

# A STELLAR PERFORMANCE

poetics and myths of the Indo-European *Männerbünde*

## INTRODUCTION

1. Methodology: comparative method: Meillet (1925); comparative poetics: Watkins (1995)

2. *Männerbünde*: gender exclusivity (males), usually around a chosen leader, military training, nudity or animal pelts, savagery and danger incarnated in the image of the WOLF, relationship with death (as dead or death-propagators); Meiser (2002).

3. Selected texts: Apollo (Homeric Hymn *h. Ap.*, Greek); Tištriia (*Yt* 8, Avestan); Ekavrātya (*AVŚ* 15, Vedic).

### 4. Dragon-slaying myth and *Chaoskampf* (*h. Ap.* & *Yt* 8):

- Apollo defeats Python & Telpousa, Tištriia defeats Apaoša and the Pairikā (the shooting stars/witches).
- Violent imposition of order over chaos & control of waters & prosperity.
- Both serve as agents of the highest divinity (Zeus/Ahura Mazdā: *h. Ap.* 301-356, *Yt* 8.25-29, 50-51).

### 5. Enthronement in *h. Ap.* (10-13, 182-206) and *AVŚ* 15.3:

- Comparing the throne built for the Ekavrātya by the deities and the song-and-dance scene and Apollo's enthronement + song-and-dance scene.
- (*h. Ap.* 189-191): Μοῦσαι [...] ὕμνευσίν ῥα θεῶν δῶρ ἄμβροτα ἧδ' ἀνθρώπων τλημοσύνας "the Muses sing together the immortal gifts of the gods and the sufferings of humans".
  - Iconic representation, Muscianisi (*forthcoming*). Singing as Apollo's *timê* and prerogative.
- Ekavrātya's throne parts: seasons; Bṛhāt, Rathantarā, Yajñāyajñīya, Vāmadevyā (*Sāma*-vedic chanting families); *ḥc-* & *yājus-*; *vēda* & *brāhman*; *sāma-* & *udgītha-*.
  - Catalogue of elements symbolizing the whole poetic canon.
- Both texts highlight the deities' sphere (poetic technique and composition) according to the development of the canon.

+ Yet another etymology for Delphinios? *AVŚ* 13.1.4 *rūho ruroha rōhita ā ruroha gārbho jānīnām janūṣām upāstham* "Elevated, Rohita scaled, (he), the uterus of women, has scaled the womb of births".

References: Dore, M. (2015) "The Ekavrātya, Indra and the Sun", in Pontillo, Dore, Bignami & Mucciarelli (eds.) *The Volatile World of Sovereignty. The Vrātya Problem and Kingship in South Asia*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 33-64; Janda, M. (2024) "The night sky of the Indo-Europeans" in Larsson, Olander & Jørgensen (eds.) *Indo-European Interfaces: Integrating Linguistics, Mythology and Archaeology*, Stockholm University Press, Stockholm; Meillet, A. (1925) *La méthode comparative en linguistique historique*, Institutet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Oslo; Meiser, G. (2002) "Indogermanische Jugendbünde oder: Probleme bei der Rekonstruktion Sozialer Strukturen" in G. Meiser & R. P. Das (eds.) *Geregeltes Ungestüm. Bruderschaften und Jugendbünde bei indogermanischen Völkern*, Hempen Verlag, Bremen, 1-10; Muscianisi, D. (forthcoming) "Language Use and Iconicity in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo (182-206): Meter and Poetics, Orality and Storytelling" *AION Linguistica* 13, 15pp.; Panaino, A. (1990 & 1995) *Tistrya. The Avestan Hymn to Sirius*, Serie Orientale Roma 68 (2 vols.); Watkins, C. (1995) *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

### 6. A stellar performance:

- Apollo: ἀστέρι εἰδόμενος (441) "in the form of a star"; ἀνέρι εἰδόμενος αἰζηῷ τε κρατερῷ τε πρωθήβη (449-450) "in the form of a vigorous and strong man in the first youth"
- Tištriia (*Yt* 8.13): *tištriio raēuuō xvarənaηuhō kəhrpəm raēθbaiieiti raoxšnušuuə vazəmnō narš kəhrpa paηca.dasaηhō xšaētahe spiti.dōiθrahe bərazatō auui.amahe amauuatō hunairiiāηcō* "Tištriia, the brilliant, the splendid, mixes his body driving through the lights with the body of a fifteen year old man, radiant, with white eyes, tall, powerful, vigorous and dexterous".
- Ekavrātya (*AVŚ* 15.1.1-2): *vrātya āsīd īyamāna evā sā prajāpatiṃ sām airayat | sā prajāpatiḥ suvārṇam ātmānnapaśyat tāt prājanayat* "There was a wandering vrātya, he stirred up Prajāpati. He, Prajāpati, saw brightness (not gold!) within himself, and he begot that."

- The star Sirius has its heliacal rising together with sunrise coinciding with the hottest months of the summer - (meteor showers), Panaino (1990 & 1995).
- Apollinean oracular practice was oriented around the rise and descent of Delphinus, Lyra and Cygnus (Apollo's visit to the Hyperboreans).



Delphinus, Cygnus & Lyra, winter solstice, Delphi

(<https://stellarium-web.org/>)



Sunrise, Sirius and Orion in Iran on August 1st