

Indo-European Mythology and Poetics

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Indo-European
Mythology and Poetics

Heaven and Earth

[GODS and MEN] = [INTELLIGENT ANIMATED B.S.]

(also [IMMORTAL and MORTAL], etc.)

- Greek: *ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε*
“of men and gods”
- Latin: *deum hominumque*
“of gods and men”
- Vedic: *amṛtam mārtiyaṃ ca*
“the immortal and the mortal”
- Avestan: *daēvāišcā mašyāišcā*
“to gods and mortals”
- Old Norse: *goðanna ok manna*
“of gods and men”

Gods and Men: Transferred Epithets

From [CELESTIAL (**deiu-ó-*) – GOD] to [GOD (**deiu-ó-*)]

Ved. *devá-* ‘god’

Lat. *deus* ‘god’, *dīvus* ‘id.’

Old Norse *tívar* ‘gods’

From [EARTHLY (**d^hǵ^hm̥-n-*) – MAN] to [MAN (**d^hǵ^hm̥-n-*)]

Lat *homo, hominis* ‘man’(**hemo*)

PGerm. **guman-* ‘man’

(ON *gumi*, OE *guma*, Germ. *Bräuti-gam*)

Old Lithuanian *žmuõ* ‘id.’

Gods and Men: Poetics and the Lexicon

- Gaulish *°gdonio-* ‘human’ is attested in an inscription
<TEVOXTONION> /*dēwo-gdonio-*/ ‘of **gods** and **men**’
- Phrygian formula *με δεως κε ζεμελος κε* understood as
‘among **gods** and **men**’
- If we compare Vedic *kṣámyasya jánmanas ... divyásya*
‘of the **earthly** race and of the **heavenly**.’
- We may reconstruct an IE formula [**CELESTIALS** (**d̥i̯éu-*) and **EARTHINGS** (**dʰǵʰm-*)], a variant of our merism [GODS and MEN] that has been blended with another merism:



Himmel un Ääd “Heaven and Earth”



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- Typical dish of Cologne (Germany, where I lived during my PhD)
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- Ingredients: black pudding (*Blutwurst*), fried onions (*geröstete Zwiebeln*), and mashed potato (*Kartoffelpüree*) with apple sauce (*Apfelmus*).
- Why *Himmel un Ääd* ?

Himmel un Ääd “Heaven and Earth”

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- Ingredients: black pudding (*Blutwurst*), fried onions (*geröstete Zwiebeln*), and mashed potato (*Kartoffelpüree*) with apple sauce (*Apfelmus*).
- Why *Himmel un Ääd*? (Unverified) etymology:
Ingredients: potatoes (Dialectal German *Erd-apfel* “Earth-Apple”) and apples (which grow up on trees, nearer to [HEAVEN])

[HEAVEN and EARTH] = [WORLD] (> Himmel un Ääd)

- Hittite merism (Sumerian ideograms) AN KI “heaven (and) earth”

CTH 382.1: ^d₁₀ EN AN KI LUGAL DINGIR^{MEŠ} *ḫalziyawen*
“We have invoked the Storm-God, the lord of **Heaven**
and Earth, the king of the gods”

- Hittite merism (cuneiform) *nepiš daganzipaš* “Heaven (and) Earth”

CTH 345.I.2.90: *nu=šši nepi[š d]aganzipašš=a* ¹*kattan* ¹*arkušk[an]zi*
“**Heaven and Earth** answered her”

[HEAVEN and EARTH] = [WORLD] (> Himmel un Ääd)

- Vedic merism *dyaú- pṛthivī-* “sky (and) earth”

RV 8.40.4d *iyám dyaúḥ pṛthivī mahī*
“this sky, the great earth”

- Vedic formulaic dual compound *dyāvā-kṣāmā* “heaven and earth”
Dvandva compound (*Bosnia-Herzegovina*)

RV 1.121.11b *dyāvākṣāmā madatām indra kárman*
“Heaven and Earth cheered you on at this deed, Indra”

[HEAVEN and EARTH] = [WORLD] (> Himmel un Ääd)

- Avestan merism *zəm- nabās-* “earth and heaven”

Y. 44.4: *kasnā dərətā zəmcā adē nabāscā
avapastōiš*

”Who holds the earth below and the heavens from falling?”

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- Old Persian merism compound *būmi- asmān-* “earth (and) heaven”

DNa 1 (= DSe 1): *hya imām būmim adā,
hya avam asmānam adā*
”who created this earth,
who created that sky”

[EARTH and HEAVEN ABOVE] = [WORLD]

- Homeric Greek formula Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε

“Earth and wide Heaven above”

Hes. *Th.* 702: [...] ὡς εἰ Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθε / πίλνατο [...]

“as if Earth and wide Heaven above had clashed”

HApoll. 335: κέκλυτε νῦν μευ, Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρύς ὑπερθεν

“listen to me now, Earth and wide Heaven above”

[EARTH and HEAVEN ABOVE] = [WORLD]

- Common Germanic formula **erþ/wō(n)-* and *upp-hemin/la-*
“earth and heaven above”

Vm. 20⁴⁻⁵:

hvaðan iorð um kom eða uphiminn

“from where came earth or heaven above”

Wessobrunner 2:

dat ero niuwas noh ufhimil,

“then there was neither earth nor heaven above”

[EARTH and HEAVEN ABOVE] = [WORLD]

- Homeric Greek formula: Γαῖα καὶ Οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ὑπερθε
“Earth and wide Heaven above”
- Germanic formula: **erþ/wō(n)-* and *upp-hemin/la-*
“earth and heaven above”
- We reconstruct merism [EARTH and HEAVEN ABOVE]

[EARTH and HEAVEN ABOVE] = [WORLD]

- [HEAVEN and EARTH] as a merism for [WORLD] is probably universal
No origin in Indo-European Brauhäuser for *Himmel un Ääd* ☹
- [HEAVEN] and [EARTH] are the two [WORLD-HALVES]
- How are they similar and how do they differ from each other?

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

Brainstorm!

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER]

Heaven is Father: formulaics

- Latin *Iūpiter* < **Iou-pater*
 - Homeric Greek Ζεῦ πάτερ “Father Zeus”
 - Vedic Sankrit *Dyaus pitā* “Father Heaven”
- Proto-Indo-European **d̥i̯éu̯- ph₂tér-* “Father Heaven”

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- Vedic Sanskrit *Dyaus pitā* “Father Heaven”
- Luwian *Tatiš Tiwaz* “Father Tiwaz”
- Hittite *Attaš Šiuš* “Father Šiuš”

Proto-Indo-European [FATHER – HEAVEN (**d̥i̯éu-*)]

Heaven is Father: other Sky-gods

- Scythian *Papaios* ‘the Fatherly (god)’ (= Sky)
- Old Russian *Stri-bogŭ* ‘Sky-god’ (*‘Father-god’?)
(*bogŭ* ‘god’, *stri*^o < **ptr-* ?)
- Latvian *Dievs debess tēvs*
“*Dievs*, the father of heaven”
(*Dievs* : **d̥i̯e̯u-* ‘sky’)]

Poetics and patriarchy

- Zeus, Iuppiter, Óðinn are called “father of gods and men”.
- However, Zeus and Odin are not the first of the gods: e.g. Odin is born from his father Borr and mother Bestla, and has a grandfather Búri.
- Also, in Norse mythology there are two families of gods, Æsir and Vanir, and they are not related to each other.
- Then, what does the title “father of all” and “father of men and gods” mean?

Poetics and patriarchy

- [FATHER] in IE formulas [FATHER – of GODS and MEN] or [FATHER – of ALL] stands for [HEAD of the HOUSEHOLD, MASTER].
- In patriarchal societies (= all early IE societies) the oldest male member of a clan (large family) was its head as well.
- Ancient Rome: the *pater familias* “father of the family” was the highest authority of a clan (could even kill other members lawfully).
- Not necessarily real father of other members: uncle or grandfather.

Poetics and patriarchy

- Odin also called *Sig-faðir* ‘father of victory’, *galdrs faðir* “father of magic”
- Priests in Gaul were called *gutwater* ‘father of prayer”
- Vedic gods Soma, Indra and Visnu called *pitá matīnám* “father of thoughts/prayers” and *janitārā matīnám* “begetter of thoughts/prayers”

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- **In all these expressions [FATHER] means [MASTER], not [BIOLOGICAL FATHER].**

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- In all these expressions [FATHER] means [MASTER], not [BIOLOGICAL FATHER].
- Only makes sense if we reconstruct a patriarchal and clan-based IE society.
- **Comparative poetics and mythology may help in the reconstruction of prehistoric social structures and gender relations.**

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER] and [MOTHER]

Earth is Mother: Anatolian

- Hittite: the Earth is *annas* ‘mother’

KUB 43.30 iii 5

annas daganzipas
“mother Earth-spirit”

In merism:

KBo 11.32.31

annas daganzipas [...] *nebisas* ^d*U-as*
“mother Earth-spirit (and) Storm-God of
Heaven”

Earth is Mother: Indic

- Vedic: the Earth is *mātrī-* (Eng *mother* Germ *Mutter* Lat *mater*)

RV 5.43.15d: *mā no mātā pṛthivī durmataú dhāt*
“Let Mother Earth not set us in disfavor.”

In merism:
RV 1.89.4b: *tán mātā pṛthivī tát pitá diyauḥ*
“At this (let) Mother Earth, at this (let)
Father Heaven come”

Earth is Mother: Greek

- Greek: the Earth is μήτηρ of all
(: Ved *mātrī*- Eng *mother* Germ *Mutter* Lat *mater*)

Hesiod *Works and Days* 562–3:

ἰσοῦσθαι νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμέρας, εἰς ὃ κεν αὖτις
γῆ πάντων μήτηρ καρπὸν σύμμικτον ἐνείκη.

“(When) days finally equal the nights in duration,
when again will **Earth the mother of all** produce all
her various first fruits.”

Earth is Mother: Germanic

- Germanic: ancient *Angli* worshipped *Terra Mater* already in 1st c. AD

Tacitus *Germania* 40

nec quicquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune Nerthum, id est Terram matrem, colunt eamque intervenire rebus hominum, invehì populis arbitrantur.

“(Describing the *Angli* and other Germanic tribes:) none of these tribes have any noteworthy feature, except **their common worship of Nerthus, who is Mother-Earth**, and their belief that she interposes in human affairs, and visits the nations in her car.”

Earth is Mother: Germanic

- Old English charms: Christianized prayers to obtain fruitful land invoking the *eorþan modor* “Mother of Earth”

Charm 8.51ff:

*Erce, Erce, Erce, eorþan modor,
geunne þe se alwalda, ece drihten,
æcera wexendra and wridendra, [...]*

Erce, Erce, Erce, **mother of earth,**
may the omnipotent, **eternal Lord**
grant you fields growing and thriving [...]

Earth is Mother: Germanic

- Old English charms: Christianized prayers to obtain fruitful land invoking the *folde fira modor* “Earth, mother of men”

Charm 8.69ff: *Hal wes þu, folde, fira modor!*
 Beo þu growende on godes fæþme,
 fodre gefylled firum to nytte.

“Hail, Earth, mother of men!
Be thou fertile in God's embrace,
filled with fodder for men's benefit.”

Earth is Mother: Germanic

Old English Christianized prayers to obtain fruitful land invoking

- the *eorpan modor* “Mother of Earth”
- and the *folde fira modor* “Earth, mother of men”

Reflexes of Ancient Germanic prayers?

Medieval Anglo-Saxons descendants of Tacitus’ ancient *Angli* ?

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER] and [MOTHER]

[BULL] and [COW]

[GREAT]

Heaven is great

- Vedic formula *máh- dyáv-/div-* ‘great sky’ (: PIE **meǵh*₂- **diéu*-/*diu*-)

RV 7.36.3cd: *mahó diváh sádane jáyamāno*
 ácikradad vṛṣabháh sásmin údhan

“Being born in the seat of **great heaven**, the bull has roared in the self-same udder.”

RV 3.54.2a: *máhi mahé divé arcā pṛthivyaí*

“I will recite a great (hymn) to **great Heaven** and to Earth.”

Heaven is great

- Greek μέγας (PIE **meǵh₂*-) epithet of Ζεύς, gen. sg. Διός (PIE **diéu-*/*diu-*)

Il. 2.134: ἐννέα δὴ βεβάασι Διὸς μεγάλου ἐνιαυτοί

“And now nine years of great Zeus have gone by”

- *Il.* 5.907: αἶ δ' αὖτις πρὸς δῶμα Διὸς μέγαλοιο νέοντο

”Meanwhile, the two went back again to the house of great Zeus”

- *Il.* 2.412: Ζεῦ κύδιστε μέγιστε κελαινεφές αἰθέρι ναίων

“O Zeus, exalted, greatest, sky-dwelling in the dark mist”

Heaven is great

- Vedic formula *máh- dyáv-/div-* ‘great sky’ (: PIE **méǵh₂- *diéu-/diu-*)
- Greek μέγας (PIE **meǵh₂-*) formulaic epithet of Ζεύς (PIE **diéu-/diu-*)
- We reconstruct inherited formula **meǵh₂- *diéu-/diu-* “great sky”
- It may sound banal, but it’s not: [GREAT] is not a usual epithet for gods in Vedic or Greek.

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER] and [MOTHER]

[BULL] and [COW]:

[GREAT] vs. [BROAD]

Earth is broad

- Greek εὐρεία χθών “broad earth”

Il. 4.182: ὥς ποτέ τις ἔρει: τότε μοι χάνοι εὐρεία χθών

“So shall some man speak in aftertime; in that day let **the wide earth** open under me”

- Vedic *urvī- kṣā-* “broad earth”

RV 6.17.7a *paprátha kṣām máhi dáṃso ví urvīm*

“You filled the **earth broad** and wide—great is your wondrous skill.”

Earth is **broad** (**h₁urHu-? *u̯(e)rh₁u-?*)

- Greek εὐρεία χθών “broad earth”

- Vedic *urní- kṣá-* “broad earth”

- | Greek | | Vedic | PIE |
|----------------|---|----------------------|--|
| εὐρεία ‘broad’ | : | <i>urní-</i> ‘broad’ | (<i>*h₁urHu-? *u̯(e)rh₁u-?</i>) |
| χθών ‘earth’ | : | <i>kṣá-</i> ‘earth’ | (<i>*d^héǵ^hōm/d^hǵ^hṃ-</i>) |

- PIE formula [BROAD (**h₁urHu-? *u̯(e)rh₁u-?*) – EARTH (**d^héǵ^hōm/d^hǵ^hṃ-*)]

Europe is broad (**h₁urHu-? *u̯(e)rh₁u-?*)

- English *Europe*, German *Europa* loanwords from Greek Εὐρώπη
- Εὐρώπη was originally used as name for **Central and Northern Greece**
- as **opposed** to the foreign land **Asia**, Ἀσία, which was originally a name for **Western Anatolia** (today's western Turkey)

Europe is broad (**h₁urHu-?* **u̇(e)_orh₁u-?*)

- Εὐρώπη possibly compound of εὐρύ- ‘broad’, ὠπή ‘aspect’, meant originally ‘she who has a broad aspect’.
- Εὐρώπη is also the name of a mythological woman loved by Zeus (PIE**d̥ié-/d̥iu-* ‘sky, heaven’)
- Also possible: PIE **u̇rh₁u-h₃k^w-ó-* or **u̇erh₁u-h₃k^w-ó-* ‘wide-eyed’
See Birgit Olsen JIES 2021 “Father Sky and the Wide-Eyed Cow”

Earth is broad (**p_lth₂u_ih₂-*): Vedic, Avestan, Greek

- Vedic formula *kṣá-* *pṛthiví-* “broad earth”
- Vedic *Pṛthiví-/Pṛthiví-* “the Broad one” usual name of Earth-goddess.
- Avestan formula *zqm pərəθβīm* “broad earth” (Y. 10.4 = Yt. 13.9)
- Greek nymph *Πλάτα(Ϝ)ια* loved by Zeus, protectress of city of Plataiai.

Greek **Pláta_uia* < PIE **p_lth₂u_ih₂-* > Vedic *pṛthiví-*, Avst *pərəθβī-*

‘broad’

Earth is broad ($*p_lth_2-$): Germanic

- Some Germanic words for ‘earth, land’

Old Norse *fold*, Old English *folde*, Old Saxon *folda*

are the reflexes of Proto-Germanic $*fuldō-$ ‘earth, land’ (cf. Germ *feld*)

- Germanic $*fuldō-$ ‘earth, land’ reflex of PIE $*p_lth_2éh_2-$ ‘broad’

Earth is broad (**p_lth₂-*): Germanic

- Germanic **fuldō-* ‘earth, land’ reflex of PIE **p_lth₂éh₂-* ‘broad’
- PIE **p_lth₂éh₂-* ‘broad’ adjective from the same root **p_lth₂-* as Vedic *pṛthivī-*, Avest *pərəθβī-* and Greek Πλάταια

**p_lth₂-éh₂-* ‘broad’

Old Norse *fold* ‘earth’

Old English *folde* ‘earth’

Old Saxon *folda* ‘earth’

:

**p_lth₂-u_ih₂-* ‘broad’

Vedic *pṛthivī-* ‘broad (earth)’

Avest *pərəθβī-* ‘broad (earth)’

Greek Πλάταια ‘broad (Earth)’

Earth is broad ($*p_lth_2-$): Germanic

- From an Indo-European formula [BROAD ($*p_lth_2-$) – EARTH]
(Vedic $kṣā-$ $prthivī-$)
- to a Germanic transferred epithet [EARTH ($*p_lth_2-éh_2-$)]
(Old Norse *fold*)

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER] and [MOTHER]

[BULL] and [COW]:

[GREAT] and [BROAD]

[DARK]

Earth is Dark: formulaics

- Hittite formula *dankui tekan* ‘dark earth’

KUB 33.8 iii 6 (CTH 324.7)

da-an-ku-wa-ya-[┘]ša-at[┘] ták-na-aš KASKAL-an pa-id-[┘]du[┘]

“Sie sollen den Weg der dunklen Erde gehen.”

KUB 17.10 ii 34

kat-ta da-an-ku-i te-e-kán za-aḫ-ḫi-iš-k[e-e]z-[┘]zi[┘]

“Unten schlä[g]t er auf die dunkle Erde.”

Earth is Dark: formulaics

- Homeric Greek formula γαῖα μέλαινα ‘black earth’

Il. 2.698–9: τῶν αὖ Πρωτεσίλαος ἀρήϊος ἡγεμόνευε
ζωὸς ἐών: τότε δ' ἤδη ἔχεν κάτα γαῖα μέλαινα.

“of these in turn fighting Protesilaos was leader
while he lived; but now **the black earth** held him down”

Hes. Th. 68–9: αἶ τότ' ἴσαν πρὸς Ὀλυμπον, ἀγαλλόμεναι ὀπί καλῆ,
ἀμβροσίῃ μολπῆ: περὶ δ' ἴαχε γαῖα μέλαινα

“As they went to Olympus, they rejoiced in their beautiful
voices and ambrosial melody. **The dark earth** echoed”

Earth is Dark: formulaics

Old Irish formula *domun donn* ‘brown earth’

8–10: *Derccain dubai a ssīthchailtib,*
 slatta etha imm ithgortu
 ōs íath domuin duinn

“Dark acorns in peaceful woods, oat stubble around grain fields all over **the brown world.**”

Earth is Dark: formulaics

- Hittite formula *dankui tekan* ‘dark earth’
- Homeric Greek formula γαῖα μέλαινα ‘black earth’
- Old Irish formula *domun donn* ‘brown earth’
- We may reconstruct an Indo-European noun+epithet formula (also Balto-Slavic)

[DARK – EARTH]

- But why is the Earth dark? Because [HEAVEN] is [BRIGHT]!

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

[FATHER] and [MOTHER]

[BULL] and [COW]:

[GREAT] and [BROAD]

[BRIGHT] vs. [DARK]

Heaven vs. Earth: similarities and differences

[HEAVEN] vs. [EARTH]

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[BRIGHT] vs. [DARK]

[IMMORTALITY] vs. [DEATH]