpreted not by the prejudices and superstitions of the 20th century but under the light of the ideas contained in some ancient texts examined above and particularly the *Rgveda*.