

TEIL 2

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MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY

YAMA'S/YIMA'S CHOICE
AND THE PRIMORDIAL INCEST

(Mythologica Indo-Iranica, I)

In memory of Claudio Damilano

[...] wenn der Tod ein Traum ist, [ist] auch das Leben bloß ein Traum [...].
Zwischen den Träumen aber führen Brücken hin und wider, und wer könnte
wirklich sagen, was Tod und was Leben sei oder wo der Raum und die Zeit
zwischen beiden beginnen und wo sie enden!

Alexander Lernet-Holenia, *Der Baron Bagge*, Frankfurt am
Main 1978, 96-97.

*Was auf ein natürliches Leben beschränkt ist, vermag durch sich selbst nicht
über sein unmittelbares Dasein hinauszugehen; aber es wird durch ein
anderes darüber hinausgetrieben, und dies Hinausgerissenwerden ist sein
Tod.*

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phänomenologie des
Geistes*, hrsg. von Georg Lasson, Leipzig 1907 (Philoso-
phische Bibliothek 114), 55.

*Ainsi la mort joue à cache-cache avec la conscience : où je suis, la mort n'est
pas ; et quand la mort est là, c'est moi qui n'y suis plus. Tant que je suis, la
mort est à venir ; et quand la mort advient, ici et maintenant, il n'y a plus
personne. De deux choses l'une : Conscience, ou présence mortelle ! Mort et
conscience, elles se chassent et s'excluent réciproquement, comme par l'effet
d'un commutateur ... Impossible de cumuler ces contradictoires !*

Vladimir Jankélévitch, *La mort*, Paris 1966, ²1977, 34.

0. INTRODUCTION

The origin of death, and in particular the reasons behind the primordial human choice in front of it, represent a deep and unresolved problem in the framework of the Indo-Iranian religious culture. Both Vedic Yama and Avestan Yima must take some radical and definitive decisions that determine their own destiny and that of future humanity as well. Thus, the one chose *mṛtyú-* “death” (according to *Ṛgveda* 10, 13, 4), the latter refused the meeting with the *daēnā-* (according to *Widēwdād* 2, 1-4). These different and apparently unrelated events will result to be independent and later developments based on a common material, which was originally connected with the earlier mythological *tópos* that concerns primordial incest. The primordial man is accompanied by a female-double (Yamī), who is apparently absent in Avesta but again present in the Pahlavi framework. This presence cannot be a later addition but goes back to a common background. The appearance of these pairs of twins does not simply justify the mythic beginning of human reproduction but this motif is strictly related to the fundamental meaning of death and afterlife in human history. The following chapters will try to open a new path in the investigation of these items. Here, I have collected most of the material I have discussed during two semesters held at the University of Bologna in the Academic Years 2008 and 2009, and in the framework of three seminars, one with Jean KELLENS and Andrea PIRAS (at Ravenna), the other two with Velizar SADOVSKI (at Vienna [ÖAW] and Bologna).

This book is dedicated to a friend of mine who played for many years a desperate chessgame with Yama, facing a devastating disease, before to discontinue unacceptable treatments, thus choosing not for *mṛtyúm*, but for a better quality of his limited life-time, waiting, with incredible force, for the due moment in which he should abandon his dimension of “grum” in order to transform himself – as he said – “into a butterfly”. I and my class had the privilege to share in many occasions his unresting and stimulating presence, although nobody (with few exceptions) might imagine that the subject of the course and of our discussions was not for him a simple scholarly investigation.

1. YAMA IN *ṚGVEDA* 10, 13, 4

Ṛgveda 10, 13 (= 839) is a hymn dedicated to the *havirdhānaḥ* “oblations-bearers”, *i.e.*, two¹ small charts used during the sacrifice to carry the Soma plant, occurring in a series of *Yama-Lieder* (*ṚV.* 10, 10–19).² This brief text (5 *jagatī* stanzas) presents us with a passage (stanza 4) shortly referring to the myth of Yama. It deserves to be carefully investigated, first in its very complex structure and meaning, then, in the light of the comparative framework of the Indo-Iranian religious history.³ Here Yama actually seems — but we still need to understand the text properly — to have “chosen” (*avṛṇīta* 3rd person singular middle of the indicative imperfect from the root *vṛ-* [IX cl.]) for “death” (*mṛtyúm*) for himself and to have “renounced” (*návṛṇīta*) immortality (*amṛtam*) for (in what sense exactly it is still to be decided) his own descendants.

Then, after the mention of what apparently could be interpreted as a sacrifice/worship of Bṛhaspati by gods (who are not explicitly named), the last verse-line declares that Yama had left/abandoned/perpetuated/jutted out his (own) dear body, although the actual meaning of the verb *prá + ric-* (*práṛirecīt*, pluperfect)⁴ is debated, and we must analyse it carefully.

Ṛgveda 10, 13, 4:⁵

- a) *devébhyaḥ kám avṛṇīta mṛtyúm*
- b) *prajāyai kám amṛtam návṛṇīta /*
- c) *bṛhaspátim yajñám akṛṇvata íṣim*
- d) *priyám yamás tanuvām práṛirecīt //*

¹ These two chariots are considered to be twins, and it is also for this reason that Yama is mentioned here, as demonstrated by MALAMOUD (2002: 18-19).

² Cf. CALAND – HENRI 1906, I: 80-92. See also GRASSMANN 1877: 465 and OLDENBERG 1912–1913: 126.

³ Ms. Annalisa BARBAGLIA (State University of Milan) has attracted my attention on this stanza. She presented an interesting dissertation entitled “*La radice indo-iranica var: un’analisi semantico-testuale*” (April 2005) under the supervision of Prof. G. BOCCALI and me.

⁴ GRASSMANN 1996: 1165.

⁵ Cf. ed. AUFRECHT 1877, II: 300.

We may just start with a provisory translation considering some variants, mostly deriving from the alternative solutions of three main problems:

- (1) the function to be attributed to the two datives (*devébhyaḥ kām / prajāyai kām*) appearing in *pāda* a and b, respectively;
- (2) the definition of the proper meaning of *prá + ric-* in *pāda* d;
- (3) the meaning of the worship/sacrifice of Bṛhaspati in *pāda* c.

Possible translations:

- a. “For (the sake of [?]) the gods (Yama?) verily chose for death (and)”
- b. (1) “for (his) descendants, indeed he did not choose for immortality”
[or (2) “in order to (have) a descendance, he did not choose for immortality;”
or (3) “(in favour of) his descendants, he did not choose for immortality”].
- c. “[The] gods made the wise Bṛhaspati (himself) into (their own) worship/sacrifice,”
- d. (1) “Yama had prolonged/spread/perpetuated his (own) dear⁶ body.”
[or (2) “Yama had passed on/left/abandoned/surrendered his (own) dear body (i.e., “he died”).
or (3) “Yama had left (i.e. died) his (own) dear body (in order to perpetuate it).
or (4) “Yama had jugged out his (own) dear body (in order to perpetuate it [but, perhaps with a covered sexual nuance])”].

The stanza is attested also in *Atharvaveda*, 18, 3, 41, as follows:⁷

devébhyaḥ kām avṛṇīta mṛtyúm
prajāyai kīm amṛtaṁ nāvṛṇīta
bṛhaspátir yajñám atanuta ṛṣiḥ
priyám yamás tanuvàm ārireca // [41].

⁶ With regard to the affective or emotional implications connected with Ved. *priyá-*, “dear”, but also “own”, see the specific discussion offered by SCHELLER 1959: 4 and *passim*.

⁷ See WHITNEY (– LANMAN) 1905: 860: “For the Gods he chose death; for his progeny did he not choose immortality (*amṛta*)? Brihaspati [as] seer extended the sacrifice; Yama left (*ā-ric*) his dear self (?)”, but in note WHITNEY adds: “or ‘the dear body (*tanú*)’.” Cf. also OLDENBERG 1912–1913: 137–138.

“For the (sake of the) gods he chose for death,
 why⁸ for his progeny did he not choose for immortality?
 Bṛhaspati as seer extended the sacrifice,
 Yama has left/abandoned (his) (own) dear body”.

Although the *Atharvaveda* version is surely later and contains some corruptions, it has been taken into consideration particularly by LUDWIG⁹ and SCHERMAN.¹⁰ We will see that the manifest changes introduced there doubtless open a different perspective in the analysis of the passage, although it is difficult to accept all the results about their origin suggested by these scholars. For instance, LUDWIG¹¹ thought that the first verse-line concerned Agni, who actually gave immortality to the gods, and not Yama. Furthermore, LUDWIG raised a number of questions about the other verse-lines: firstly, he wondered whose was the “body” mentioned there, then translating: “Yama hat [uns] das liebe selbst gerettet”,¹² but without excluding the following interpretation: ‘Yama hat seinen leib preisgegeben, und hat uns den weg ins jenseits gefunden, (also) er hätte nicht nötig gehabt zu sterben; aber um uns unsertwillen ist er über die hohen abhängen geschritten, und hat für vile den pfad erspäht’. Then, LUDWIG considered the Ṛgvedic *pāda* to be incomprehensible: *bṛhaspátim yajñám akṛṇvata śṣim* in the light of *bṛhaspátir yajñám atanuta śṣih* of the *Atharvaveda* version. Thus, he suggested that *akṛṇvata* could be an explanation of *atanuta*, but derived via **akṛṇuta*. In its turn, also the reference to Bṛhaspati would be the fruit of a wrong correction (due to the presence of *śṣih*) instead of *vaivasvatam* (or, perhaps of *vāivasvato*). Then, the original Ṛgvedic text would have been: *vaivasvatam yajñám atanuta śṣih* “the seer extended the

⁸ See INSLEY 1993: 589.

⁹ 1889: 46-47: “Es ist richtig, dasz die postpos. kam mit der zeit in abname komt, anderseits aber ist zu bedenken, dasz kim ein plus an schriftzügen darstellt, aus dessen vernachlässigung kam entstehn konnte. Lesen wir nun der weisung des AV. folgend: *devebhyah kim avṛṇīta mṛtyum, prajāyāi kim amṛtam nāvṛṇīta* | so ist der sinn unzweifelhaft berichtigt: ‘hat er etwa für die götter den tod gewält? warum hat er für die geschöpfe nicht die unsterblichkeit gewält?’” Please, note that in all such citations from earlier German works, the original orthography has been respected.

¹⁰ 1892: 146. SCHERMAN substantially followed the interpretation of the passage proposed by LUDWIG.

¹¹ 1889: 47.

¹² *Ibidem*. See also LUDWIG 1876, II: 415, where he translated “Yama hat den lieben leib [uns] ge-rettet”.

sacrifice as an offering belonging to [Yama] Vaivasvata [i.e. “for the dead”]. Although these remarks can appear very provocative and, maybe, enlightening, I doubt, as already OLDENBERG did¹³ rejecting other similar emendations suggested by WEBER¹⁴ and FOY,¹⁵ that we can actually follow LUDWIG’s bold solutions.¹⁶ Presently we must rely on the traditional text of *R̥gveda* 10, 13, 4, without, however, excluding these critical remarks from the panorama of our considerations. The parallel passage of the *Atharvaveda* deserves attention, because its modifications are significant: for instance, the sentence *bṛhaspátir yajñám atanuta ř̥ṣiḥ* cannot be taken aside not only from the verse-line *bṛhaspátim yajñám akṛṇvata ř̥ṣim*, but also from *R̥V.* 10, 90, 6a *yát puruṣena haviṣā devā yajñám átanvata* “when the gods stretched the sacrifice with Puruṣa as oblatory substance”. In this case, the syntagm *yajñám kṛ-* finds a fitting correspondence in *yajñám tan-*, where not only the sacrifice is extended as a sort of embroidery, as RENOU¹⁷ explained, but Puruṣa is considered as the oblatory matter of the sacrifice itself. Also the choice of a perfect (*árireca*) without any preverb, instead of a pluperfect (*práirecīt*), is in itself significant. It seems to be a simplistic attempt of

¹³ 1912–1913: 137–138.

¹⁴ WEBER (1896: 268) suggested that *kám* should be interpreted as having the meaning of *kím*.

¹⁵ FOY (1897: 32) proposed to read *kím* instead of *kám* in *pāda* b; this was his translation of the whole passage followed by a short interpretation of it: “Hat er etwa für die Götter den Tod gewählt? Warum (*kim* mit AV. zu lesen!) hat er für die Menschheit die Unsterblichkeit nicht gewählt? Den Bṛhaspati (d. i. Agni als Opferfeuer) setzen sie (die Götter) sich als Opfer ein, den Ř̥ṣi; seinen lieben Leib gab Yama hin” (gleichlautend bis auf *Pāda* c AV XVIII 3, 41). Der Sinn scheint mir, mit einem Vorwurfe für Yama, der zu sein: Während die Götter sich durch Einsetzung des Opfers Unsterblichkeit sichern, giebt Yama seinen Leib hin und bestimmt so für die Menschen allein den Tod (vgl. auch TS. II 6, 6, 4, 5).

¹⁶ See also SCHERMAN 1892: 146–149.

¹⁷ RENOU 1956b: 98, 248, n. 5. We must also consider that, according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (Mādhyandina), 10, 6, 5, 1–8 (= *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1, 2), Mṛtyu “Death” assumes some characters, which can be compared with those proper of Puruṣa. Mṛtyu, as a primordial being, desired to have an *atman-* to be sacrificed. Thus, by means of an act of inflation (*aśvat*) of his body, he generated another himself in the shape of a horse (*aśva-*), which, after one year, he offered in sacrifice (*medhya-*) to himself. Thus, the *aśvamedha-* was founded. The text openly states that it is for this reason that the victim is offered to Prajāpati, although it belongs to all the gods. See EGGELING 1885: 402–404; DUMONT 1927: 5–7; KOPPERS 1936: 320–340; GROTTANELLI 1980: 222–223; SWENNEN 2004: 198–218.

clarification, but it possibly shows that in later times the use of the pluperfect was not understood and that the proper meaning of *prá + ric-* presented some difficulties, as we will see again in the framework of the present analysis.

In any case, also in his translation of the *Rigveda* as well as in the following *Commentar* (both very rarely quoted in modern literature), LUDWIG assumed a very original point of view. His translation runs as follows:¹⁸

«für die götter wies er [wiest ihr?] den tod zurück, für das geborene wies er [wiest ihr?] unsterblichkeit zurück, | Bṛhaspati machten beim opfer sie sich zum řši; Yama hat den lieben leib [uns] gerettet».

In his *Commentar*,¹⁹ LUDWIG gave two different explanations of this stanza: according to the first solution, he assumed that it was Bṛhaspati to be interpreted as the subject also of the first *pāda* and not Yama, while the omission of the negation before the second *zurück* is based on the aprioristic assumption that *avṛṇīta* corresponded to *avārayat* (“Dieselbe geht von der voraussetzung aus, dasz avṛṇīta = avārayat”). Then, after having stated that the gods are the subject of the verb *akṛṇvata*, LUDWIG suggested:²⁰

«Der sinn ist zufriedenstellend ‘die götter sind absolut frei vom tode, die menschen haben zwar auch hoffnung auf unsterblichkeit, aber nur auf dem wege des todes. Bṛhaspati jedoch hat die sache für die menschen unentschieden gelassen; erst Yama hat dem menschen den weg ins jenseits gefunden (I. 83, 5: Yamasya jātam amṛtam yajâmahe)».

Then, while Bṛhaspati, the *purohita* of the gods, left unclear human destiny, it would have been Yama to open the way of immortality to his progeny. The second (alternative) solution, contrariwise, is a logical inference from the (more prudent) interpretation of *avṛṇīta* with the meaning of *avṛṇot*. In this case, LUDWIG explains the text as follows:

«[...] für die götter hat er (sogar) den tod gewählt [bestimmt; auch diese hat er schlüsslich dem losse der vergänglichkeit anheimfallen lassen]; warum hat er dann für die lebenden geschöpfe nicht unsterblichkeit bestimmt? (disz wäre ja die natürliche logik gewesen, die wir im Rgveda direct ausgesprochen finden: wäre ich der gott, dann wärest du der sterbliche). Die antwort darauf ist: Bṛhaspati hat das opfer ausgedehnt; in diesem liegt die unsterblichkeit der götter; uns hat Yama das selbst gerettet».

¹⁸ LUDWIG 1876, II: 415, hymn n. 788.

¹⁹ 1883: 335.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

Surely, some of these remarks will be considered in the framework of the interpretation of such a passage, although they appear somehow extreme. In any case, LUDWIG's approach to this stanza²¹ was explicitly in opposition to GRASSMANN's one²² whose translation deserves to be quoted:

«Um der Göttern willen wählte Jama den Tod [d. h. um bei den Göttern zu sein], um seiner Nachkommenschaft [d. h. der Menschen] willen wählte er nicht die Unsterblichkeit [d. h. wohl: er wollte nicht auf der Erde unsterblich sein, um im Himmel für seine Nachkommen zu sorgen], den Seher Brihaspati machte er zum Gegenstande seiner Verehrung (?); sein eigenes Leben gab Jama dahin».

It is clear that most of the problems we focused on appeared already in the earliest works of Vedic philology, and the strong differences between LUDWIG and GRASSMANN are only one remarkable example.²³ In the case of GRASSMANN, his translation of *pāda c* is very peculiar, because we do not have any compelling reason for taking *akṛṇvata* as a 3rd singular,²⁴ governed by Yama as understood subject of the sentence, instead of a regular 3rd plural. On the other hand, this possible interpretation was evaluated also by MACDONELL,²⁵ who apropos wrote: “In X. 13⁴ *akṛṇvata* has the appearance of being used for the 3. Sing (= *akṛṇuta*)”.

On the contrary, WEBER²⁶ tried to emend the passage of the *Atharvaveda* using that of the *R̥gveda*, in particular in his interpretation of the *pādas c* and b:

«Erwählet ihr für die Götter den Tod? Warum erwählet ihr nicht das Unsterbliche für die (menschlichen) Geschlechter?» | Den ṛishi Bṛihaspati nahmen sie sich als Opfer, sein liebes Leben gab Yama dahin ||».

WEBER took *avṛṇīta* as 2nd pers. pl. and, as we have already noted, wrongly assumed that *kām* had the same interrogative meaning of *kīm*. He considered meaningless (*sinnlos*) the third *pāda* of the version preserved in

²¹ 1883: 335: “Gr.’s auffassung wäre ser bestechend, aber seine erklärung von pāda c ist evident unmöglich und absurd”.

²² 1877: 466.

²³ Very peculiar is the translation offered by LANGLOIS (1870: 518): “Comme la mort avait été établie pour la race (humaine), elle le fut aussi pour les *Dévas*. Le sage Vrihaspati a été choisi pour être le chef du sacrifice. (Un moment arrive) que son corps est livré à Yama”.

²⁴ In his *R̥gvedic dictionary*, GRASSMANN (1996: 340) registered this verbal form as “Unklar”.

²⁵ 1910: 348, n. 4. Against this explanation see already LUDWIG 1883: 35 (quoted *in extenso* in note 20 above).

²⁶ 1896: 268.

the *Atharvaveda*, and restored the Ṛgvedic passage, also considering *ārireca* older than *ārireca* in the last *pāda*. He thought that the stanza contained a kind of blame against the gods, who did not give immortality to human beings but offered Bṛhaspati in sacrifice for themselves, while Yama had to die in order to become the king of dead.

In his turn, also OLDENBERG dedicated his attention on both parallel passages, the Ṛgvedic and the Atharvavedic one as well: he rejected any emendation based on the later version of the *Atharvaveda*,²⁷ so following WHITNEY but assumed that the subject of verse-lines a and b was an unnamed god (*ein ungenante Weltordner*) or perhaps, but less probably Vivasvant or also *prajā-*,²⁸ who assigned death to the gods and humanity. While the gods would have escaped their destiny by offering Bṛhaspati in sacrifice (“Bṛh. machten sie zum Opfer, den R̥ṣi”),²⁹ humans, represented by Yama, must die. Thus, c would correspond to a, and d to b. Furthermore, he assumed,³⁰ so trying to resolve a problem left open by WEBER,³¹ that the insertion of this stanza in the framework of the hymn dedicated to the two chariots named *Harvidhāna-* should be connected to the role played by one of them, more precisely the southern chariot, in the context of a series of cults concerning the dead.

We must also consider that GELDNER too had a certain prudence concerning the interpretation of this stanza, which he translated as follows:³²

«Den Göttern zuliebe zog (Yama) den Tod vor; der Nachkommenschaft zuliebe zog er nicht die Unsterblichkeit vor. (Die Götter) machten den R̥ṣi Bṛhaspati zu ihrem Opfer. Yama hat seinen lieben Leib fortgepflanzt».

It is worth to quote *in extenso* GELDNER's note:³³

²⁷ See already OLDENBERG 1912: 210-211.

²⁸ OLDENBERG 1912–1913: 138-139.

²⁹ 1912–1913: 138, with reference to the fact that in the Later Vedic period Prajāpati and other beings can be equated to the sacrifice; OLDENBERG noted that also Manu in *ṚV.* 10, 100, 5c was identified with *yajñā-*. See also MACDONALD 1953.

³⁰ 1912–1913: 139-140.

³¹ 1896: 268.

³² GELDNER 1951: III: 141-142: Cf. also GRIFFITH 1973: “He, for God's sake, chose death to be his portion. He chose not, for men's good, a life eternal. They sacrificed Bṛhaspati the R̥ṣi. Yama delivered up his own dear body.” DANDEKAR's translation (1945: 201): “For gods' sake, verily (he) chose death; (he) chose not indeed, in the interest of progeny, a life immortal. The (gods) made Bṛhaspati, the R̥ṣi (himself), sacrificial offering. Yama surrendered his (own) dear body”. Cf. also SKJÆRVØ (2008: 511).

³³ GELDNER 1951, III: 141-142, in the footnotes.

«Die Str. muß in irgend einer Weise in den Zusammenhang des Lieds sich fügen. Oldenberg möchte darin eine Hindeutung auf ein im späteren Verlauf des Somaopfers an den Havirdhāna's vollzogenes beiläufiges Manenopfer sehen. Das liegt doch zu weit ab und würde die Einheit des Lieds zerreißen. Auch scheint mir O[ldenberg]³⁴ den Gedanken der Str. nicht richtig erfaßt zu haben. Nach ihm habe der Weltordner für Götter und Menschen den Tod bestimmt. Die Götter haben sich davon befreit, indem sie einen der Ihren in das Opfer verwandelten, während an den Menschen sich die Bestimmung erfüllt. Eher scheint der altvedische Gedanke ausgesprochen zu sein, daß Nachkommenschaft und Tod ebenso unzertrennliche Dinge sind wie Götterschaft und Unsterblichkeit. Entweder Nachwuchs und Tod wie bei Menschen (vgl. 10, 72, 9) oder Unsterblichkeit und Kinderlosigkeit wie bei den Göttern. Von den Göttern ist aber nur mittelbar die Rede. Zu *avṛṇāta* ist aus *d* beide Male Yama als Subjekt zu denken. Yama hat den Tod vorgezogen und auf die Unsterblichkeit verzichtet und zwar einmal den Göttern zuliebe (a), um nämlich diesen als Mensch opfern zu können, und sodann um der Nachkommenschaft willen (b). Die Götter aber haben durch Bṛhaspati das Opfer eingerichtet und damit zugleich dem Yama die Möglichkeit gegeben, nach dem Tode ein ewiges Leben zu erlangen (c), aber er zog doch die Fortpflanzung der Unsterblichkeit vor (d). *c* korrespondiert also mit *a*. Man könnte aber auch daran denken, ob nicht die Dative *devébhyaḥ kām* und *prajāyai kām* durch die nicht unhäufige Kasusvertauschung im Sinne des Abl. stehen: Den Göttern zog er den Tod vor, der Nachkommenschaft zog er die Unsterblichkeit nicht vor, d. h. er wollte lieber ein Sterblicher als einer der Götter sein, eben um der Nachkommenschaft willen».

An important revision of the passage and its main interpretations has been offered by H.-P. SCHMIDT,³⁵ who translated it as follows:

«Für die Götter wählte er den Tod, für die Nachkommenschaft wählte er nicht die Unsterblichkeit. Sie machten sich Bṛhaspati, den Seher, zum Opfer. Yama ließ seinen lieben Leib zurück».

This is his brief comment to the passage:³⁶

«Nach Oldenberg hat die Str. folgenden Sinn: Ein ungenannter Weltordner hat den Göttern und Menschen den Tod zugewiesen, von dem sich die Götter befreiten, indem sie Bṛhaspati zum Opfer machten, während der Mensch – repräsentiert durch den sterblichen Yama – sterben muß. Deutung des Pāda c, für die er sich auf die in den Brāhmaṇas häufige Identifizierung Prajāpatis oder eines anderen Gottes mit dem Opfer beruft, ist sicher der Alternative Geldners, nach *yajāthāya* in 10, 12, 1c *yāṣṭum* zu ergänzen, vorzuziehen. Für a b aber ist Geldners Deutung erheblich einleuchtender als Oldenbergs, ist es doch wenig wahrscheinlich, daß Vivasvant als Subjekt zu denken ist, der für seine

³⁴ See OLDENBERG 1912–1913: 137–140.

³⁵ 1968: 124.

³⁶ 1968: 124–125.

prajā (= Yama) nicht die Unsterblichkeit wählt, oder daß ein ungenannter Dritter Subjekt ist; Yama, den er auch erwägt, wäre bei seiner Deutung ganz fehl am Platz. – Geldner beruft sich auf 10, 72, 9 c d *prajāyai mṛtyāve tvat pūnar mārtaṇḍām ābharat* “Zur Nachkommenschaft, aber auch zum Tod holte sie den Mārtaṇḍa wieder herbei”. Danach wird Yama als Subjekt verständlich : Um Nachkommenschaft zu erhalten, nimmt Yama den Tod in Kauf. Der Sinn von a ist nach Geldner, daß Yama den Göttern zuliebe, um ihnen zu opfern, den Tod gewählt hat».

2. THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL VERSE-LINES OF *ṚGVEDA* 10, 13, 4

First, we must evaluate the real meaning of the 4 *pādas* of this difficult passage. According to the translation offered by GELDNER, it is Yama, mentioned only in d, who should be considered the subject also of *pādas* a and b, while LUDWIG's attributions to Bṛhaspati or to Agni of the role of subject also in the first *pāda* results very improbable, because these gods are never presented as fathers of humanity. Also OLDENBERG's idea that here we should introduce the presence of an unnamed or unknown god, Vivasvant, or perhaps *prajā-*, appears very speculative and highly improbable, as already H.-P. SCHMIDT³⁷ remarked. Then: "For (the sake of [*zuliebe*]) the gods (Yama) verily chose for death and for (the sake of his [*zuliebe*]) descendance (i.e. in order to [have] a descendance), indeed, he did not choose for immortality"; but, as we have read in his long note, GELDNER explained his solution (accepted by MALAMOUD),³⁸ showing that the text could be understood in the sense that "Yama preferred death to the gods and did not prefer immortality to humanity", i.e. that he refused to remain in a state of immortality in order to obtain a progeny. Theoretically, we may include another possibility, which, as I will soon show, results to be impossible, i.e. that the passage meant: "Yama preferred death for the gods (i.e. against their own advantage?) and did not prefer immortality for humanity". Such a solution could be supported if we assume that the gods should have been compelled to sacrifice one of them, Bṛhaspati (*pāda* c). On the other hand, no attested source supports such a bold solution, countering what we know of Vedic mythology. Thus, it is difficult to imagine that Yama might take the decision to make gods mortal. On the other hand, it is clear that, also according to the *Atharvaveda* version, Yama, if he is the subject of the sentence, did not chose for immortality for his progeny (*prajāyayai kim*

³⁷ 1968: 124-125.

³⁸ MALAMOUD 2002: 21-22: "Aux dieux il a préféré la mort. / A la progéniture il n'a pas préféré l'immortalité. / Les dieux ont fait du voyant Bṛhaspati leur sacrifice. / Yama a laissé son corps bien-aimé [se perpétuer]", or as possible alternative: "Pour le bien des dieux il a choisi [pour lui] la mort. / Pour le bien de la progéniture il n'a pas choisi [pour lui] l'immortalité [...].

amṛtaṃ nāvṛṇīta). In the Vedic and Hindu frameworks³⁹ (apparently as well as in the *Widēwdād* version of the myth,⁴⁰ notwithstanding some ideological differences discussed in detail by KELLENS),⁴¹ the process of reproduction was considered one of the main factors connected with the presence of death in the world. For this reason, the existence of offspring seems to imply that human life cannot be immortal during this earthly existence.⁴² On the other hand, we find a remarkable difference between Vedic and Avestan mythology;⁴³ while Yama resolves the problem of the overpopulation opening the path of death, Yima enlarges the earth, although he cannot interfere with the arrival of the winters, and he is compelled to build the *vara*-.⁴⁴ The origin of this diverging version probably shows, as we will see, an older background.

The solution discussed by GELDNER in his commentary (but already contained in his translation, although not explicitly) deserves to be better evaluated. It has been, for instance, clearly emphasized by MALAMOUD.⁴⁵ GELDNER (at the end of his note, *loc. cit.*) assumed that, in force of a (not rare) *Kasusvertauschung*, both datives *devēbhṛyaḥ kām* and *prajāyai kām* could have been used with the value of an ablative. If we follow this explanation, the text would mean that Yima preferred death to a divine position (i.e. instead of maintaining an immortal state), and that he did not prefer the possess of an immortal condition to the birth of a descendance. Then, as GELDNER suggested, he desired to be a mortal more than a god, in order to obtain a progeny. But, also his basic translation (“der Nach-

³⁹ See O’FLAHERTY 2002: 337-338, 359-351 and *passim*.

⁴⁰ See MALANDRA 1983: 176.

⁴¹ KELLENS 1999-2000: 731; 1984a: 279-20.

⁴² In addition, if Yama had eventually chosen “death” for the gods, any evaluation of this stanza grammatically excludes the possibility that it could be interpreted as if he was giving on the contrary immortality to his offspring; no doubt, this (impossible) solution would change the myth in itself. But Yama died and his offspring is mortal as well; then, either his choice was ineffective or, more probably, it was completely different, as we may suppose after his mythical cycle. We can also consider that a different interpretation would be very strange in terms of logical opposition: if Yama had preferred death for the gods, then he would have preferred immortality for his offspring, while, contrariwise, we do not understand why he refused (lit. “did not choose”) immortality for his descendants, a decision that would turn out to be absolutely contradictory.

⁴³ See already SÖDERBLOM 1901: 176.

⁴⁴ There is no need of a root-noun like *var-*, m., as suggested by BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 1363-1364, sub. ⁵*var-*); see HAUSCHILD 1959: 25, n. 40; KELLENS 1974: 360.

⁴⁵ See here, footnote 38.

kommenschaft zuliebe” = “aus Liebe für eine Nachkommenschaft”) does not counter such a conclusion; the desire of obtaining a descendance (expressed through a *dativus finalis*) compelled Yama to refuse immortality. Thus, we may simply accept the syntactical presence of two datives (both followed by *kām*, usually postponed after such a grammatical case),⁴⁶ but we must decide which kind of datives they actually are. In fact, if in the case of the gods, i.e. in *pāda* a, there is no doubt that we have to do with a *dativus commodi* (*devébhyah kām*), with regard to *prajāyai kām* we must consider, at least in theory, three possibilities:

- 1) a *dativus commodi*: “for [i.e. in favour of / the advantage of]⁴⁷ (his) descendance”;
- 2) a *dativus incommodi* “for [i.e. against the interests of] (his) descendance”;
- 3) a *dativus finalis*:⁴⁸ “for [i.e. in order to have]⁴⁹ a descendance”.

The three solutions would be perfectly fitting the syntax, but the context of the passage makes the presence of a *dativus incommodi* very improbable, if not impossible, at least in the framework of early Vedic mythology. We have no reason to suppose that Yama was deliberately acting against humanity. The intricate mythological material related to Yama shows that he was an immortal being (*ṚV.* 1, 85, 5),⁵⁰ who became the first to die (*AV.* 18, 3), so assuming the function of the king of the dead (*ṚV.* 9, 113, 8; 10, 14, and *passim*), but, although he could be also considered as a particular kind⁵¹ of god (in any case he is never called *deva-* in the *Ṛgveda-saṃhitā*),⁵² he was neither a demon, nor an *asura-* or a *rākṣasa-*. On the other hand, as already

⁴⁶ Cf. GRASSMANN 1996: 313-314; see also OLDENBERG (1912–1913: 137), who rejects the *Atharvaveda* reading (18, 3, 41, b) *kīm*.

⁴⁷ This is the solution of LUDWIG 1876, II, 415; 1883, V: 334-335.

⁴⁸ See MACDONELL 1916: 225, 314, who explains the use of *kām* as follows: after datives it has the basic meaning of “well”, but attenuated. It can be used “either of persons = *for the benefit of* (*dat. commodi*) or of abstract nouns (final dative)”.

⁴⁹ This is the solution of GELDNER in his commentary (quoted above).

⁵⁰ See already MUIR 1870: 300-305. Cf. CHRISTENSEN 1935: 39, who also refers to some parallel data in the Zoroastrian sources. We may note that only Max MÜLLER (1868: 514-516) denied that Yama has been the first human on the earth; his character would have been that of the “setting sun”. See, on the contrary, already ROTH 1850: 426, *passim*; 1853: 335-336).

⁵¹ As X. TREMBLAY recalls to me, Yama never receives sacrifices, but only a service for the dead. This way he does not take part to the libations of the *ṚV*.

⁵² See MACDONELL 1897: 171; but Yama is actually called *deva-* in some later rituals (see WAYMAN 1959: 50).

MACDONELL noted,⁵³ “Yama must to a certain extent have been an object of fear in RV”, while in later texts he doubtless became not only the king of dead but also the god of death. In Epic and Hindu sources this role of a dark representative of death was developed in close connection with hell and darkness,⁵⁴ while his name assumed demonic implications, being attested in the case of the names of some Rākṣasas.⁵⁵ Thus, it is more reasonable to imagine that in this stanza, Yama’s choice was basically assumed in order to favourite humanity and its interests,⁵⁶ and was not taken as an hostile decision explicitly assumed against his descendents. This does not avoid the possibility that its original meaning might have been later re-interpreted in different (i.e. negative) ways. For these reasons, we may suppose that only the first and the third possibilities can be sound, while the second one would correspond to a re-interpretation of the passage (which would be much more probable *only* in the Iranian context). Thus, among them, in agreement also with some remarks I owe to Xavier TREMBLAY, the last one, i.e. the *dativus finalis*, is preferable, because it appears to have had a prevalent utilization in Vedic.⁵⁷ On the other hand, we must consider that the parallel passage of *AV.* 18, 3, 41a, “For the gods he chose death, why for his progeny did he not choose immortality?” (*devébhyāḥ kām avṛṇīta mṛtyūm prajāyāi kīm amṛtaṁ nāvṛṇīta*), through its interrogative structure (with *kīm* instead of *kām*) doubtless shows a couple of *dativi finales*; although this was a simplistic and later solution, its relative antiquity indicates the potential and intrinsic meaning of the passage.

In any case, the sense and impact of the consequences derived from this decision taken by Yama do not change from the point of view of human (mythological) history. Yama accepts to die and his mortal progeny will follow him. But, as kindly noted by TREMBLAY, we must wonder which one is the actual *potestas* assumed by Yama; a genetic posterity or a

⁵³ 1897: 172.

⁵⁴ See BODEWITZ 2002: 221-222.

⁵⁵ HOPKINS 1915: 115.

⁵⁶ GÜNTERT (1923: 386) so interpreted the passage: “Hat er denn etwa für die Götter den Tod erwählt? Hat er nicht vielmehr im Interesse seiner Nachkommenschaft die Unsterblichkeit nicht gewählt? Den Opferherrn selbst machten sie (die Götter) zum Opfer: seinen lieben Leib gab *Yama* dahin”.

⁵⁷ See ETTER 1986.

mystical/magical one?⁵⁸ Yama's decision does not imply the annihilation of another life after earthly life; the first blessed dead might become "fathers" (*pitārah*), and their descendents will follow their path (*pitṛyāṇa*). In this framework, we must consider *RV.* 1, 83, 5: *yamāsya jātām amṛtaṃ yajāmahe* "we worship the immortal race/family (i.e. "humanity"?) of Yama".⁵⁹ The German translation of this passage given by GELDNER⁶⁰ ("Wir verehren das unsterbliche Geschlecht des Yama") has been interpreted by MALAMOU⁶¹ as "ce qui, de Yama, est né immortel". The French scholar, however, underlines the fact that GELDNER was making a reference to the gods; this, anyway, was the solution taken by BERGAIGNE ("la race immortel de Yama"),⁶² but also by a few other Vedists.⁶³ Contrariwise, MALAMOU would prefer RENOU's solution: "Nous adorons la naissance immortel de Yama".⁶⁴ Unfortunately, both solutions are possible (*jātā-*, m./n., in fact, has various meanings, as noted by GRASSMANN:⁶⁵ 1] Sohn; 2] lebendes Wesen (Götter und Menschen); 3] n. Lebendes Wesen; 4] Geschlecht, Stamm; 5] Geburt, Ursprung). If TREMBLAY is right (but his solution is not compelling, although reasonable), then, the passage means that also the dead, i.e. the descendance of Yama, can be immortal, and so it is not absolutely true what GELDNER stated considering the divine immortality as *completely* incompatible with a descendance; actually Vedic mythology describes the Ādityas like a family, while Tvaṣṭar may generate Vṛtra, Saraṇyū and

⁵⁸ TREMBLAY thinks that the second possibility is the correct one, with reference to I, 83, 5: *yamāsya jātām amṛtaṃ yajāmahe* "we worship the immortal race of Yama".

⁵⁹ GELDNER 1951, I: 106; GELDNER in a note remarks that the construction of this verse-line can be compared with the Avestan one in *yazamaide*.

⁶⁰ 1951, I: 106.

⁶¹ 2002: 153, n. 21; MALAMOU adds: "comme se le génitif valait ablatif et comme si la naissance des dieux était rapportée à Yama". I do not understand MALAMOU's commentary against GELDNER.

⁶² 1878, I: 88: "comme Vivasvat et Manu, Yama est le père de la race divine elle-même".

⁶³ See SCHERMAN 1892: 145 and in particular n. 1. SCHERMAN (*ibidem*) translated this verse-line just following LUDWIG (1876, II: 26; 1883, V: 25-26; 335): "die von Yama entsprungene Unsterblichkeit lässt uns eropfern" (oder "verehhren").

⁶⁴ RENOU 1969: 31.

⁶⁵ 1996: 482-483. But see also GELDNER 1907: 66, s.v. *jātā*: "(p. pr. von *jan*) I. a) geboren; m. Sohn 8,70,5; 10,95,12; 45, 10; zur Welt geworden 10,121,1; entstanden 10,97,1; abstammend von (abl.) 10,80,6; bestimmt als 5,32,11. b) neugeboren 9,9,3. c) vorhanden, dargeboten 3,31,11. 2 subst. n. a) das Geborene, Erschaffene, Schöpfung, Geschöpf, Wesen, Kreatur 1,89,10; 2,23,3; 8,1,18; 96,6; 100,4; 10,121,10. b) Geburt 163.1. c) Ursprung, Abstammung, Art 3,31,3. d) das Vorhandene, Masse 3,31,10."

Viśvarūpa, and furthermore, in his turn, Varuṇa is the father of Bhṛgu (*JB.* I, 44 = *ŚB.* XI 6, 1).⁶⁶ Thus, a definitive solution is not at hand in this case and many evidences result contradictory; actually we may simply remark that the basic idea considering immortality on earth and human generation in evident contradiction results to be sound, given the fact that a divine descendance, when it occurs, does not produce a continuous series of following generations of immortals. We can recall the beautiful and fitting translation offered by GÜNTERT⁶⁷ for this passage: “des Yama angeborene Unsterblichkeit laßt uns opfern”, assuming that the immortality, properly belonging to Yama in his quality of god, was there attested and worshipped.

In addition, we must consider that verse-line c of 10, 13, 4, *bṛhaspātim yajñām akṛṇvata iṣim* “(The gods) offered (lit. “made”) the wise Bṛhaspati (himself) as (their own) sacrifice/worship” raises an interesting number of questions. In particular, it is the meaning of such a reference to the sacrifice that results unclear. Does it concern an immolation of a divine being like Bṛhaspati? Is it a simple identification of Bṛhaspati with the sacrifice itself or with the worship, as a kind of strictly symbolic incarnation?

In the first case, we might raise other tantalizing questions: if Yama did not choose immortality in order to have his progeny, and if he had prolonged (in which sense?) his own body, why should Bṛhaspati be sacrificed? Is the continuity of Yama’s descendance to be connected with the sacrificial immolation not simply of another god, but with that of the chaplain of the gods? If Yama must die because of his choice, why did the *devas* sacrifice another one? It is possible that the prolongation of Yama’s body, i.e. his future progeny represents the chain of the sacrificers, and then, the chain of the humans who will follow the path of the fathers. But, we may also imagine that this eternal, uninterrupted sacrificial chain was in itself considered immortal because of its uninterrupted continuity. Apropos TREMBLAY thinks that:

«[...] entre (c) et (d) (Bṛhaspāti est sacrifié, Yama se perpétue), (d) se comprend grâce à *RV.* I, 83, 5: le corps de Yama, i.e. le sacrifice et la chaîne des sacrificants, est immortel, et c’est pourquoi *RV.* 10, 13, 4 n’est pas seulement inséré dans l’évocation des chars jumeaux à la faveurs d’un calembour *yamé – Yamá*, mais parce que le char de l’offrande est le véhicule vers l’immortalité (cf. 10, 13, 3)».

⁶⁶ I must thank TREMBLAY for these remarks. Cf. also EGGELING 1900: 108: “Now, Bhṛigu, the son of *Varuna*, deemed himself superior to his father Vanita in knowledge [...]”.

⁶⁷ 1923: 388.

In addition, it would be clear that the choice of death, involves a different form of immortality on another level, not like that of the gods, but just like that of the “fathers”, which, in any case, is not a prize for everybody.

We can, however, note that the subject of the sentence mentioning Br̥haspati is not openly mentioned. Generally a reference to the gods has been here reasonably presumed, and this solution may be probable. But, if Yama has chosen death for the sake of the gods and has refused immortality in order to obtain a long descendance (possibly corresponding to the prolongation of his body, or in other words to his power of procreation, but in any case throughout his own death), why the sacrificers offering Br̥haspati are the gods? Did they celebrate and give a sanctification to Yama’s decision, offering Br̥haspati as an *alter ego* of Soma? This was, for instance, the solution already suggested by BERGAIGNE.⁶⁸ According to such an explanation, the hymn is celebrating the sacrificial chain, starting with Yama and Br̥haspati, in the framework of a procession of the Soma chariots. This way, Yama sacrificed himself (self-immolation?)⁶⁹ through his double choice (death and progeny) only after he had left his own body, while the gods offered Br̥haspati-(Soma). On the other hand, the (apparently) more prudent alternative considering the reference to the chaplain of the gods as a simple identification of such a divinity with the sacrifice and the ritual results clearly supported from the parallel passage of the *Atharvaveda*, where Br̥haspati is doubtless the subject: “Br̥haspati as seer extended the sacrifice,

⁶⁸ 1878, I: 300; cf. also I: 90.

⁶⁹ See GÜNTERT (1923: 385-386); in particular (p. 386) he wrote: “Die Stelle scheint mir unsere Ansicht aufs beste zu unterstützen: zunächst ist hier deutlich gesagt, daß *Yama* sich opfern ließ, und daß er diesen freiwilligen Opfertod deshalb wählte, um Nachkommen zu erhalten, d. h. um die Menschheit zu begründen. *Yama* hätte unsterblich bleiben können, aber wie es im *puruṣa*-Lied geschildert wird, wollte er durch seinen Tod den Kosmos schaffen. Somit wird er ein echter Wohltäter der Menschheit, ein Heiland, der nicht um der Götter, sondern gerade um der Menschen willen seine eigene Göttlichkeit preisgab. Alles, was wir aus Spuren und durch die Aussage des Eigennamens erschlossen haben, ist hier tatsächlich belegt; man verstand aber die Stelle nicht richtig, weil man in *Yama* meist nur einen ersten Sterblichen sehen wollte, wie es *Manuṣ* ist. Und daß diese Ansicht vom freiwilligen Opfertod eines Gottes nicht vereinzelt vorkommt, lehrt die Stelle RV X, 81, 5ff., wo vom Opfern und Selbstopfern des Weltschöpfers gesprochen wird”. Güntert took into consideration also the self-sacrifice made by Óðinn, and discussed the ritual creativity of the sacrifice performed by Zurwān. Cf. also VON WESENDONK 1924: 180-182.

(after) Yama had (already) left/abandoned his (own) dear body” (*bṛhaspátir yajñám atanuta řṣiḥ priyāṃ yamás tan_ivām āřireca*). The simplistic solution of the *Atharvaveda* in any case shows that (at least according to a particular Vedic school) the divine chaplain was not sacrificed, and perhaps this verse-line might mean also that Bṛhaspati prolonged the *yajña*- as Yama had earlier prolonged his body (through the chain for his direct progeny of sacrificers) abandoning it. A kind of esoteric word-game should be, in any case, devised between *atanuta* and *tan_ivām*, although the solution presented in this parallel passage is surely later and cannot be considered compelling with regard to the interpretation of the Ṛgvedic stanza.

At this point of the discussion, I would like to recall that the presence of a pluperfect (*prāřirecīt*) in verse-line d has not been seriously considered before the present investigation, as if it were a simple alternative for a normal imperfect.⁷⁰ Such an interpretation remains possible, but we must wonder if it is really sound. Contrariwise, we may theoretically suspect that, in this passage, a kind of *consecutio temporum* is meant, and then that the action of d was assumed to be earlier than the one expressed in c. Although the interpretation of the whole passage can be debated, KÜMMEL⁷¹ clearly suspects that the pluperfect in *pāda* d, might refer to a far past action, to a past-resultative or to a static meaning: “Für die Götter wählte er sich den Tod, für seine Nachkommenschaft wählte er sich nicht die Unsterblichkeit. Bṛhaspati machten sie sich zum Opfer, den Ṛṣi; den eigenen Körper gab Yama auf/hatte Yama aufgegeben”. In addition, KÜMMEL⁷² rejects the interpretation offered by GELDNER, according to whom *prāřirecīt* would mean “ließ weiterreichen” (as factitive) against the medium with *prā* “weiterreichen”, because it would be groundless. Thus, the action of the gods and the (potential) sacrifice of Bṛhaspati should follow the death of Yama, which, in any case, gave a possibility of life to a human progeny, and opened the heavenly path of the afterlife to his mortal descendents. In this sense, the choice of Yama seems to correspond to a kind of self-sacrifice, an act to which also Bṛhaspati could have been (symbolically?) submitted.

⁷⁰ This opinion was already stated by DELBRÜCK (see DELBRÜCK – WINDISCH 1876: 113-114), who rejected the anteriority of the so-called pluperfect. On the contrary, we must underline that already THIEME (1929: 42) expressly wrote: “(*pra* +)*arirecīt* könnte also *praet.* sein zu einem (προ)ἔλοιπε entsprechenden (*pra* +)*řireca*: «er war einer, der (übrig) gelassen hat»”.

⁷¹ 2000: 424.

⁷² 2000: 424, n. 776.

Unfortunately the difficulties of this verse-line are many, and the basic interpretation of *prá + ric-* presents a number of problems, which were the object of deep discussions already started by Ludwig,⁷³ but which have been developed, for instance, also by SCHMIDT.⁷⁴ The alternative solutions that we can consider are the following ones:

- 1) “Yama had prolonged/spread/perpetuated his (own) dear body.”
- 2) “Yama had passed on/left/abandoned/surrendered his (own) dear body [i.e. “he died”].”
- 3) “Yama had saved his (own) dear body/his own self [for us].”
- 4) “Yama had left his (own) body (in order to perpetuate it).”
- 5) “Yama had juttet out his (own) dear body (in order to perpetuate it)” [with a covered erotic meaning].

The basic meaning of Indo-Iranian verb **raič-* should be that of “to leave, let, abandon”,⁷⁵ and the I.E. verbal root **leikʰ-*, probably already meant “verlassen”,⁷⁶ “zurücklassen” (middle: “sich entfernen von”).⁷⁷ For instance, LUDWIG⁷⁸ translated *prá + ric-* in this passage as “retten”; BERGAIGNE⁷⁹ and MACDONELL⁸⁰ proposed “to abandon”, while GRASSMANN⁸¹ offered in general five possibilities for *prá + ric-*: 1) “hinausreichen”, “hervorragen über” (Ab., Ab. mit *pári*), 2) “hervorragen”, 3) “emporragen bis” (*ácha*), 4) “übrig lassen” [[A.], 5) “lassen, zurücklassen”, although in his interpretation of this very passage he chose “dahingeben”. HILLEBRANDT preferred “hingeben”,⁸² THIEME “dahingeben”,⁸³ while GELDNER opted for “fortpflanzen”, adding a long note about *tan_ivām prāṛirecīt*, which is worthwhile to be quoted again *in extenso*:

«*pra-ric* bedeutet ‘weiterreichen als (Abl.)’, im Trans. ‘weiterreichen lassen, auf Vorrat legen’ (6, 20, 4), *prareká* (3, 30, 19), *prarécana* (1, 17, 6) ‘Vorrat’. 6, 20, 4d ist zu übersetzen: ‘Er legte von der Speise (Trank) gar nichts auf Vorrat’, d. h. er zehrte alles

⁷³ 1889: 47.

⁷⁴ 1968: 124-125.

⁷⁵ MAYRHOFFER 1996: 457-458; WERBA 1997: 227; CHEUNG 2007: 307-308.

⁷⁶ RIX 2001: 406-407, and n. 1.

⁷⁷ RIX 2001: 406-407 and n. 2.

⁷⁸ 1876, II: 415; 1883, V: 335.

⁷⁹ 1878, I: 90.

⁸⁰ 1897: 72.

⁸¹ GRASSMANN 1996: 1164.

⁸² 1891: 491: “seinen lieben Leib gab Yama hin”; (English tr. “to surrender”; 1980 II: 223).

⁸³ 1929: 42.

auf. *tanvàm pra-ric* Kaus. der obigen Stelle ist dagegen mit 9, 46, 15a *réknas tanvè* zu verbinden: den Leib weiterreichen machen ist s. v. als ihn fortpflanzen. Möglich wäre auch: Yama hat seinen lieben Leib (auf Erden) zurückgelassen, d. h. sterben mußte er doch». ⁸⁴

But, as we have seen, such an explanation seems to be questionable after KÜMMEL's examination of the textual data.

Then, GELDNER suggested two solutions: according to the first one, given in the translation ("Yama hat seinen lieben Leib fortgepflanzt"), Yama has been able to propagate, prolong, then, reproduce his body, but in the note quoted the German scholar remarks that *prá-ric-* does not simply mean "to leave", but "to leave aside", or "in supply" (MALAMOUUD translates "laisser en réserve"). ⁸⁵ MALAMOUUD, in his turn, prefers the second option, ⁸⁶ assuming that we can this way understand what Yama's death was: "il s'est séparé, le temps de passer par la mort, de son « corps bien-aimé », de son corps d'immortel. Il s'est fait mortel afin d'instituer les conditions de vie et de survie des générations de mortels". Furthermore, MALAMOUUD (*ibid.*) supposes that the first possibility seems weak because we do not know how Yama might generate his own descendance. But we will see that this statement itself can be reversed. Recently, HETTRICH translated 10, 13, 4c: ⁸⁷ "Yama ließ seinen lieben Leib [darüber] hinausreichen [über den Tod hinaus; d.h. er pflanzte sich fort]", considering that the semantic meaning of *ric-* with *prá* in this place and in 6, 20, 4 should be taken aside from the other active attestations. ⁸⁸

But leaving aside other additional speculations, I must remark that the mention of the sacrifice and of Br̥haspati (whichever its interpretation might be: immolation of the god or simple identification of the god with the worship/sacrifice) should be not separated from the circumstance that Vīuauṇ^vhant obtained Yima as his son, because he was the first to press *haoma-* (while Vivasvant gave the sacrificial fire to human beings). ⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See in any case the long note in GELDNER's commentary.

⁸⁵ 2002: 22. MALAMOUUD underlines the fact that the special meaning of *prá + ric* "laisser en réserve" is more frequent than that of "laisser".

⁸⁶ *Ibidem.*

⁸⁷ 2007: 161. Cf. MEISER 1993: 307.

⁸⁸ They might be explained as "transitivierende Oppositionsbildungen zu den semantisch bereits weiterentwickelten Mediopassiv", according to HETTRICH (*ibidem*).

⁸⁹ See SKJÆRVØ 2008: 511.

Then, the role of Haoma/Soma is strictly linked with the original notion of a cyclical mortality and with the image of a mortal god. In any case, the destiny of *soma*- and of Yama seems to be similar – as well as the destiny of their father –, if we consider that Vivasvant and Mārtāṇḍa (as well as Vivasvaṇt = Gaia Marətan) have been strongly assimilated in Vedic mythology.⁹⁰ Like Soma, when Yama abandons/leaves his own body, and eventually dies, he becomes immortal under the pressure, thus assuming a new form. Thus, he is the matter of the sacrifice, but as father of the mortal beings he is a kind of priest and of sacrificer, like Bṛhaspati himself among the gods, and also like the future mortals, who would offer a sacrifice from this point on.

In any case, all these facts should be carefully considered in the general discussion of the whole passage, particularly with reference to a larger Indo-Iranian framework. No doubt that Yama was strongly connected with the sacrifice, as already DANDEKAR remarked⁹¹ comparing the sacrifice of the Puruṣa with the self-sacrifice of Yama. But it is noteworthy, too, that he established a special alliance with Agni. It is Yama who finds Agni (escaping from the gods, hidden in the waters and among the plants) and promises him long life, and a part of the sacrifice (RV. 10, 51, 3).⁹² Here Yama, as GÜNTERT underlined,⁹³ does not appear as a man but behaves as a god. In addition, he embodies all the ritual meters (RV. 10, 14, 16: *triṣṭubh gāyatrī chāndaṃsi sārva tā yamā āhita* “*triṣṭubh, gāyatrī*, all these meters are contained in Yama”).⁹⁴ In Iran, it is again Yima who plays the role of one of the primordial sacrificers. However, I wonder whether the prolongation of life should be

⁹⁰ See below.

⁹¹ DANDEKAR 1945: 204, *pace* OBERLIES 1998: 389-390 and n. 253. Cf. HOANG-SON HOAN-ŠY-QUY 1969. About the comparative ritual aspects of this myth in connection with the Semitic tradition see GROTANELLI 1981 and 1982. Cf. also BROWN 1931; MUS 1962. KIRFEL (1951) assumed that the *Puruṣamedha*- was older than the *Aśvamedha*-; against this interpretation see JAMISON 1996: 274, n. 114.

⁹² See DONIGER 2002: 213-214; cf. GELDNER 1951, III: 212. This stanza should be compared with RV. I, 72, 4c (GELDNER 1951, I: 95). See also the important article by KRAMRISCH 1961: 109, n. 17.

⁹³ 1923: 387. CH. POUSSE in a recent work (2005-08: 220) has developed the subject of the “*gémellité temporelle*”, with fitting reference to Agni (RV. 1, 69, 2), Yama (RV. 1, 66, 8a), but also to the *Ahunauii Gāthā* (Y. 31, 8), where we find an interesting paradox: although Ahura Mazdā is called *yazūm* (“the young(er) one”), he is with respect to Angra Mainiiu, “the first” (*paouruuim*).

⁹⁴ GÜNTERT 1923: 387.

brought into connection with the primordial incest,⁹⁵ and furthermore, if *prá-ric-* with the meaning of “to jut out” might contain also a sexual implication. This possibility is actually supported from the fact that in *Yt.* 17, 10 ^x*friiaia paiti tanuui* is referred to the “dear body” of the master of the house desired by his wives:⁹⁶ *kaða nō auui ājasāṭ nmānō.paitiš kaða šāiti +paitišāma*⁹⁷ ^x*friiaia paiti tanuui* [...]”⁹⁸ “When will the master of the house come down to us? When shall we rejoice with joy on (his) dear body?”.

⁹⁵ See also HUMBACH 1974: 196-197: “Deutlicher ausgesprochenen ist das in 10, 13, 4 *devēbhyah kām avṛṇīta mṛtyūm prajāyāi kām amṛtaṁ nāvṛṇīta* . . . *priyām yamās tanvām prārireṇ*, den Göttern zuliebe wählte er den Tod, der Nachkommenschaft zuliebe wählte er nicht die Unsterblichkeit . . . seinen lieben Leib gab Yama hin’. Hier ist mit dem absichtlich mehrbezügigen *tanvām prārireṇ* nicht nur auf den Verlust der Unsterblichkeit des Leibes angespielt, sondern zugleich auch auf die leibliche Vereinigung mit Yamī. Das erhellt aus deren Wunsch 10, 10, 7 *jāyēva pātye tanvām riricyām*, wie das Weib dem Gatten möchte ich meinen Leib hingeben’. Fortpflanzung und Tod erscheinen ja auch in dem Mārtāṇḍa bezüglichen 10, 72, 9 *prajāyāi mṛtyāve*, damit er sich fortpflanze und sterbe „in gegenseitiger Bedingtheit“. It is interesting to note that in *Y.* 32, 7, in a difficult passage that probably has to be directly connected with the following one (KELLENS – PIRART 1991: 86), where Yima is considered guilty of some sins (*aēnah-*), we find the following verse-line (c) *yaēšqm tū ahurā irixtām mazdā vaēdištō ahī*, which can be tentatively interpreted as “(sins because) of (or among) which, you, o Ahura Mazda, are the best who found the one who was left/abandoned (i.e. Yima)”. In any case the presence of *ric-* in this pertinent context has to be underlined.

⁹⁶ I must thank J. KELLENS for this kind remark. See also KELLENS 1995: 35 about the sexual connotation of this passage. Cf. SCHLERATH 1968, I, 180; II: 163. SCHELLER (1959: 3-6, and *passim*), in the framework of a wider discussion about Ved. *priyā-* (Greek φίλος and Av. *friia-*), noted that in *RV.* 10, 13, 4d, “*priyā-* könnte hier höchstens eine affektische Beziehung Yamas zu seinem eigenem Leib ausdrücken: «er ließ den (ihm) lieben Leib fahren». SCHELLER (1959: 20) also remarked that “die Junktur *priyā- tanū-*, die im Rigveda einen der klarsten Belege für die ursprüngliche Verwendung von idg. **prījo-* liefert, auch im Awestischen ihre Entsprechung besitzt”.

⁹⁷ GELDNER 1889: 233: *paitišām*; ⁺*paitišāma*, according to BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 30, 1707, but from the verbal root ¹*aēš-*. For the analysis of this passage see in particular BENVENISTE 1935: 28-25, who considered *šāiti +paitišāma* a figura etymologica with ⁺*paitišāma*, 1st pers. pl. inj. of the verbal root *š(ii)ā-*, *šā-*, and the instrumental *šāiti* (earlier interpreted as an infinitive stem). SCHELLER (1959: 5-6, n. 1) quotes a different interpretation of the whole passage proposed by HUMBACH: “Wann wird unser Hausherr kommen, wann um mit Lust auf meinen Leib loszugehen?”. Clearly, HUMBACH rejected the reading ⁺*paitišāma* (J10) and maintained *paitišām*, now considered as an infinitival accusative (from the root *aēš-*) of the type *garābqm*, depending from the verb *ājasāt*.

⁹⁸ See HOFFMANN – NARTEN (1989: 65, n. 92), who accepted BENVENISTE’s interpretation of the verbal form as deriving from the root *š(ii)ā-* “sich freuen”, but rightly considered it as

Although the other two Ṛgvedic passages where the sequence *priyā-tanū-* occurs have no patent sexual character (*ṚV.* 1, 114, 7: *priyās tanvò*; 10, 132, 4: *tanūśv* [...] *priyāsu*), we must investigate if in this case, the two final *pādas* of 10, 13, 4 could have a double meaning, one basic, simply referring to the “prolongation” of Yama’s body, and another one characterized by a *covered* sexual implication. Thus, Br̥haspati was sacrificed, or assimilated to a sacrifice, only after Yama had reproduced himself, i.e. after he had sex, probably with his sister, who was the only woman at disposal for him. In other words, if the sexual hues contained in *prā-ric-* are only a *mirage*, we can simply understand the passage as referred to the prolongation of the body as a metaphor of the continuity of the human gender after Yama’s death, but if such an expression was properly erotic, i.e. if it contained a covered reference, for instance, to a penis’ erection or simply to a copulation, we will have a direct reference to the process of reproduction, started by Yama himself, who finally “paid” for this choice with his own death. Thus, we will have to do with a sort of hierogamy, followed by the death of the first man. That all these considerations are not the fruit of a farfetched speculation is shown by some textual data. One particular occurrence of the root *ric-* with *tanū-* confirms the existence of this potential erotic nuance. It occurs in the most pertinent dialogue between Yama and Yamī, *ṚV.* 10, 10, 7: *yamāsya mā yamṇām kāma āgan samāné yónau sahaśéyāyā / jāyēva pátaye tanvām riricyām ví cid vṛheva ráthyeva cakrá* “Desire has come to me, Yamī, of Yama, of lying together (with him) in a common bed. As a wife for (his) husband, may I (Yamī) give (my) body (to him); we will move to and fro like the wheels of a chariot”.⁹⁹ The sexual proposal made by Yamī to her twin Yama is clear, and, here, *tanū-* refers to her body offered or left (*ric-*), to him.¹⁰⁰ Erotic hues are explicitly involved also by the following

a subjunctive aorist. They also suggested the emendation of *friia* (attested in the manuscript tradition) in **friiaia*, here accepted, and, then, translated the sentence as follows: “wann werden wir mit Freude Freude finden an seinem lieben Körper?”. See also INSLEER 1970: 191-192; KELLENS 1976: 89, n. 6; 1984: 89, n. 6.

⁹⁹ See GELDNER 1951, III: 414. RENOU 1956b: 56; SCHNEIDER 1967-68: 4; 8, who underlines that *yóni* in 7b does not mean only “bed”, but also “womb”. SCHNEIDER, against GELDNER, does not believe in the sexual interpretation of the image of the wheels, but I am sceptic about his explanation of the text. Supportive remarks on the sexual interpretation of the passage are now given by BRERETON 2002: 227, n. 15. Cf. again HUMBACH 1974: 197.

¹⁰⁰ KÜMMEL (2000: 425) rightly translates *pāda* c: “Wie eine Gattin dem Gatten **möge ich [ihm] meinen Körper überlassen (haben)!**”.

reference to the image of the corporeal movement, there compared to that of the wheels of a chariot. The last *pāda* of *RV.* 10, 13, 4 cannot be taken aside from this parallel passage, although in that case the situation was presented with reference to Yama. Also *RV.* 10, 10, 11cd and 12ab, insist on the sexual implications of *tanū-*: *kāmamūtā bahv ètād rapāmi tanūvā me tanūvām sám pīprgdhi || ná vā u te tanūvā tanūvām sám papṛcyām pāpām āhur yāḥ svāsāram nigācchāt* “[Yamī]: mad of lust I repeatedly whisper this: «Mix your body with my body!». [Yama] «I will never mix (my) body with your body!» Bad is said, if one goes with (his) sister”.¹⁰¹ See also *RV.* 10, 10, 3d *jānyuḥ pātis tanūvām ā viviśyāḥ* “as a husband may you (Yama) penetrate the body of the wife (Yamī)”. Thus, the sacrifice of Bṛhaspati would have confirmed the conclusion of this radical event, derived from Yama’s choice. Thus, Yama chose for death and not for immortality. He did so because he accepted to be a mortal divine being, who obtained a long descendance. This decision was taken for the sake of the gods, because he procured for the gods a chain of (mortal) future sacrificers, of whom he assumed, in the afterlife, the eschatological role of king. After his death, which should be connected with the presence of a new mortal descendance, and necessarily with an act of procreation (more or less explicitly mentioned, according to the interpretation of the last *pāda* we prefer, if erotic or not), the gods offered one of themselves in sacrifice or as a representation of the sacrifice, in order to sanction or ratify Yama’s choice and its definitive results. Yama and his descendance must die, but they have also the duty to reproduce themselves (thus, sex is necessary, total abstinence, ignored also by gods, being excluded). The gods, in their turn, remain immortal, and the possible immolation of one of them, Bṛhaspati, is necessarily symbolic, because he, a *deva-*, cannot really die, but like Soma, maintains his immortal status.

Then, after this preliminary discussion, we can propose a working translation:

- a) “For (the sake of) the gods (Yama) verily chose for death”
- b) “and in order to [have] a descendance, he did not choose for immortality.”
- c) “(The gods) made the wise Bṛhaspati ([corresponding to?] their own) sacrifice,”

¹⁰¹ GELDNER 1951, III: 136; RENOU 1956b: 57; SCHNEIDER 1967-68: 4; 9-10; cf. KÜMMEL 2000: 306.

- d) “(when/after) Yama had (already) juttied out his own body” (in order to perpetuate it, or: he died after he had sex with somebody, probably his sister, or simply: he died after he had reproduced himself).

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF YAMA'S CHOICE IN THE INDO-IRANIAN FRAMEWORK AND THE AVESTAN PERSPECTIVE

The fact that the verb *vy-* is here (*RV.* 10, 13, 4) connected with death and the refusal of (earthly) immortality, as a deliberate decision taken by Yama in agreement with the Devas and for their own advantage (but also for that of humanity), suggested to me a more careful comparative reflection upon the value to be attributed to this very act of choice in the Indo-Iranian context. The Vedic case is enormously interesting: Yama takes a choice that, being assumed by the first mythical mortal (who in India has been also demonized in later sources, where he became the king of hell)¹⁰² can be considered as free,¹⁰³ although deliberated under certain circumstances. If he was not free, his choice of renouncing to his immortal status in order to die would be a nonsense. This very decision, patently taken for the sake of the Devas, should be analyzed by means of a contrastive comparison between the Indian and the Iranian concepts of life and death.

We must consider that any option in favour of death, or, worst, the decision to die in itself, would have been *per se* considered demoniac in the Mazdean *milieu*, and that Yama's decision, if it was that one, would appear in that framework as a crazy or foolish solution without any excuse. No good being created by Ahura Mazdā could prefer such a choice, if not inspired and confused by the Daēuvas; but I will return again on this problem below. Thus, from a Mazdean point of view this Vedic stanza would have clashed with the idea, attested in *Y.* 30, 1, that "life" (*gaiia-*) is directly opposed to the "impossibility of life" (*ajiiāiti-*), a contrast being directly determined by the confrontation between the two Mainiūs.¹⁰⁴

We should consider, in its turn, also that, in his primordial world, Yima, after having "refused" the *daēnā-* (whose role I explain in a different way

¹⁰² See in particular ARBMAN 1926 and 1928; cf. also O'FLAHERTY 2002: 311, 349, 364 and *passim*. Interestingly, Yama is sometimes given magical power, and some negative hues are attributed to him (see WAYMAN 1959: 52-53, 131).

¹⁰³ As, for instance, KELLENS too (2002: 36) assumes, when he writes: "Il aurait délibérément choisi la condition mortelle « pour l'amour des dieux et de la descendance » (RS 10.13.4), c'est-à-dire afin de pouvoir sacrifier et de se reproduire". The same expression already in KELLENS 2000: 244.

¹⁰⁴ See PANAINO 2005: 118-120.

with respect to past studies, as we will see below), accepted Ahura Mazdā's proposal to augment and make prosper his divine creation (attested, e.g., already in *Vd.* 2, 5). This way, Yima declared that during his *xšaθra*- "there will be neither cold wind nor hot wind, neither sickness nor death". This means that such a (temporary) period of physical perfection was established by Yima himself under the protection of Ahura Mazdā. It was Ahura Mazdā who gave Yima a golden "goad" (*suβrā*-)¹⁰⁵ and a whip (*aštrā*-)¹⁰⁶ adorned with gold through which he was able to enlarge the earth three times; also when the winters were coming upon creation, it was Ahura Mazdā who instructed Yima about the construction of the *vara*-.¹⁰⁷ In this case, the arrival of winters is neither due to Ahura Mazdā, who helps Yima, nor to a sin committed by the latter,¹⁰⁸ but it should be connected to the invasion of demoniac forces, which appear on the scenario without any clear (at least for us) aetiological reason; simply they become manifest. So, it is evident that the perfect status of Yima's world was not at all eternal and immortal. This version of the myth probably also means that the later well-developed doctrine of the *gumēzišn* ("mixture") was still in formation, and that the story contained in the second chapter of the *Widēwdād* represents another (probably older) tradition, according to which Yima was living in a splendid and ageless period of perfection, during which he enlarged the world, and then,

¹⁰⁵ A "golden horn" according to DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN 1980; but against this interpretation cf. SIMS-WILLIAMS 2001.

¹⁰⁶ SKJÆRVØ (2008: 503) seems to propose a different identification of the two tools given by Ahura Mazdā to Yima, writing that they are "a cattle goad (*aštrā*) and a *suβrā*, either some kind of pick (cf. Pers. *sumb*- "pierce") or a shepherd's flute (cf. *nālī* in *RV.* 10.1235.7) or horn" (again with reference to DUCHESNE-GUILLEMIN 1980; KELLENS 1994-95: 702; and SIMS-WILLIAMS 2001). Earlier interpretations have been critically presented by KELLENS (1974: 358, n. 1).

¹⁰⁷ It was a kind of "fortress" or "cave", as its denomination shows. Av. *vara*-, Pahl. *war*, Ved. *valā*-, could be also connected with Lat. *vallum* (and then also with the Engl. loanword *wall*, as remarked also by SKJÆRVØ 2008: 506), but DE VAAN (2008: 652) does not register such a possibility. SIMS-WILLIAMS (2001: 333) suggests also "castle" with reference to Hungarian *vár*. Cf. GELDNER (1926: 30, n. 178) who described the *vara*- as a kind of microcosm, preserving the golden period of the earliest Iranian world; KELLENS 1999-2000: 732. SKJÆRVØ (*ibidem*) remarks that the Middle-Persian interpretation of the *war* as a "lake" is based on a mistaken association, *war* being also a different word from Av. *vairi*- "lake". The shape of the *vara*- should be round or circular, as shown by STEBLIN-KAMENSKIJ 1995.

¹⁰⁸ LINDNER (1893: 213-215) tried to demonstrate that the arrival of the winters was due to human sins, and that it was "ein Strafgericht über sündige Menschheit", but his arguments are not convincing.

after the disastrous arrival of winter, he was allowed to take a safe place in the *vara-*. It is possible that the second part of this cycle, the one concerning the winters and the construction of the *vara-*, belongs to an earlier tradition, in which, as already SÖDERBLOM suggested,¹⁰⁹ its meaning was different.¹¹⁰ The original myth probably concerned the end of the world, as in the Old Norse tradition, and its repopulation by means of that part of humanity saved by Yima into the *vara-*.¹¹¹ Thus, the incoming winters would be those which will arrive in a far future, after which the world, will be again inhabited by all the survived living beings, saved by Yima. Although it is unnecessary to re-discuss in this framework the question concerning the pattern of the cosmic flood, we must note, just remaining in the limits of the Indo-European context, that *Fr.W.* 8, 2, mentions Mahrkūša,¹¹² a demon (or a

¹⁰⁹ 1901: 177-190, *passim*. SÖDERBLOM was not the first to suggest this comparison between Iranian and Old Scandinavian mythology; see HULTGÅRD 2007: 116-118. LINDNER (1893: 215-216) assumed that the myth of Yima was essentially Iranian, and tried to exclude any external influence from Semitic traditions. The same statement was expressed by HERTEL (1924: 35-40) in particular against KOHUT (1871). See also GELDNER (1881: 181), who suggested a number of potential Mesopotamian points of comparison with the cycle of Yima, while the relation in particular with the Biblical tradition was again underlined by MOULTON 1913: 308. Cf. LOMMEL 1927: 196-203.

¹¹⁰ See also GELDNER 1881: 180-181, with reference to WINDISCHMANN 1853: 4-10. Cf. also HULTGÅRD 2007: 109-114.

¹¹¹ HULTGÅRD (2007: 115) assumes that “The Pahlavi versions on the Malkūsān winter are based on an independent tradition of a great eschatological winter in which both the building and the opening of Yima’s *vara-* were told as part of future events. The Vidēvdāt version of the winters and the *vara-* would then represent another myth variant on the theme of climatic calamities and survival of humankind, which in all probability belonged to pasted mythical events”. Although HULTGÅRD has rightly focussed on the differences between the two narrations, the Avestan and the Pahlavi one, I cannot accept the idea that the two stories were originally unrelated. On the contrary, these discrepancies should have been derived from the fact that an earlier myth concerning the coming of the winters was re-moved from its eschatological role, and then placed in the framework of the past history of humanity. We have already seen that the cycle of Yima suffered a number of changes and adaptations, and that also the history of the *vara-* presents some contradictions with respect to the development of Yima’s story. In any case, HULTGÅRD’s article is very important in the presentation and evaluation of the Pahlavi sources.

¹¹² BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1147. The fragment is very corrupted; see DARMESTETER 1893: 8-9; HERTEL 1936: 9-11, 19-29. HERTEL suggested that “*mahrkuša-*” would be an *Awestisierung* of the Pahlavi name *malkōš* (and its derivative *malkōšān*), in its turn a loanword derived from Hebr.-Aram. *malqōš* “the rains of March and April” (1936: 23-24), adapted in Avestan after a popular etymology which linked it with the family of Ved. *marká-*, Skt. *maraka-*, and Av. *mahrka-* “death”. But the etymological meaning of

witch-doctor; *ǰādūg Markūs* [also spelt *Malkūs*] or *Markūš*) who, according to the seventh book of the *Dēnkard*, 1, 24¹¹³ and 9, 3-5,¹¹⁴ after 300 years of the millennium belonging to Ošēdar (Uxšiiat.ərəta-),¹¹⁵ will devastate the earth for seven years, bringing three years plus one of winter (with snow and cold), the *markūsān zamestān*, killing the most of humanity. Only after the death of this demon, *ǰam* (Yima) will get out of the *ǰam-kard-war* (i.e. the “*vara-* made by Yima”) with his people, repopulating the earth; a similar tradition is reported by the *Dādestān ī Mēnōg ī Xrad*, 27, where it is narrated that *ǰam* will open the *war* after the coming of the rains brought by Markūs.¹¹⁶ If this story, as we may suppose, is old (and for this reason it patently clashes with the version, in which Yima has been killed by Spitiiura), SÖDERBLOM’s comparison¹¹⁷ between the winter of Mahrkūša and the Fimbulvetr “the mighty winter” of the *Edda* (*Gylfaginning* 51),¹¹⁸ announcing the *ragnarōkr* “the twilight of powers”,¹¹⁹ or that between the three Markūsān winters and the three uninterrupted winters of the Old Norse mythology,¹²⁰ appearing again in *Gylfaginning* 51,¹²¹ result very attractive.

“Vernichter”, underlined also by MAYRHOFER (1977a: I/60, n° 216), is sure. See HULTGÅRD (2007: 110), who registers also the possible spellings *Malkūs* and *Malkōs*.

¹¹³ MOLÉ 1967: 8-9.

¹¹⁴ MOLÉ 1967: 93-94; 217-218.

¹¹⁵ According to *Vd.* 2, 42-43, it is Uruuāt.nara who propagates the religion of Zoroaster in the *vara-*. The relation between the *saosiiants* and the *vara-* should have been framed in a later development and adaptation of this myth.

¹¹⁶ BAUSANI 1963: 125.

¹¹⁷ 1901: 178-182, 189-190. See also BAUSANI 1963: 129-130. A direct connection among the Iranian cycle of Yima with particular regard for the construction of the *vara-*, the Vedic one about *valá-*, and the Old Norse myth of the final Winter, has been proposed also by HAUDRY 1987: 207-219. Cf. also Moisson 1993: 77-82, and *passim*.

¹¹⁸ FAULKES 2005: 49, line 21, 94; FAULKES (1995: 52) translates “mighty or mysterious winter”. Cf. GERING 1896: 47; ZOËGA 2004: 136; HULTGÅRD 2004.

¹¹⁹ FAULKES 2005: 131. On the other hand, LARRINGTON (2008: xviii) affirms that *Ragnarok* means “the Doom of the gods” – adding – “though the word *rok* ‘doom’ is sometimes confused with *rōkkr* ‘twilight’, most notably by Snorri, hence the alternative term ‘Twilight of the gods’ or ‘Götterdämmerung’.

¹²⁰ FAULKES 2005: 170; “perhaps the name of a giant, or just a kenning for ‘generous man’”. Cf. SÖDERBLOM 1901; 204-222.

¹²¹ FAULKES 2005: 49, line 23: *þeir vetr fara þrír saman ok ekki sumar milli*. Cf. FAULKES’ translation (1995: 53) “There will be three of these winters together and no summer between”.

We must also note that, according to *Gylfaginning* 52,¹²² after the end of the “mighty winter” and of the fire of (the giant and demon) Surtr (*Surtalogi*),¹²³ two human beings, Líf and Leifþrasir,¹²⁴ who were hidden in the grove of Hoddmímir,¹²⁵ will repopulate the earth.

In any case, this version was not strictly in agreement with the freshly introduced Zoroastrian chiliadic doctrine of the 12,000 years (which appears to be evoked already in *Yt.* 9, 10), although one Avestan fragment, appended to the Pahlavi commentary of the *Widēwdād*, 2, 19,¹²⁶ tries to offer a mediation or a link between two different stories and mythical chronologies. In this (without doubt, contradictory) context, the *vara-* appears as a kind of (temporary) earthly *refugium*, where the seed of the Aryans can be preserved. Its basic origin is in any case due to the incoming winters; thus, it is not properly a true paradise, but a means of resistance and defence against these new dangers. We may remark that also the favours, which Yima asked Druuāspā in *Yt.* 9, 9-10 (in order to introduce big and little animals and indestructibility in the creation of Ahura Mazdā, expelling thirst and hunger, old age and death, hot and cold winds), underline the positive functions of Yima. On the contrary, Aṇra Mainiiu is called *pouru.mahrka-* (*Yt.* 10, 97, etc.),¹²⁷ while he defines himself as *mahrkanqm mahrkō.təmām* “the most mortiferous among the mortiferous ones” (*Yt.* 3, 13), an epithet that cannot be separated from the image of the winters brought by Mahrkūša. The Avestan imaginary insists on a number of demons personifying death and decomposition: e.g., Aoša “destruction”, Astō.viḍātu “the binder of the bones”, Nasu “corpse”, Vīzarəša “who drags away the deceased”, Maršuan “decrepitude”. Pahlavi sources actually consider Ahreman as ontologically “inexistent” with respect to the *gētīg* dimension,¹²⁸ because he possesses

¹²² FAULKES 2005: 54, lines 10-13 (*En þar sem heitir Hoddmimis holt leynask menn tveir í Surtaloga er svá heita: Líf ok Leifþrasir; ok hafa morgindöggar fyrir mat. En af þessum mönnum kemr svá mikil kynslóð at byggvisk heimr allr*). Cf. FAULKES’ translation (1995: 57): “And in a place called Hoddmimir’s holt two people will lie hid during Surt’s fire called Life and Leifþrasir, and their food will be the dews of morning. And from these people there will be descended such a great progeny that all the world will be inhabited”.

¹²³ FAULKES 2005: 176.

¹²⁴ FAULKES 2005: 171.

¹²⁵ SÖDERBLOM 1901: 211-222. For a brief presentation of the Old Norse sources see HULTGÅRD 2007: 117.

¹²⁶ See PANAINO 2004b.

¹²⁷ BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 901. Cf. GRAY 1926: 113, and *passim*.

¹²⁸ See SCHMIDT 1996.

only a contrastive and destructive function, while the origin of death is actually attributed to the “mixture”. In reality, man has been created (in the pure state), according to the *Dēnkard*,¹²⁹ as “a material immortal being”, but in the limited time, after the “mixture” produced by Ahreman’s aggression, he is only “a material mortal being” and for this reason he must die. Thus, we can say that the mortal nature of human beings is connected with their actual role in the creation (according to the Pahlavi treaties),¹³⁰ but their death comes only because of the aggression and the mixture, while the immortality of their souls and the promise of the final resurrection in the *Frašgird* counter the effects of earthly death. In this context, Ohrmazd cannot grant any “physical” immortality, because it would stop the progression of time, but he does not provoke death. If we recall the famous episode of Zardošt asking Ohrmazd for immortality in the *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, 3, 1-3,¹³¹ we learn that Ohrmazd refused it in order to avoid that also other humans, eventually seduced by Ahreman, could become immortal. Thus, if KELLENS¹³² rightly focuses on the fact that apparently the origins of human mortality are not clearly explained in the Iranian sources, it is, however, patent that death is a necessity due to the *gaēθiia-* dimension and that it was produced by the evil forces, because the primordial opposition was between *gaiia-* and *ajiiāiti-*. The death of the body, then, is connected only to “the time of the mixture”, but it does not involve the eternal dimension, i.e. the time without limits. So, we can suspect that the end of Yima’s fabulous period of (temporary) “immortality” and the following construction of the *vara-* were not necessarily connected, at least according to an earlier version of the Iranian myth, to an “original” sin of Yima, introducing death into the world (apparently as a *deus ex machina*).¹³³ Thus, we cannot assume that, in the framework of the Zoroastrian version of the myth, death was simply considered as an inevitable need due to the internal contradiction between immortality and reproduction, although this reason

¹²⁹ MOLÉ 1963: 466-468.

¹³⁰ See again MOLÉ 1963: 202, 386, 406, 443; cf. also DE MENASCE 1973: chapters 316-318, pp. 301-302.

¹³¹ CERETI 1995: 81-82, 134, 150-150. Cf. JACKSON 1899: 120; see also WEST 1880: 194-196. As TREMBLAY reminds me, this passage might depend on early Iranian (i.e. Avestan) sources, as noted by SUNDERMANN 1978: 498.

¹³² KELLENS 1999-2000: 726.

¹³³ See SHAKED 1987a: 242-244.

actually seems to reflect an Indo-European pattern.¹³⁴ We must also consider that, in a later Avestan source (*Aog.* 28), Anra Mainiiu's dwelling is eventually located into a(nother?) *vara-*.¹³⁵ This peculiar reference puts the representation of any place called *vara-* in a very ambiguous position, also when we reflect on the fact that, in the *R̥gveda*,¹³⁶ the functions attributed to the *valá-* are patently negative,¹³⁷ although it is risky to add further speculations about this subject.¹³⁸ The necessity of death belongs to the "mixture" period (for instance, to the winters, from which part of humanity does not escape) and it is due to Anra Mainiiu and the evil forces irrupted after the aggression, but it is also explained thanks to the limited time (i.e. the millenaristic doctrine). In this theological framework, neither human beings can choose death, nor a primordial (positive) divine being makes such a choice; they simply die because of the Antagonist, but they all have their own *frauuāši-*, pre-existing and enduring after death. The re-composition of the animical complex (*uruuan-* plus *daēnā-*) in the *post mortem* will grant a provisional state of beatitude or punishment until the *frašō.kərəti-* and the complete re-establishment of a life without death. Thus, while Yima's choice to die was not a "sin" in the Indian framework, where this decision solved (although with a number of ambiguities)¹³⁹ the contradiction between immortality and generation, we have not yet found its corresponding act in the Mazdean Iran, where the Daēuwas were false gods, and where any act done for their sake would be considered as negative. The only responsibility, which can be attributed to Yima after the arrival of winters is the one concerning the fact that he was compelled to choose the best part of the

¹³⁴ In particular, about the over-population of the earth see DE JONG 1985. Cf. also BALDRY 1952: 85.

¹³⁵ Cf. LINCOLN 1982: 3. Rightly LINCOLN mentions also "the cave of Lie" (*gərəḍa-*) on Mount Arəzūra (*Vd.* 3, 7), a subterranean enclosure contaminated with death and putrefaction, "whence all demons issue". See already SÖDERBLOM 1901: 177.

¹³⁶ GRASSMANN 1996: 1225-1226. See, in particular, *R̥V.* 3, 30, 10; 1, 52, 5; 10, 67, 6.

¹³⁷ See MALANDRA 1983: 178; cf. JACKSON 2006: 71, 75.

¹³⁸ Very improbable is HERTEL's (1924: 17-20, *passim*) location of the Avestan *vara-*, Vedic *valá-*, in the heaven. In his earlier approach to this myth, also DARMESTETER (1877: 232-234) assumed that the *vara-* was a celestial place, corresponding to the fourth heaven. The whole framework of the myth concerns the earth, although that place had an inner cosmological dimension, like a microcosm. Against HERTEL's hypothesis that the *vara-/valá-* can be referred to the vault of the heaven see also KEITH 1925: 621-623.

¹³⁹ See SHAKED 1987a, *passim*. Pahlavi sources clearly locate the *war* underground, although in different places; see SKJÆRVØ (2008: 505-506).

living word to be saved; the rest was left to the catastrophe. But this obligation was compulsory and was not decided by Yima.¹⁴⁰ We should also consider the possibility that the story contained in *Vd.* 2, 1-5, and generally interpreted as the witness of the refusal of the Ahurian and Zaratuštrian *daēnā*- by the primitive and brave Yima had another (until now hidden) meaning.¹⁴¹ If the *daēnā*- refused by Yima was not the “Mazdean Religion”, but a female double, i.e. the symbolic representation of the final prize after death and, as Yima’s female double,¹⁴² that of his spiritual twin-sister, the act of Yima would be different with respect to that attributed to Yama. In brief, if the vision of the *daēnā*- can symbolically be taken as a premise for a following incest,¹⁴³ the refusal of her means that only the “imaginal” dimension of such a union was avoided, and not its corresponding earthly version. What can one find more similar to his *daēnā*- if not his own (female) twin? But, while the immediate meeting of Yima with the *daēnā*- would have produced a stop in the Ahuric process of creation, Yima’s refusal becomes the basic condition in order to increase the living world. For this reason, we may note that, while the Indian twin chose death, the Iranian one refused it. Remarkably enough, the consanguineous union was considered in Mazdean Iran a perfect form of marriage; thus, if we accept the explanation of this myth as suggested here, the incest reinstalls a kind of primordial unity, and corresponds to the final process of reintegration of the different parts of the human soul; it is a kind of salvation from physical death, which cannot be eliminated because of the presence of the demons in the world history. The Iranian version of the myth thus offers an interesting esoteric explanation for the incest, which, in any case, Yama probably committed too, although the Indian sources result to be seriously in trouble with any admission of its occurrence.¹⁴⁴ We may note that also in the case of Yima, Avestan texts do not mention neither his incest nor his twin, a fact that is very peculiar, but which can be explained supposing that the mention

¹⁴⁰ See below the more detailed discussion of this problem in chapter 6.

¹⁴¹ See more in detail PANAINO (in press).

¹⁴² I must remark that also Kellens (2000: 246-247) expressed some doubts about the identification of such a *daēnā*-, suggesting the presence of the female soul and not of the “religion”, although his general interpretation of the data is partly different from that I present here.

¹⁴³ We must recall that, in Pahlavi literature, Īmšēd “is said to have established incest marriage (*xwēdōdah*)”, as noted by SHAKED (1987a: 241).

¹⁴⁴ See also JAINI 1977: 323.

of the *daēnā*- made the reference to such (additional) female twin not necessary. In any case, we know that, according to *Vd.* 2, 41, in the *vara*-, “every forty years, by every couple, two human beings (lit. “men”) are born, a pair, a woman and a male, thus (it is) for (all) these sorts of cattle”¹⁴⁵ (*caθβarəsātəm aiβi.gāmanqm duuaēibiia haca nərəbiia duua nara us.zaiieīnte miθβana strica nairiasca aθa aētaēšqm yōi gēuš sarədanqm*). This statement presupposes, although it is not openly expressed, a pattern based on the principle that twins generate other following twins (one male, one female), thus reproducing the perfect origin of humanity starting with Yima and his twin-sister or double.

Coming back to the basic interpretation of the beginning of *Vd.* 2, we must insist on the fact that the *daēnā*- was actually “shown” to Yima (*Vd.* 2, 1: *kahmāi fradaēsaiiō daēnqm yqm āhūirīm zaraθuštrīm*; *Vd.* 2, 2: *ahmāi fradaēsaēm daēnqm yqm āhūirīm zaraθuštrīm*); this means that he was able to see her when he was not yet dead, and not that Ahura Mazdā tried to “teach” her, as generally these passages have been interpreted. Then, the vision of his double without passing through death gave Yima (like *Zaraθuštra*) a supernatural conscience, which compelled him to refuse the immediate mystic union with his beautiful (she-)double, because he felt to have been created for a different mission, that of increasing the living world. For this reason, we can understand why Ahura Mazdā, notwithstanding Yima’s eventual obstinacy against his divine proposal, was not offended and did not react with fury.¹⁴⁶ If my interpretation is sound, we may presume that Ahura Mazdā expected such a “refusal”. Furthermore, if we reflect just for a moment on the traditional interpretation of these passages, we cannot explain the inner rationale of a refusal committed by a human being who, in front of a god like Ahura Mazdā, dares to deny his “religion” (i.e. his existence and power), but accepts to increase his kingdom. What happened was surely different and the *daēnā*- probably was something more substantial than a simple “Religion” taken as an ideal *corpus* of concepts and oral texts. This was only a later re-interpretation, but its original function and meaning should have been very different. A compelling support to this radical reinterpretation of the facts comes from the reading of the so-called “*Ĵam*’s Confession of Sins”, which covers the whole chapter 31 of the Pahlavi

¹⁴⁵ See REICHELTL 1911: 141.

¹⁴⁶ See PANAINO 2009c.

Rewāyat to the Dādestān ī Dēnīg.¹⁴⁷ This text will be discussed again in our essay, but at the moment we may just start with an important remark. The scenario in which this confession takes place is very similar to that of the afterlife judgment. We may resume it in brief: Zoroaster speaks with Ohrmazd and asks him to show “the soul of him who was the most active in the human body in the world”. Ohrmazd, then, summons the soul (*ruwān*) of Ǧam, which comes from the direction of hell. Zoroaster asks Ohrmazd about the identity of this sinful image and what wrong he did, and god declares that this person is Ǧam, son of Wīwanghān, who stood on the path of Ahreman and the demons, when Ohrmazd showed him the *dēn*. Then, Ǧam confesses his sins and makes a long act of contrition, after which he is forgiven and can be released from the hell; so, he goes to the “limbo” (*hamēstagān*), where he becomes its lord. This description evokes in many aspects the meeting of the *uruuan*- with the *daēnā*-, with the difference that now it is Ǧam to come from the same path of the sinful *daēnā*-; after this new judgment, an event very unusual in the Mazdean tradition, Ǧam can take the direction to the limbo. If we accept the basic idea that we are playing with a pattern based on the twinning and a series of mirrored images, some peculiar aspects become more clear. On the earth, as a twin, Yima saw the female aspect of himself (or of his *uruuan*-); in the afterlife, he walks as a *ruwān* on the same path of the *dēn*, and stays in front of Ohrmazd, who forgives him. Furthermore, two passages of the text state that Ohrmazd “showed” the *dēn* (31a9: *im dēn ō Ǧam nimūd*; 31c4: *ō man nimūd*), as the Pahlavi commentator of *Vd.* 2, 1-2, translated *fra-daēs*- with *fraz-nimūdan*. They confirm what I noted before with respect to the Avestan background of this story. No “religion” was taught; the body that appeared was not that of the religious *corpus* or of the theology, but that of a beautiful lady, through (*fra-daēs*-) whom Yima was shown an unexpected beauty in form of his own double. For this reason, I wonder if we have here a kind of transparency, which is alluded in the Avestan source, and not a simple mirrored image.

There are also other peculiar facts that cannot be taken without a critical discussion. For instance, the *Widēwdād* does not tell about Yima’s exit¹⁴⁸ from the *vara*-, but its occurrence should be deduced from another Avestan

¹⁴⁷ WILLIAMS 1990, I: 134-138; II: 57-59.

¹⁴⁸ This is an inevitable supposition, if there is a connection between the two versions of his mythological cycle, one mentioning his construction of the *vara*- and another referring to his death.

passage stating that Yima was killed by Spitiiura.¹⁴⁹ The demons were not present in the *vara-* and such an exit should be probably related with another sin/mistake that leads also to his final death (but also his final meeting with his own *daēnā-*). In any case, Yima's behaviour in *Vd.* 2 had nothing offensive and sinful,¹⁵⁰ although, as we have seen and will see again, later traditions demonized it.

If a mythological pattern concerning a primordial option for death (and, of course, procreation) was basically known to Indo-Iranian peoples at a certain moment of their culture (and many shared elements support this solution),¹⁵¹ we could also assume that this original event, so significant for the destiny of the human race, was strongly transformed and re-interpreted in the Iranian framework, particularly if it was connected, as I suspect, with the primordial incest and with the need of future generations (but this problem will be discussed below, in chapter 10). In any case, the Gāthic and generally Avestan orientation towards death, as something belonging to Angra/Aṇra Mainiiu and not to Ahura Mazdā, would have been completely in contrast with the Vedic one, which, in this very aspect, appears to have been probably earlier.

In other words, if we would read the same R̥gvedic passage from a Zoroastrian perspective, we should interpret it as follows: “for the sake of the “Demons”, Yama/Yima chose death and refused immortality for his descendants [...]”.¹⁵²

It is clear that we see here a strong opposition between two traditions, an opposition showing — I suggest — the radical innovation represented by the Zoroastrian assumption that death had nothing to do with Ahura Mazdā and *aša-*, but also that reproduction is not in contrast with the main target of the supreme god, who, thanks to the “living” dimension (the *astuuant-* *ahu-*, later the *gaēθiia-* and the *gētīg* ones)¹⁵³ is able to directly counter and

¹⁴⁹ This should have happened obviously out of the *vara-*, where his life was perfectly secure against any danger.

¹⁵⁰ See also SHAKED 1987a: 242.

¹⁵¹ See MACDONELL 1897: 8, 173.

¹⁵² Such a negative interpretation of the antagonism between gods and humans finds some parallels in the Babylonian tradition, in particular in the myth of Atrahasis; see, e.g. BOTTÉRO – KRAMER 1989: 529-567.

¹⁵³ GNOLI 1963; SHAKED 1971. On the other hand, in the *Widēwdād*'s cycle of Yima (2, 22), the *ahu-* *astuuant-* can be also “wicked” (*aya-*). The origin of such a situation is unclear, as explained below in chapter 6.

contrast the evil “presence” of the Daēuuas and Aṇgra Mainiiu during the mixture; human beings die not for the sake of the Devas, but because of the presence and the will of the Daēuuas. Thus, they became mortal because, in the “mixture”, time dimension is limited, but they are still eternal with respect to the unlimited time that will be restored. This way, their physical death is transformed through the continuous action played by the *frauuas* (also by those of the dead ones) and by the new-born progeny, while the target of the Daēuuas is, contrariwise, that to stop any kind of progeny as clearly explained in the (only apparently later) myth of Mašya and Mašyāne, or in the dynamics of the aetiological myth of Jēh¹⁵⁴ and of the dramatic occurrence of her first menials. So, the antagonism between death and reproduction had lesser (or, anyway, different!) importance in the Zoroastrian perspective, because the complete annihilation of life, the *ajiiāiti*-, represents the constant demoniac aim. We can also wonder if some aspects of this divarication between India and Iran are partly pre-Zaraθuštrian, because the negative reinterpretation of the passage concerning Yima’s refusal of the *daēnā*- resulted to be a later accommodation with respect to his damnation we find in the *Gāθās*.

¹⁵⁴ PANAINO 2011b.

4. YIMA'S "CHOICE" AND "FAULT"

Now we can raise again the question whether in particular this original and mythological "choice" made by the Vedic Yama is one of the mythical events to be considered on the background of the Gāthīc damnation of Yima (Y. 32, 8),¹⁵⁵ apparently due to his actually most significant sin or crime

¹⁵⁵ Y. 32, 8: (a) *aēšaṃ aēnaṇhaṃ / vīuaṇhušō srāuuī yimascī* (b) *yā mašiiəṇṅ cixšnušō / ahmākəṇṅ gāuš bagā x^vārəmnō* (c) *aēšaṃciṭ ā ahmī / θβahmī mazdā vicīθōi aipī*. It can be useful to offer some translations in order to show the difficulties emerging from the interpretation of this extremely difficult passage: HUMBACH 1957: 367 ("Um einer dieser Frevel willen wurde vor allem Yima, der Sohn des Vivahvan zur Aussage gebracht, der die Menschen mit Glücksanteil erfreuen wollte – die Unseren er, der Stier –, indem er einen [Mein-] Eid ablegte, gerade um eines dieser Frevel willen – in dieser deiner [richterlichen] Entscheidung, o Mazda"); HUMBACH 1959, I: 97 ("Wegen eines solchen Frevels wurde sogar Yima, der Sohn des Vivahvan, zur Aussage gebracht, der sich der Menschen mit Glücksgabe hatte annehmen wollen, der Unseren, er, der Stier, indem er einen Eid ablegte, gerade wegen eines solchen Frevels – in dieser deiner richterlichen Entscheidung, o Kundiger"). LENTZ 1962: 132: ("(it is by one) of these transgressions (that) even Yima, the son of Vivahvan, became known, who tried to compel our [fellow-country]men to do obeisance by protesting himself to be god, the bull. Even with the [remainder] of these transgressions [it happens] to [us] according to thine decision, O Wise one"). INSLER 1975: 46-47 ("Even Yama, the son of Vivahvant, was tried for these sins, he who wanted to satisfy our men [by] swearing: 'The cow is goddess'. If I, too, am guilty of these sins, Wise One, lies in Thy judgment"), 204. HUMBACH 1974: 199: (only verse-line b: "der im Bestreben, die Menschen zufriedenzustellen [= ihnen gefällig zu sein], die Unseren, sich versündigte, indem er mit Gott rechnete"). GERSHEVITCH 1987: 492 ("From among these sinners none-less-than Yima was heard [pleading continuously], throughout Thy court-hearing, «O God, the desirer to satisfy our men [is] the [top-?] food-constituting ox(, no blames attaches to me). With these [here,] of-all-people, I have nothing in common (*lit.* from these-*čī* I am apart.»"). KELLENS – PIRART 1988, I: 120 ("[Pour certaines] des ces torts est renommé Yima Vīuaṇhuša, qui voulait choyer nos [mauvais] hommes, ... Et pourtant, ô Mazdā, est-ce que je participe à ta capacité de discerner ces [torts]?"); 1990; 1991, III: 86-87; HUMBACH 1991, I: 133 ("Even Yima, the son of Vivahvan, became notorious for [one instance of] such crimes, the ox, who tried to satisfy the mortals, our [people], in swearing by God [and] with regard to any such [crimes] I submit to Thy decision, O Wise One."), II: 82. HUMBACH 2002: 76, offers a completely new interpretation ("Even [or: particularly] Yima, the son of Vivahvan became notorious for such crimes, [Yima], who tried to content men, our [people] or: men [and] our [animals], [decreeing:] meat [should/may be] part of a [complete] meal").

(*aēnah-*).¹⁵⁶ Thus, is it possible that the choice for “death” found a certain resonance also in Iran, where it would be reversed and considered as due to the inspiration of the (false) gods (i.e., the *devas/daēnuas*)? Their role, in facts, results, in the Zoroastrian framework, in any case negative for the human beings. This observation offers also the possibility to remark, as a working hypothesis, that an original pattern containing a positive choice made by Yama for the sake of the (former) gods and in order to obtain progeny would have been subjected to a completely negative evaluation in the Gāthic, and more generally, in the Zoroastrian framework. Unfortunately, this solution, as I already noted, is improvable, although the theme of the choice is well attested, as the one of the incest, which is the same notwithstanding the evidence of two opposed moral evaluations. In addition, the Gāthic passage concerning Yima’s damnation is grammatically tantalizing, being its interpretation still very doubtful because of the presence of a number of *hapax legomena* and grammatical

See LOMMEL 1971: 61 (“Dieser Frevler einer ist, wie bekannt, auch Yima, der Sohn des Vivahvan, der unsere Leute erfreuen [ihnen gefallen] wollte, indem er Stücke von Rindfleisch aß. Bei deren [der Frevler] Bestrafung bin ich künftig, o Weiser, durch dich abgesondert.”), 64. Cf. also the earlier interpretations by DARMESTETER 1892: 238-239 (“Ces pécheurs avaient pourtant entendu Yima, fils de Vīvañhat, qui enseigna aux hommes de nous donner une part de la viande qu’ils mangent. Ceux d’entre eux qui sont ainsi à moi, ô Mazda, seront plus tard tes élus”). BARTHOLOMAE 1906: 29 (“Zu diesen Frevlern gehört, wie bekannt, auch Yima, der Sohn des Vivahvant, der, um die Menschen zufrieden zu stellen, den Unrigen die Fleischstücke zu essen gab. Von ihnen werde ich, o Mazdāh, künftig von Dir geschieden werden”); ANDREAS – WACKERNAGEL 1913: 380-381 (“Als einer dieser Frevler wurde zumal bekannt Yomo der Sohn des Vivohvont, der den zu uns gehörigen Menschen zu gefallen suchte, indem er Stücke vom Rinde aß. Bei deren Bestrafung bin ich alsdann, o Weiser, unter deinen Auserwählten”); SMITH 1929: 84 (“[As guilty] of these sins the son of Vīvahvant was known, even Yima, who [was] desirous-of-satisfying men, causing our [people] to eat pieces of ox[-flesh]. Apart from such-as-these am I at thy dividing wisdom hereafter”); DUCHESNE-GULLEMIN 1948: 255 (“Parmi ces pécheurs se trouve notoirement Yama, fils de Vivahvant, Qui pour flatter notre peuple lui a fait manger des morceaux du bœuf. Dans ta décision, ô Sage, je serai à l’écart de ceux-là”). For additional bibliography see SCHLERATH 1968, I: 46-47. Cf. also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 512).

¹⁵⁶ I do not follow DARMESTETER (1892: 238), BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 21-22), ANDREAS – WACKERNAGEL 1913: 380-381, LOMMEL (1971: 61) and GERSHEVITCH (1987: 488), who take, here, *aēnah-* as “sinner”, supposing the existence of two stems, one a neutral substantive, the latter an adjective, on the base of the Pahlavi tradition. See KELLEN – PIRART 1990: 197.

cruces that can be analyzed in various and contrasting ways.¹⁵⁷ The earlier interpretations assuming that this very passage was referred to an alimentary sin committed by Yima are possible only¹⁵⁸ if the standard (but until now peculiar)¹⁵⁹ reading *x^vārəmnō* could be emended in *+x^varəmnō* (“eating” or “being eaten?”), which, however, is supported only by few manuscripts,¹⁶⁰ and still present problems.¹⁶¹ The recent treatment of the passage by HUMBACH, who now explains *x^vārəmnō* as the gen. sg. m. of a *-man*-stem (i.e. *x^vārəman-*), derived from Proto-Ir. **x^vāra-* “meal”,¹⁶² opens supportive perspectives to the supposed reference to an alimentary crime. In its turn, the Pahlavi commentary to *Y. 32, 8*,¹⁶³ suggests that this passage

¹⁵⁷ KELLENS – PIRART (1991: 84) remark that *gāuš* cannot be taken as gen. sg. of the name of the cow, but perhaps (“éventuellement”) as nom. sg. of that for “bull”; furthermore, *gāuš* cannot be explained, as HUMBACH tried to do (1974: 199) as a sigmatic aorist, because the 3rd sg. inj./ind. involves an original **ē*-vocalism, which is incompatible with the presence of a velar stop at the beginning of that stem. Both scholars also assume that the form *x^varəmnō* has nothing to do with the verb *x^var-* “to eat”, particularly as present causative. They rightly remark that the interpretation of this stanza cannot be taken aside from that of *Y. 32, 7*. On this connection see also GERSHEVITCH 1987: 492. We remind that the other possible solution, assumed by HUMBACH, INSLER and others (see KELLENS 1984a: 113), explains *x^vārəmnō* by means of the comparison with Germ. *Schwur*, OHG. *swuor* “oath” (cf. HUMBACH 1957: 367 on the base of a suggestion proposed by K. HOFFMANN; HUMBACH 1974: 198).

¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, we may consider another solution kindly suggested by TREMBLAY. If the PIE present was **s^uēlh₃-ti/ s^uēlh₃-nti* (≥ *ἐλεῖν*; as suggested by TREMBLAY), we can expect as possible outcomes Av. *x^vāra-* besides *x^vara-*. For similar pairs, TREMBLAY mentions *van-* “to win” ~ *vāng-/vāna-*; *θuuas-* “to run” (Parth. *nydf’s*) ~ *θuuāsa-/θuuāsa-*. We must recall that GERSHEVITCH (1987: 491) noted that “Ossetic *xor*, Dig. *xwar* owes its meaning ‘wheat, grain, bread’, to a semantic transition of its Old Iranian ancestor from ‘food’ to ‘food par excellence’. The form of that ancestor can only have been **x^vāra-*”. But against this solution see the arguments raised by KELLENS – PIRART 1991: 87.

¹⁵⁹ See the careful analysis proposed by KELLENS 1984a: 113. Cf. also GERSHEVITCH 1987: 491-492.

¹⁶⁰ See GELDNER 1886: 117, n. 7: *x^varəmnō* C1; *x^varəmanō* S1.2 P11, J6.7 H1 K11 B1 L1.

¹⁶¹ See GERSHEVITCH 1987: 491.

¹⁶² HUMBACH (2002: 75), suggests three possible meanings for the stem *x^vārəman-*: “complete meal”, “company at meal” or “participant to a meal”.

¹⁶³ *Y. 32, 8: awēšān [dēwān] kēnīg [wināhgār] ān ī Wīwaghānān Jām srūd kē-š ō mardōmān čāšīd kū amāgān gōšt pad bazišn xwarēd [...].* “Among these [demons] the malicious [sinner] Jām, son of Wīwaghān, was celebrated, he who taught humanity: «eat in portions the meat of the ours [...]»”. See DHABHAR 1949: 150. Cf. SKJÆRVØ (2008: 512), who notes that: «Early scholars simply followed the Pahlavi interpretation: *kē-š ō mardōmān čāšīd kū amāgān gōšt pad bazišn xwarēd* “who taught people: eat the meat and

really mentioned an alimentary sin committed by Yima,¹⁶⁴ who would give meat to humans: the Pahlavi text literally says that Ğam (Yima) told men to “eat in portions the meat of the ours”. Some modern commentators usually assume that this meat “of ours” or “of our race” (*amāgān*) should be that of the animals, i.e. of the members of the same animal kingdom, but, very cautiously, we could suspect that the passage could be also read literally. If this were true, Yima would have introduced a kind of human sacrifice, but this explanation is not directly confirmed by the Avestan original, which, as we said before, remains problematic, notwithstanding HUMBACH’s recent solution ([...] *yā mašiiāng cixšnušō gāuš bagā x^vārəmnō* [or *+x^vārəmnō?*]).¹⁶⁵ Anyway, if the sin of Yima should be connected with a primordial act of (ritual) violence (*aēnah-*), most probably a lie, that probably produced the act of killing (which in the Pahlavi literature was also repeated by Mašya and Mašyāne, when they decided to eat their first couple of babies), then we could imagine that its origin was connected to the end of the primeval condition of happiness the first humans were living in. Thus, also the decision to kill animals¹⁶⁶ (if not human beings) could be brought into relation with the mortal dimension of humanity; in addition, the first human couple, subsuming the pattern of the Vedic myth of Yama and Yamī, killed and ate their first two babies.

According to *Y.* 32, 8, Yima, as KELLENS¹⁶⁷ remarked in the framework of a systematic criticism of the trifunctional explanation of Yima’s role and sins (in particular with regard to his threefold loss of the *x^vārənah-*, which, in another work, I have connected to the three parallel enlargements of the

distribute(?) it to ours(?)!” In the *Warštmānsr nask* commentary on this strophe in the *Dēnkard*, Av. *cixšnušō* is understood (correctly) as being related to the verb “satisfy (with gifts), make favorable” and the passage as being about how Ğam satisfied people by giving them meat to eat (*Dk.* 9.32.12; cf. *Pahl. Y.* 9.1). The Pahlavi rendering is based on several pseudo-etymological interpretations: *gāuš* = *gōšt* “meat,” *bagā* = *bazišn* “sharing,” and *x^vārəmnō* = *xwarēd* “eat!”».

¹⁶⁴ See CHRISTENSEN 1934: 11, 42-43. Cf. HUMBACH 1974: 197-198. A detailed and insightful discussion of the problem has been also offered by SKJÆRVØ (2008: 512). Very fittingly SKJÆRVØ (2008: 503) focuses on the fact that according to the Pahlavi translation of *Y.* 9, 1, humans became immortal by eating the meat offered by Ğam, which is a peculiar statement, when we consider that the eating of meat is put in connection with the first sin made by Mašya and Mašyāne.

¹⁶⁵ See KELLENS 1984b: 277.

¹⁶⁶ Cf. WAYMAN 1959: 50.

¹⁶⁷ See KELLENS 1984b: 268, n. 4.

earth,¹⁶⁸ and that could be also related to the three levels of the *vara-* was attributed a plurality of mistakes and manifestations of violence: *aēšqm aēnaṇhqm vīuuaṇhušō srāuui yimasci* “for (lit. of) these *aēnah-* Yima, Vīuuaṇ^hap̄t’s son, was known”. In addition, KELLENS noted that, in *Yt.* 19, 33-34, the mistake attributed to Yima was actually a lie (*draoya-*),¹⁶⁹ to

¹⁶⁸ PANAINO 1997b: 70; cf. also KELLENS 1997-1998: 746; 1999-2000: 731. SKJÆRVØ (2008: 507) excludes my suggestion stating that it “has no basis in the texts and explains nothing” and quotes both references by KELLENS as the first negative, the second “less negative”. I do not know why my colleague desires to change facts, because both quotations are, in my opinion, supportive, with the only caution that in the Iranian framework the correspondence between triadic patterns is not very pertinent. But the basis of my argument is not simply in the observation of the clear respect of the triadic pattern. Contrariwise, in this case, we find a direct correspondence between the progressive formation of the three following parts of the earth made by Yima, and the power on it (*x^varənah-*), which, analogically abandons him in three steps (or in three portions, as assumed by BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 964). The myth of Yima, in fact, proposes three progressive and proportional amplifications of the earth, the first of 1/3, the second of 2/3, and the third of 3/3 than before (i.e. the original dimension of the earth = 1 = 3/3, so that the earth itself now became 9/3 larger than it was at the beginning of the world = 3/3 or 1). Practically, it is not true that the earth became “twice its original size”, as SKJÆRVØ (2008: 503) assumes (without any reference to PANAINO 1997, where the problem was analyzed in details). The pattern adopted for the loss of the *x^varənah-* means that Yima has also lost all the power he was originally given by Ahura Mazdā with the right to perform the threefold amplification of the earth. It is not a compelling argument to write that my proposal is not in the sources, because most of our efforts of reconstruction are based on an interpretation of the data and not in a simple repetition of their content. For this reason, I still underline the fact that this analogy is pertinent, and that it finds additional correspondences also in the structure of the *Baršnum-Gāh* and, for instance, in the way in which the *vara-* itself was proportionally divided with 3, 6 and 9 holes or *mayas* (PANAINO forthcoming). Furthermore, a very good argument in support of my proposal is given by SKJÆRVØ himself (2008: 503), when he writes that: “Although it is not said explicitly, it may have been Yima’s *x^varənah* that enabled him to maintain the world in this state [...]”. This logically implies that the “fortune” should be also connected with the actual power of enlarging and controlling the earth, so that, when Yima sinned, the power abandoned him symbolically three times or in three portions, in order to show that the whole earth enlarged by him was no more his realm. Maybe this is only a speculation, but the statement that it explains nothing is a matter of discussion.

¹⁶⁹ GERSHEVITCH (1987: 496-499) offered an interpretation of *Yt.* 19, 33 worth to be quoted *in extenso*, assuming that, there, *anādruxti-* should be analyzed as **ana-a-druxti-* “abrogation-of-the-exclusion-of-lying”, so translating the passage: “(Everything was Golden-Age-like in Yima’s reign) previous to the abrogation-of-the-exclusion-of-lying, previous to the time when he restored (= *paiti.barata*) it, (namely) the lie, the untrue

which a later explanatory gloss (*vācim aṇhaiθim* “a false word”) was added; but he also assumed that an Avestan quotation contained in the *Pahlavi Widēwdād* (2, 6):

«confirme qu’il s’agit d’un péché de parole et enseigne qu’il eut pour conséquence, outre la déchéance de Yima, la suspension de l’immortalité: *mošu paiti.akərənaoŋ aošarj^hhaŋ huua hizuuu* “bientôt, il refit cela périssable par sa propre langue”». ¹⁷⁰

This attractive conclusion allows us to suspect that the plural of *aēnah-* in Y. 32, 7-8,¹⁷¹ could include a number of sins of mental, of verbal and, of course, of ritual and practical nature, finally introducing death into the creation. Thus, from a Gāthic point of view (which in any case was not that of the *Widēwdād* anymore), if the myth of the choice made by Yama was known, its occurrence could be one of the mythical reasons behind the series

word, to *činman-*”, where *činman-* is explained as *čin(t)-man-* “ability to invent”. Thus, according to GERSHEVITCH, “The tale of *Yašt* 19, 33, would emerge as follows from the translation so amended: There *was* lying before Yima’s reign began, but this achievement on taking over had been to remove it from availability. Centuries passed, in golden lie-less Age, until it occurred to Yima to abrogate the exclusion, and hand back (= *paiti*) the lied to *činman-*”. If this interpretation is correct, in any case this version of the cycle cannot be of Proto-Iranian origin, because it clearly implies Anra Mainiiu’s invasion of the earth, and then it already considers Yima as one of the heroic protagonists of the world history inside the “mixture”.

¹⁷⁰ See again KELLENS 1984b: 268, n. 4.

¹⁷¹ I try to offer a working translation of both stanzas, although they present a high number of problems: “I affirm (desiring to go) at the completion (of my path), that I do not know at all which ones of these sins (*aēnah-*) are defined as to be won (*jōiīā*), (sins) on account of which, by means of the brighting metal, he (Yima) was known (guilty) and among which (sins), you, o Ahura Mazdā, are the best who found the one who was left/abandoned (i.e. Yima, because guilty)”. “For (lit. of) these sins (*aēnah-*) even Yima Vīuuaṇhuša, was known (guilty), who (was one who) desired to satisfy our men, (like) a bull part of the meal, and am I here also of these (sins), o Mazdā, in Your judgment?”. Notwithstanding the metrical problems raised by KELLENS – PIRART (1990: 86), about *jōiīā*, I still maintain the earlier solution independently suggested by G. KLINGENSCHMITT and J. SCHINDLER to J. KELLENS (1974: 240), considering *jōiīā* as non.-acc. pl. nt. of a gerundive (*jōiīa-* < **jāi-ja-*) of the verbal root *jī-* “to win”. NYBERG (1938: 448) connected *jōiīā* with *jaiia-* (Y. 50, 7) “Gewinn, Sieg”, while HUMBACH (1957: 365, n. 3) with Ved. *jyā-* “Gewalt”. SKJÆRVØ himself (2008: 512) suggests a comparison between the “shining metal” and the sky, which actually was made of the same substance (*Yt.* 13, 2, etc.). He suggests that “There is no evidence that the term refers to the ordeal by fire, as assumed from Bartholomae to Insler and Humbach. Kellens and Pirart, however, suggested the etymology **hu-waina-* “good to look at,” which would fit, for instance, mirrors made of shiny bronze”.

of *aēnah*-s attributed to Yima. The problem is now to verify if such an interpretation could fit in the framework of the complex background of the Indo-Iranian mythology of the Primordial man and king (a fact that has been correctly questioned by Kellens¹⁷² with respect to the Iranian situation) and, to some extent, in that of the Indo-European myth of the Primordial man and of the first human couple.

¹⁷² KELLENS 1984b, *passim*.

5. INDO-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND

We have to reconsider the Indo-European and Indo-Iranian backgrounds of this myth, after the reassessment proposed by B. LINCOLN,¹⁷³ who analyzes (as already did GÜNTERT)¹⁷⁴ also the Ymir's cycle in Scandinavia (*Ymir* < Proto-Germanic **yumiyáz* < Indo-European *(*H*)*īm̥*-*íó*-s “twin”)¹⁷⁵ and that of Remus in Rome. The myth of the first man is, strictly connected with the idea of a primordial sacrifice of a man and/or a bull (or an ox).¹⁷⁶ Very fittingly DANDEKAR¹⁷⁷ had earlier suggested that the death freely chosen by Yama in *ṚV.* 10, 14, 4 should be equated with the sacrifice of the *Puruṣa* (*ṚV.* 10, 90); he also made reference to *ṚV.* 10, 81, 5ff, “where the creator Viśvakarman is asked to offer himself in the primeval sacrifice”.¹⁷⁸ Actually, we have to consider that also Manu,¹⁷⁹ the (first)¹⁸⁰ Vedic sacrificer (*ṚV.* 10, 63, 10) shows a number of relations with Yama, who is his (half-)brother,

¹⁷³ See LINCOLN 1975; 1977; 1980; 1986a: 1-40, *passim*; 1991: 32-48; 1997: 684-685. Cf. also MALANDRA 1983: 175. Some of the comparisons proposed by LINCOLN were, at least in part, focused on, much earlier, by EHNI (1890: 196-214, *passim*; 1896; see HOPKINS 1894: 162-163). We must also take into consideration the monograph written by LUGINBÜHL 1992, which offers important facts and interpretations. Cf. also EBENBAUER 1974.

¹⁷⁴ 1923: 365-367; see in particular the conclusive paragraphs (1923: 392-394).

¹⁷⁵ PUHVEL 1975: 153; BURKERT 1962: 365-368 (with reference also to BRELICH 19: 24-25); LINCOLN 1986a: 42-46; 1986b. Cf. MAYRHOFER 1996: 400, 401. See also KELLENS (2002: 39-40). Interesting remarks about the root *(*H*)*iem̥*/(*H*)*īm̥*, and the Lat. stem *imago* “identical copy”, but also “phantasm”, have been suggested by DEVOTO (1967: 26-27), with particular reference for its secondary semantic relations with *gemma* and, through the latter, with *geminus*. In this framework; cf. also MEILLET 1931, and PUHVEL 1975. But cf. also SKJÆRVØ (2008: 514), who does not accept the comparison with Ymir.

¹⁷⁶ LINCOLN 1975: 144. Cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 178-179.

¹⁷⁷ See DANDEKAR 1945: 202; cf. LINCOLN 1975: 132-133, who is very supportive particularly “in the light of the comparison to Ymir and Yima”.

¹⁷⁸ DANDEKAR 1945: 202, n. 12. Cf. also FRENKIAN 1943.

¹⁷⁹ The Indo-European background of this figure was clear also to CHRISTENSEN 1916: 63. He actually compared Manu with the Germanic *Urmensch* Mannus, the son of the god Tuisco (see Tacitus, *Germania*, 2). See also LINCOLN 1975.

¹⁸⁰ But also Yama presents himself as a primordial sacrificer, as DANDEKAR (1945: 204) remarked, in particular when “he is the first to stretch the web of the sacrifice (VII, 33. 9-10), which was further extended by the Vāsiṣṭhas. He was also the first to serve as the sacrificial offering”.

both being sons of Vivasvant (*RV*. 9, 11, 8; 10, 58, 1; 8, 52, 1),¹⁸¹ but — a fact less considered — of different mothers.¹⁸² Thus, if we assume, like LINCOLN,¹⁸³ that “in Iran, the figure of *Manu is well hidden, but discernible nonetheless”,¹⁸⁴ and if, as the same scholar suggests,¹⁸⁵ Spitiiura, Yima’s brother¹⁸⁶ who dismembered him (*Yt*. 13, 46), “is but a reflex of Manu”,¹⁸⁷ the situation becomes more clear, because it shows how an original myth was readapted in an “heroic” story. Practically, we can find here the pattern of the two brothers, one as ancestor of the priestly line¹⁸⁸ (Manuščihr, from whose genealogy Zaratustra himself derives [*Ir.Bd.* 35, 52-53], although he was partly rejected and demonized because of the role played by Spitiiura), and the other one, who was originally the first “lord”¹⁸⁹ of the mortals (Yima/Yama). In his turn, also the giant Ymir was killed, according to *Gylfaginning* 7–8,¹⁹⁰ by Borr’s sons (one of them was Óðinn),¹⁹¹ and the world was made with the dismembered parts of his body as in the case of the Puruṣa. Other sources belonging to the so-called *Poetic Edda* give additional

¹⁸¹ LINCOLN 1975: 134-135. Cf. ZELLER 1990: 30-35.

¹⁸² Cf. already GÜNTERT 1923: 363-365.

¹⁸³ LINCOLN 1975: 135.

¹⁸⁴ As CHRISTENSEN noted (1916: 66), Manuščihr (< Av. *manuš.ciθra-*) is a reflex of Manu himself. This article by CHRISTENSEN is very important with regard to the later Iranian sources about the legend of Manu; cf. also LINCOLN 1975: 136. See also VON WESENDONK 1924: 155-156, in particular, for what concerns the existence of a sister of Manu, named Manušag. See already GEIGER 1916: 54-55. Manušag is actually mentioned in the *Selections* of Zādspram, ch. 9, 1 (GIGNOUX – TAFAZZOLI 1993: 64-65), where she is the woman of the demon Ēšm (Av. Aēšma) and the mother of Koxred. We can wonder if this direct association with Ēšm is a reflex of the demonization of Manu. SKJÆRVØ (2008: 516) considers the potential connection between Manu- and Manuščihr, proposed by CHRISTENSEN, “slim”.

¹⁸⁵ LINCOLN 1975: 135.

¹⁸⁶ According to the *Ind.Bd.* 31, 3, and the *Ir.Bd.* 35, 1, Spītūr is one of the brothers of Jam (CHRISTENSEN 1934: 79; cf. PAKZAD 2005: 389). These were Tahmōraf, Spītūr, and Narseh.

¹⁸⁷ On the contrary, CHRISTENSEN (1934: 52) suggested that Spitiiura should have been inserted into the genealogy of Yima only later. Cf. LINCOLN 1986b: 471.

¹⁸⁸ See GÜNTERT 1923: 371.

¹⁸⁹ SKJÆRVØ (2008: 504, 510) offers a large *conspectus* of the pertinent sources regarding Yam in the Manichean framework, with particular attention for his role as *Rex Honoris*.

¹⁹⁰ See FAULKES 2005: 11-12.

¹⁹¹ Cf. YOUNG 1954: 34-35; LINCOLN 1975: 128-129.

information about his cycle.¹⁹² The death of Remus (whose name can be explained as a derivation from PIE. **jemo-*, with *y* → *r* under the influence of *Ruma*, *Rōma* and *Rōmulus*),¹⁹³ can be “seen as the sacrifice which establishes that creation”,¹⁹⁴ i.e., the founding of a city as an act of creation in a cosmological sense.¹⁹⁵ With regard to LINCOLN’s description of the facts, I must remark, so following HILLEBRANDT,¹⁹⁶ GÜNTERT¹⁹⁷ and OBERLIES,¹⁹⁸ that Yama was a mortal god (and it is in this sense that his death has to be understood together with the fact that in *AV.* 18, 3, 13, he is presented as the first one who died among the mortals, because “mortal” not necessarily means “human”), and that, notwithstanding a long series of *loci*

¹⁹² These are: *Seeress’s Prophecy* (or *Völuspá*) 3, 1: “Young were the years when Ymir made his settlements, [...]” (*Ár var alda, þat er Ymir bygði*). *Vafþrúðnismál* (or *The prophecy of the prophetess*) 21: “From Ymir’s flesh the earth was shaped, / and the mountains from his bones; / the sky from the skull of the frost-cold giant, / and the sea from his blood” (*Ör Ymis holdi var iorð um scqpuð, / enn ór beinom biorg, / himinn ór hausi ins hrímkalda iotuns, / enn ór sveita siór*); 28, 3-4: “[Tell me ...] who was the eldest of the Æsir or of Ymir’s descendants / in bygone days” ([*Segðu ...*] *hverr ása elztr eða Ymis niðia / yrði í árdaga*). *Grimnir’s Sayings* (or *Grímnismál*) 40-43: (40) “From Ymir’s flesh the earth was made, / and from his blood, the sea / mountains from his bones, trees from his hair, / and from his skull, the sky” (*Ör Ymis holdi var iorð um scqpuð, / enn ór sveita sær, / biorg ór beinom, baðmr ór hári, / enn ór hausi himinn*). (41) “And from his eyelashes the cheerful gods/ made earth in the middle for men; / and from his brain were the hard-tempered clouds/ all made” (*Enn ór hans brám gerðo blið regin / miðgarð manna sonom; / enn ór hans heila vóro þau in harðmóðgo / scý ǥll um scqpuð*). (42) “May he have Ull’s protection, and that of all the gods, / whoever first quenches the flames; / for the worlds lie open for the sons of the gods / when they lift off the kettles.” (*Ullar hylli hefr oc allra goða, / hverr er tegr fyrstr á funa; / þviat opnir heimar verða um ása sonom, / þá er hefja af hvera*). *The Song of Hyndla* (or *Hyndluljóð*) 33, 4: “all the giants come from Ymir” (*iotnar allir frá Ymi komnir*). For the translation of these passages I have quoted LARINGTON 2008: 4; 43; 44; 57-58; 257). For the original sources I have followed the text prepared by D. STIFTER and S. H. PÁLSSON (Vienna 1994), corrected by F. DUCCI (in 2001) and edited by J. GIPPERT, within the electronic project *Thesaurus Indogermanischer Texte und Sprachmaterialien* (TITUS; www.titus.uni-frankfurt.de). It follows the 5th edition of the *Edda*, with the text established by G. NECKEL (1936) and revised by H. KUHN (1983).

¹⁹³ See PUHVEL 1975: 156-157; cf. LINCOLN 1975: 138-139.

¹⁹⁴ LINCOLN 1975: 138; 1986a: 41-64.

¹⁹⁵ The seminal idea that Remus was the “Bauopfer”, a kind of human sacrifice, was suggested already by KRETSCHMER 1909; cf. PUHVEL 1975: 149.

¹⁹⁶ 1891: 491-493; 1929: 356-360; 1980, II: 222-233.

¹⁹⁷ 1923: 388-389.

¹⁹⁸ 1998: 386-387. See also MALAMOUD 2002: 24 and *passim*.

communes, in the Indo-European framework many gods can die (Baldu,¹⁹⁹ Κάστωρ, the Ṛbhus) as well as they do outside²⁰⁰ of it (e.g. Adonis).²⁰¹ Thus, Yama, as divine and immortal being,²⁰² decided to die (10, 13, 4). Manu, human and mortal, was his half-brother,²⁰³ because he descended from the same father, while his mother was not Saraṇyū, but, as we will see, her double, Savarṇā²⁰⁴ or Sāvarṇī.²⁰⁵

A particular problem concerns Yamī, whose origin might be later, according to some scholars.²⁰⁶ After HILLEBRANDT,²⁰⁷ this particular set of myths had nothing to do with the son of Vivasvant. But the comparison with the Iranian myth of the primordial incest of the twins Mašya and Mašyāne, attested in the *Bundahišn*, as well as the scattered references to another couple²⁰⁸ formed by Ĵam and Ĵamag (*Ind.Bd.* 23, 1;²⁰⁹ *Ind.Bd.* 31, 4-5 =

¹⁹⁹ Cf. EBENBAUER 1974: 242-249.

²⁰⁰ SCHNEIDER (1967-68: 16-18) interestingly wonders if the dialog between Yama and Yamī concerns an attempt of posthumous incest, because Yama, passing the sea (*ṚV.* 10, 10, 1; cf. *ṚV.* 10, 14, 1) would have been already dead. Furthermore (pp. 19-24), he tries to connect the motif of the incest in the Indo-Iranian context with an Egyptian influence, a solution that is not convincing, because the cycle of Yama and Yima has a profound background in Vedic and Avestan mythologies, and an earlier Mesopotamian mediation having such a radical impact on both traditions is, in my opinion, very problematic.

²⁰¹ About the Mesopotamian perspective, see CASSIN 1982.

²⁰² The opposite solution, i.e. the one stating that Yama was the first man, then mortal, was supported by ROTH and SCHERMAN.

²⁰³ OBERLIES 1998: 387-390.

²⁰⁴ MALAMOUD 2002: 17.

²⁰⁵ See JACKSON 2006: 73, 114-115, with reference to *ṚV.* 10, 62, 11.

²⁰⁶ OBERLIES 1998: 338. Also PISANI (1928 = 1969: 340) suggested that not only Yamī was a later creation (with reference also to LEUMANN 1893: 301), but that also the figure of Yama derived from the image of the Áśvins, called *yamáu* “the twins”, a radical opinion that appears very difficult to be accepted in the Indo-Iranian framework. On Ved. *Yamī*-, see REMMER 2006: 65.

²⁰⁷ See, e.g., HILLEBRANDT 1891: 495, n. 3; 1927: 139; 1980, II: 224-230.

²⁰⁸ For this comparison see also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 509-510, 511-512.

²⁰⁹ In this paragraph the origin of monkeys, bears and other dangerous animals is attributed to the sexual union of Ĵam with a demoness and of Ĵamag with a demon (WEST 1880: 87; CHRISTENSEN 1934: 21); the same legend is the object of a longer presentation attested in the *Pahlavi Rewāyat to the Dādēstān ī Dēnīg*, ch. 8e; (see WILLIAMS 1990, I: 54-55; II: 13-14; cf. also CHRISTENSEN 1934: 28-29); this source strongly emphasizes the importance of the consanguineous marriage. As I have written in another work (PANAINO, forthcoming), it is to be noted that the intercourse of Ĵam with the witch generates “a bear, a monkey, a *gandarw*, and a *gōšwar*,” while that between Ĵamag and the *dēw* generates “a turtle, a cat, a cheetah, a frog and a leech”. Later, Ĵam and the *dēw* were drunk; then, Ĵam

Ir.Bd. 35, 4;²¹⁰ see also the *Ĵamasp-nāmag*)²¹¹ make, in my opinion,²¹² such a solution very improbable, although in the Avestan literature we do not find any direct mention of a twin sister of Yima.²¹³ This difference is in any case

switched places and clothes with the witch and slept with his sister Ĵamag. This *xwēdōdah* killed a lot of demons, and repelled the *dēw* and the witch to hell. Here, another primordial couple, different from that of Mašyā and Mašyāne, is involved. The idea behind the text is that between a demoniac being and a human being only monsters or *xrafstars* can be generated, but no other human person; in other words, beings which are not really *gētiḡ* in proper sense. It is interesting to remark that this *Rewāyat* implicitly criticizes the heterogamous marriage, and justifies the merits of an unconscious incest. Cf. also VON WESENDONK 1924: 156-157.

²¹⁰ In this paragraph it is stated that Ĵam and Ĵamag are twins, and that they generated another couple of twins, one male and one female. Then, it is also said (in the following paragraph) that Ĵam was cut (in two pieces) [*kirrēnīdan*] by Spitūr (cf. WEST 1880: 131; CHRISTENSEN 1934: 22; PAKZAD 2005: 390). This passage reminds that of *Vd.* 2, 41, where the generation of twins in the *vara-* is mentioned. Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 376-377.

²¹¹ In this source, Ĵam and Ĵamag behave as the first human couple, which lives for 717 years in normal conditions, and then takes a special refuge in the ocean; here, because of a sin committed by Ĵam, the glory was lost and the demons with Spitūr killed him with a “saw with one hundred teeth” (CHRISTENSEN 1934: 29-30). See KELLENS 2007a: 27, and SKJÆRVØ 2008: 508-509).

²¹² But see already GELDNER 1951, III: 133 against HILLEBRANDT. Cf., for instance, also VON SCHROEDER 1908: 278-280.

²¹³ According to later traditions Šahrnāz and Arnvāz were sisters of Ĵamšid. Dahāg captured them, who were liberated by Ferēdun. Both women are known from Avestan sources (*Yt.* 5, 34; 9, 14; 15, 24; 17,34; see HOFFMANN 1954: 43-49 = 1976b: 373-377), one with the name of *Sanḡhauuācī-* “she who speaks solemn announcements” and the latter with that of *Arəṇauuācī-* “she who speaks faults” (MAYRHOFER 1977a: nos. 24, 275; see now REMMER 2006: 214-225, *passim*). Ōraētaona liberated them from Aži Dahāka (see SKJÆRVØ 2008: 507-508). We may wonder if these women were twins (just a guess presumable from the similarity of their names, which seem to show one original personality split in two opposites), and in particular if they were considered already in the original form of the myth as sisters of Yima. In that case, it would be legitimate to rise an additional question, i.e., if they corresponded to a duplication (or a splitting) of *Ya/imī. Otherwise, they could be just two twins and/or sisters of Yima, but born after him and his twin-sister *Ya/imī. On the other hand, we cannot exclude that their relation with the cycle of Ĵamšid could be only a later phenomenon, based on the unification of similar cycles concerning twins and doubles. A different interpretation of the mythical origin of these two ladies has been proposed by REMMER (2006: 218-225). In fact, she has tried to establish a direct link between them and the R̥gvedic *Vala*-cycle, assuming that *Arəṇauuācī-* would have been in origin a feminine formation derived from a Proto-Iranian (and then, Avestan) form like **Arṇauācī-* (epithet of Dahāka), in its turn corresponding to *Arnavā-*, “Fluten habend”, name of a Vedic demon and surname of the same Vṛtra-. This way, *Arəṇauuācī-* (< Ir. **Arṇauācī-*) represents an earlier denomination of Uṣāh (Indo-Ir. **Uṣas-*). Only in the

remarkable, but explicable with the fact that Yima is no more an immortal god who accepted death and no more the first human to die too. Then, the place corresponding to the Vedic pair Yama/Yamī was transferred to Mašya/Mašyāne (then, from “*geminus/gemina*” to “he-mortal/she-mortal”). We can also wonder if the never-mentioned Avestan *Ya/imī was not hidden behind the image of Yima’s (refused) *daēnā*-, and if the triplication of the earth was a kind of magical action performed by the male twin under the strict condition of a refusal of the spiritual hierogamy (incest) with the *daēnā*- (a choice that did not prevent its performance in the earthly dimension). The last question will be discussed later on in chapter 10.

It is also important to recall that another aspect of Yama’s earliest cycle was identified by HERTEL²¹⁴ in the framework of a myth contained in *Mahābhārata* III, 142, 35 ff.²¹⁵ In the Golden Age (*ṛtayuge*), the primordial god (*ādidēva*-), assumed the function of Yima (*yamatva*-). In that period danger and death were absent (as in Yima’s kingdom) because of the paradisiacal state of perfection, and humans and beasts did not die, so that they became too many and the Earth became overburdened, and sank down for a hundred *yojanas*. Then, the Earth asked the help of Nārāyaṇa (= Viṣṇu), who, in form of a boar, grasped and raised her up on one of his tusks, making her lighter. But although some points underlined by HERTEL can be compared with the myth attested in the *Widēwdād*, its evolution is completely different (in the conclusion of the Indian version people do not actually die),²¹⁶ and as LOMMEL²¹⁷ thought, it is difficult to reconstruct a common myth on the base

Zoroastrian framework, the semantical value of this name would have been re-adapted, and re-interpreted in a religious way (from **Arnaūā*- “Fluten habend” > **Arna-ūāc*- “Schuld Sprechend”). In any case, Remmer assumes that the formation of the two sisters could be due to a *Persönlichkeitsspaltung* (REMMER 2006: 218). The hypothesis is suggestive, although too many passages are missing, and the idea of a moralistic Zoroastrianization of the female name uncertain. In addition, the problem of the potential links with the cycle of Yima is not taken into consideration. In any case, also this attempt concurs to show that, although the Avestan data about these two sisters is very poor, their origin has a very complex background.

²¹⁴ 1924: 26-34.

²¹⁵ Cf. DONIGER 1976: 222-223, and CHRISTENSEN 1934, II: 6-8.

²¹⁶ As NARAYAN 1898 (= 1987): 196-197 fittingly remarked. SKJÆRVØ (2008: 512) focusses on the fact that in the Greek poem *Cypria*, belonging to the Epic Cycle, Zeus would have devised the Trojan war in order to make the earth lighter after the death of many heroes and warriors.

²¹⁷ LOMMEL 1927: 197-198.

of these two stories. On the contrary, LOMMEL²¹⁸ took into serious consideration the Iranian origin of a (strongly christianized) Bulgarian myth, referred to the creation of the earth from the water by god and Satan. Such a story belonging to the Bulgarian Bogomil folklore was already studied by DÄNHARDT,²¹⁹ who very fittingly postulated a direct link with the Iranian tradition. Furthermore, DÄNHARDT suggested also remarkable points of comparison with another legend concerning the origin of the earth and the world²²⁰ taken from oral material coming from the South Siberian Altai,²²¹ which actually presents scattered parallels with the cycle of Yima²²² in the Avestan *Widēwdād*. Both stories reveal strong dualist trends, and directly involve the problem of the origin of death and the role of the earliest humanity or that of the first human being. A most recent and pertinent discussion of this material has been offered by STOYANOV.²²³ His study allows me to avoid a complete analysis of such a complex literature, which, at the moment, is not essential for the main problems discussed in the present research, because these external cycles, although they can present Iranian “resonances”, do not change the essential framework of the Indo-Iranian myth of Yama/Yima.

Certainly more fitting is the comparison with another story contained in the *Mahābhārata* II, 8,²²⁴ where the house for Yama’s meeting, built by Viśvakarman, patently looks like Yima’s golden age and its perpetuation into the *vara-*. In fact, not only it was very large (one hundred *joyanas* wide and long), and had the brightness of the sun (in the *vara-* actually there were lights), but also the condition of life it offered result very similar to those attested during the kingdom of Yima (“there was no cold, no heat, no old age, no death, no envy created by the Daēuuas. Father and son each went forth fifteen (years) in shape [...]”).²²⁵ It was “neither too cold nor hot inside; neither grief, old age, hunger, thirst, nor unpleasantness is found there, nor

²¹⁸ 1927: 197.

²¹⁹ 1907: 2-3, 5-6, 7-13; STRAUZ 1898: 2. Cf. also the later edition of the original material by IVANOV 1925: 329-337. An Italian translation of these stories has been offered by DETKOVA 2008: 105-116.

²²⁰ 1907: 3-5, 6-13.

²²¹ RADLOFF 1866: 175-176. Cf. STOYANOV 2001: 31, and n. 54.

²²² See again DÄNHARDT 1907: 5-6, 7-13. CHADWICK – ZHIRMUNSKY (1969: 1969 = 2010: 178-179) insist on the Buddhist characters of this saga. See also PEISKER 1911: 344-345.

²²³ 2001: *passim*.

²²⁴ Christensen 1934, II: 8-9. Cf. again SKJÆRVØ (*ibidem*).

²²⁵ See again CHRISTENSEN 1934: 9, 42, 45.

misery, fatigue, or obstruction [...]. All desires are satisfied there, human and divine, food and drink is plentiful and tasty. There are garlands of auspicious fragrance, the trees are always in bloom and fruit. There is both hot and cold water, tasty water". Royal seers, pure Brahmins, and heroes live in.²²⁶ It is clear that the image of the house of Yama/Yima and that of a paradisiacal dimension leaded by them is an archaic common tradition.

²²⁶ See the translation by VAN BUITENEN 1975, II: 47-48.

6. THE PARTICULAR POSITION OF YIMA IN THE MAZDEAN LITERATURE

In the Younger *Avesta*, Yima's position is doubtless peculiar. He is one of the first sacrificers (*Y.* 9, 4 to Haoma; *Yt.* 5, 25 to Anāhitā; *Yt.* 9, 8-11 to Druuāspā; *Yt.* 15, 15-17 to Vayu; *Yt.* 17, 28-31 to Aši Van^hhī). During his age, according to a formula that is frequently repeated in *Avesta*, "there was no cold, no heat, no old age, no death, no envy created by the Daēuuas. Father and son each went forth fifteen (years) in shape [...]"²²⁷ This means that in such a period reproduction was not interdicted, and that humanity lived in marvellous conditions. We shall note, after KELLENS,²²⁸ that differently from the Vedic situation, Yima is no more the first human being, because he belongs to the third primordial generation (in *Yt.* 5, after Haošiiānha Paradāta, Taxmaurupi Azinauuant²²⁹ [and his father Vīuuant^hant, who, in his turn, is considered to have been the "first «(mortal) man»" according to *Y.* 9, 3-4 (*paoiriiō mašiiō*)],²³⁰ but in any case his *aēnah*-s are implicitly responsible for a series of general consequences of catastrophic character (while this is not the case of Ved. Yama), although the motif of his heavy responsibility is a later adaptation of his cycle to the Zoroastrian framework. As we have seen, following SÖDERBLOM, the suspect that the story of the *vara*- belongs to an earlier myth concerning the end of the world and its repopulation results to be substantiated by various arguments. On the other hand, Yima was born as a reward for the merits obtained by his father who at first pressed *haoma*-. Also in this case, a human being (or a mortal [**mart(i)ja*-] divinity?) apparently corresponds to a Vedic peculiar god (if he was a god), Vivasvant, in his turn founder of sacrifice (I, 139, 1; 1, 53, 1).²³¹ According to *Widēwdād*, 2, Yima refused to accept the *daēnā*- (*Vd.* 2, 3-5),

²²⁷ But it is partly paralleled in the *Mahābhārata*; cf. CHRISTENSEN 1934: 9, 42, 45.

²²⁸ KELLENS 1984b: 272-273. But cf. also SKJÆRVØ (2008: 513-514).

²²⁹ KELLENS 1984b: 278-279. Cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 164-173. See also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 502-503.

²³⁰ BLOOMFIELD 1893: 176; but BLOOMFIELD is wrong when he states that according to *Y.* 9, 6-7, "the second mortal" (*bitiiō mašiiō*) was Yima; on the contrary, this man was Āθβiia, the father of Ōraētaona (Ferīdūn).

²³¹ See JACKSON 2006: 78.

but assumed the duty to multiply and protect the living world (*Vd.* 2, 4-8), enlarging it three times (*Vd.* 2, 9-19).²³² Then, Yima was informed by Ahura Mazda that a number of tremendous diseases and dangers were coming upon the world, and that only one part of the living beings²³³ might escape from

²³² See PANAINO 1997a.

²³³ According to *Vd.* 2, 23, “one third” (?) of the animals will disappear (or will survive) after the arrival of the winters, while *Vd.* 2, 30 states that the seed of 1900 men and of 1900 women will be saved (1000 men and 1000 women to be located in the lowest stratum of the *vara-*, 600 + 600 in the middle one, while only 300 + 300 in the lowest one). From other passages like *Vd.* 2, 29, notwithstanding the paradisiacal dimension that should characterize Yima’s age, we must deduce that some humans were not free from physical defects, and it is clear as well (*Vd.* 2, 27, 35, 37) that Yima had to save only the best ones among them. It is unclear how it was possible that these defects were present in that age. Perhaps, this contradiction can be resolved by assuming that with the announce of the arrival of the winters also human perfection started to decline. I must be carefully noted that a “true” interpretation of *Vd.* 2, 23, is much needed. Some scholars assume that the passage means that only “one third of the livestock will survive, or will come off (unhurt)” (MALANDRA 1983: 180; cf. also WOLFF 1910: 322: “Und [nur] ein Drittel des Getiers, o Yima, wird alsdann [mit dem Leben] davonkommen [von allen]”). Contrariwise, others, like KELLENS (1984: 263) give the opposite interpretation: “le tiers du bétail périra ici-bas”. In his turn, LOMMEL (1927: 205) proposed a very ambiguous translation: “(Zu einem Drittel?) soll dort, o Yama, das Vieh zu Grund gehen (?; oder: weggehen?), [...]”. Another pertinent problem concerns the analysis of *θrižat*, which, as we will see below, could not necessarily mean “one third”, but, for instance, “three parts”. Thus, in that case, the meaning of the passage would be “three parts, here, of the livestock will go (i.e. they will escape [unhurt] or [second possibility] they will die)”, depending on the semantic explanation of the verb *gam-* with *apa°*. It is worth noting that, according to this solution, the paragraph would, perhaps, symbolically imply that the livestock will “escape” (?) or “die” (?) from/in the three different areas of the world originally enlarged by Yima. Presently, I do not see any compelling morphological argument for interpreting *θrižat* as a fraction. In my opinion, it simply could mean “three times”. If we take into consideration the Pahlavi translation, we can observe that the text patently gives a completely different interpretation: *az sē-gyāgān ō ēdar Jam gōspand bē-rasēd* [...] “and from three places here will the animals come, o Jam; cf. JAMASP 1907, I: 37; ANKLESARIA 1949: 27. HAUG (1862 = 1878: 233) translated the Pahlavi version as: “From three places, O Yima!, the cows should go away [...]”. BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 812) assumed the existence of a stem *θrižant-*, n. “Drittel”, a derivative from *θriš*, based only on the present occurrence of *θrižat*, and connected with *θrižuuaq*, “dreimal”. But the logical derivation of a fraction from a multiplicative adverb remains for me a mystery. In fact, as I have already remarked (PANAINO 1997: 98-100), “the multiplicative adverbs involve a completely different idea from that of the fractions, and a semantic shift from “dreimalig, dreimal vorhanden” to “das Drittel” is not at all simple; or rather, they are opposite concepts”. See also EMMERICK (1992: 333), who rightly noted that the Pahlavi

them into the *vara*-²³⁴ that he had to build up (*Y.* 2, 20-43); in this refuge, no sign of the presence of Anra Mainiiu would be present and effective (*Y.* 2, 37). According to *Yt.* 19, 30-38, Yima again exerted his power over the seven *karšuuars*, over demons and men, over wizards and witches, over commanders, *kauuis* and *karapans*, in a state of beatitude and richness, practically like in a golden age; so it was, perhaps, before he started to conceive a lie opposite to the truth (*draoγəm vācim aṇhaiθīm*).²³⁵ Because of this sin the *x^varənah-* abandoned him three times, and he was compelled to wander about, surrounded by his enemies and, then, he hid himself on the earth. Finally, he was killed by Spitiura, who divided him (in two parts).²³⁶

It is obvious that Avestan mythology, as attested in the extant sources, is very contradictory about Yima. In the *Gāthās* his reputation is completely discredited, while in the *Yašt*s he behaves as a hero standing out for his magic and social role and as one of the primeval sacrificers, who lived in a golden age, until he committed a sin by pronouncing a lie against the truth. According to the second chapter of the *Widēwdād*, his role appears to be positive and incremental with respect to the enlargement of the earth and life, until the catastrophic arrival of the winters and other disasters

translators just “took *-at* to be the ablative termination of a consonant-stem”. More simply *θrižant-*, if it really exists, could mean “having three parts”, if such a form is not a simple corruption of *θrižuuaṭ* (cf. again PANAINO 1997: 100). Probably, this expression means a great quantity (of the livestock), although we cannot speculate too much about the actual figure behind it. For a tentative interpretation of the passage as “and then three times (?) here (some of the) cattle (*gəuš*) will get away (?)”, see PANAINO (*ibidem*).

²³⁴ About the Vedic *valā-* and other Vedic correspondences, see MALANDRA 1983: 178. Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 372-373. KELLENS (2002: 36) has emphasized the paradisiacal dimension of the age of Yima, but considers his construction of the *vara-* as a function (of Indo-Iranian derivation), which qualifies Yima as “le batisseur du royaume des morts”, although there is no supporting source to state that the people that followed him there were dead.

²³⁵ See also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 506-507.

²³⁶ The epithet of Spitiura is *yimō.kərənta-* “who cuts Yima (in two sides)” (*Yt.* 19, 46); see BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1301; 1625. Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 378. The fact that Gayōmart was considered as the originator of the *kustīg*, i.e. the Mazdean sacred belt, fittingly noted by SHAKED (1987a: 241; cf. LINCOLN 1986b: 472), can be framed in the complex net of symbolical associations covered by this important mythical figure. In fact, the belt divides the body in two parts, a superior and an inferior one, and it cannot have been by pure chance that he was taken as its primordial inventor. Thus, it is not peculiar the fact that also Jamšēd was credited with the same teaching in Middle Persian and New Persian sources, as underlined by SKJÆRVØ 2008: 504-505.

compelled him, following a suggestion of Ahura Mazdā, to take refuge into the (threefold) *vara-*. In this story, the only apparent “negative” aspect of Yima is focused in his denial of the *daēnā-*, although, as we have noted, probably this act had nothing of bad in itself, if we consider that Yima, refusing the meeting with the *daēnā-*, in reality assumed the duty of increasing the living world. Thus, if Yima’s role is presented as clearly negative in the *Gāθās*, the later Avestan literature testifies the presence of diverging versions and opinions about him or also, perhaps, various events chronologically different, to be dated before and after his (apparently) unforgivable sin. The version contained in *Yt.* 19 is the most compatible with the Gāθic evaluation and it probably could represent a sort of enlightening clarification about a new assessment of this cycle: then, the *aēnah-* mentioned in the *Gāθās* should be connected with such a lie, pronounced by Yima after this long and happy period, and probably with a consequent alimentary sin²³⁷ (and/or, perhaps, with an act of cannibalism), which seems to be reflected also in the story of Mašya and Mašyāne. The loss of the *x^varənah-* signified, anyway, the end of his power. Contrariwise, the other *Yašts* do not mention such a lie, and simply recall Yima’s golden age, while the *Widēwdād* describes in details the positive sides of his rule, before escaping into the *vara-*. One possibility, as noted before, is that of considering the *Widēwdād* story as referring to a period before that lie; then, it would not be in open contradiction with what happened later in Yima’s cycle, although it seems to belong to a completely different and, in my opinion, earlier cycle.

In other words, we may propose a presumable sequence of the events concerning Yima’s life, according to the “Zoroastrian” re-assessment: Ahura Mazdā appeared to Yima, and showed him the *daēnā-*; after the refusal of the *daēnā-* (i.e. the apparent refusal of a sudden “death” and of the union with his double as a kind of anticipated beatification), Yima enlarged the creation three times; then, with the support of Ahura Mazdā he organized the *vara-*, where, later, he took refuge against the winter and the demons with a selected part of humanity. According to the *Widēwdād*, the end of the paradisiacal age and the arrival of the winters have no apparent reason,²³⁸ apart

²³⁷ MORTON SMITH (1975) doubted that an alimentary taboo could be ascribed to the Indo-European period, but this objection does not exclude a later Iranian development.

²³⁸ SKJÆRVØ (2008: 505) writes: “After the third enlargement of the earth, any further expansion being apparently impossible, Ahura Mazdā and Yima called a meeting of gods and men, respectively, in which it was decided that the population of the earth must be

from the peculiar declaration that they shall come “upon the evil living existence” (*Vd. 2, 22: auui ahūm astuuantəm aγəm zəmō*).²³⁹ What such a reference to an *ahūm astuuantəm*, qualified as *aγəm*, can exactly mean, remains deeply questionable.²⁴⁰ The use of *astuuant-* instead of *gaēiθiia-* is an archaism in the Later Avesta, but the definition of the *ahu-* as *aγa-* “bad, evil, wicked” (*Ved. aghá-*), is unknown. Usually, it is the “mental” (*mainiiauuu-*) dimension to be both “positive” or “negative”, but the “living” or “physical one” was considered basically positive.²⁴¹ Did the *ahu-* become so? When? Why? Or, did another *ahu-* (that was *aγa-*) exist? Actually, we cannot establish which kind of aetiological explanation for such a sudden collapse of the beautiful primordial state of perfection was given by means of such an expression.²⁴² The end of “paradise” simply happens – and it is Ahura Mazdā to warn Yima with regard to the impending risks (see *Vd. 2, 20-21* and in particular the following speech delivered [in 22-30] by Ahura Mazdā during the general assembly of human and divine beings, where all the instructions concerning the construction of the *vara-* are given). In other

reduced.” But such a statement is not supported by the text, and attributes Ahura Mazdā and Yima with the deliberate decision to kill a large number of people. Contrariwise, it is Ahura Mazdā with Yima to invite gods and humans to an assembly in order to limit the damages of the incoming winter. If the arrival of bad times can probably reflect an old aetiological myth explaining the origin of death, it is neither Ahura Mazdā nor Yima who decided to introduce death into the “living world”. More simply, the *vara-*, which remains a protective fortress, cannot contain the whole humanity and a selection results compelling. Thus, we see a very different scenario.

²³⁹ Cf. HERTEL 1924: 36; LOMMEL 1927: 198-199, 205; MALANDRA 1983: 180. The Pahlavi tradition (and also some modern scholars) have re-interpreted and “corrected” the text, assuming the *aγəm* was a mistake for **aγa*, then to be put in agreement with the following *zəmō* “the winters”. This is a possibility, but it remains a solution *ad hoc*. See the critical discussion proposed by SKJÆRVØ (2008: 512, 515). SKJÆRVØ’s reference (2008: 515) to *vōiγnā* as “floods” does not take into consideration Buddhist Sogdian *wynh* and *wynhyh* “famine” (BENVENISTE 1940, text II, 184, 195; XI, 22; pp. 12, 129, 275; HENNING 1946: 717 = 1975, II: 235) and Bactrian *oγvo* [*< *vaignā-*] “famine” (SIMS-WILLIAMS 2000: 212); cf. already PANAINO 1990: 79, 144.

²⁴⁰ HAUG seriously considered the grammatical and syntactical problems presented by this passage, and literally translated “the evil of winter” in both the Avesta and the Pahlavi versions (HAUG 1862: 204 “evils”; 1878: 233: “evil”). In fact, *zəmō*, can be gen. sg. of *ziām-*, m. “winter”, while its interpretation as nom. pl. (BARTHOLOMAE 1904:1699-1670) is based on the interpretation of the sentence.

²⁴¹ SHAKED 1971; GNOLI 1963; 1991: 118-119.

²⁴² It could be, perhaps, related to the “obscure” or “black” matter (*az stī/gēfīg ī tārīgīh*), from which Ahreman extracted his own contra-creation, as stated in the *Ir. Bd.*, I, 46-47 (PAZKAD 2005: 20). See PANAINO 2009b: 202-203, n. 8).

words, no sin was committed by Yima at that time. Also the selection made by Yima among the best humans, animals and plants, whose seeds would be saved and stored in the *vara-*, is not a fault, but a need, because this place was limited in space and should remain hidden. Thus, the rest of the creation was abandoned to the violence of the winters. LOMMEL²⁴³ rightly put in evidence that the criteria according to which primordial people on earth were admitted into the *vara-* or not, do not seem to fit at all with a Zoroastrian “ethical” perspective, being based on crude physical patterns. But, in that case, we cannot exclude that such a distinction reflected a ritual canon of adequacy or inadequacy to the sacrifice (just as it patently happens in the case of sacrificial animals). What is certainly unclear from the – so to say – “logic” point of view is the following question: if the world was “perfect” like a paradise, what was the origin of these physical defects that made a part of humanity unworthy of admission to the *vara-*? So did the action performed by Yima involve also an implicit choice for death? Also in this case a definitive answer is difficult, because we do not know anything of explicit about the destiny of these people. On the other hand, according to *Yt.* 19, 33, the period of happiness continued “since there was no deceit, until he (i.e. Yima) reproduced the false speech (suggesting him) to strive for untruth” (*parō anādruxtōi*²⁴⁴ *para ahmāt yaṭ hīm aēm draogəm vācim aṇhaiθīm cinmāne*²⁴⁵ *paiti.barata*), a statement completely contradictory with respect to the story of the arriving winters. Furthermore, the Avestan fragment (fr. 4) embedded in the Pahlavi translation of *Vd.* 2, 5²⁴⁶ does not clarify when and where this lie was pronounced: “with his tongue he immediately made this (world) mortal again” (*m<o>su taṭ paiti akərənaoṭ aošaṇ^yhaṭ huua hizuuā*). It is clear that Yima sinned and said something offensive against Ahura Mazdā, but this event had nothing to do with the *vara-* and the winters. Later sources state that Yima presumed to be the “creator”²⁴⁷ and that for this reason he lost his glory and was killed. In the *Pahlavi Rewāyat to the*

²⁴³ 1927: 199.

²⁴⁴ I follow the textual emendation introduced in HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 37, 109.

²⁴⁵ Note that according to PIRART (1992: 46) *cinmāne* should be derived from the verb *can-* “to desire.”

²⁴⁶ Cf. HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 106-107.

²⁴⁷ See the sources collected by SKJÆRVØ (2008: 506-507), ŠEDIQĪĀN (1976) and OMIDSALAR (2008). SKJÆRVØ, in the same work, rightly notes that “The motif of transferring worship from God as creator to another is also found in the story of Maši and Mašyāni, who first worshiped Ohrmazd as the creator, then Ahriman, thereby committing the sin of uttering a lie (*drō-gōwišnīh*), which sent them to hell (*Bdh.* 14.11-16).”

Dādestān ī Dēnīg 31a10 and 31c5-6,²⁴⁸ it is Yima himself who confessed this sin, while according to the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 39, 16-17,²⁴⁹ he was seduced by a Druj, who convinced him to consider himself as the true creator. The same motif of the sin of megalomania or *hybris* is attested in Ferdowsī (4, 74, MOHL).²⁵⁰ Probably we have to do with two different traditions – one which considers the arrival of winter to be due to external reasons (the myth of the end of the world), and another one which refers this phenomenon to a sin committed by Yima. The first one (*Widēwdād*) does not mention Yima's fault and his final death (because he must wait for the end of the winters in order to get out from his castle and repopulate the earth), the second one does not make any reference to the *vara-* (*Yašts* and *Yasna*). If, as it is presumable, the two cycles were (later) intermingled, we must try to frame them, if possible, into a coherent model, although the location of the sins and that of the losses of the *x^varənah-* in a chronological perspective present us with a number of problems and contradictions. Thus, we may figure out two scenarios, in the framework of a later phase of harmonisation of the various cycles:

- 1) Yima committed some mistakes (lie and/or alimentary sins) in the *vara-* itself, and it was still there that he lost three times the *x^varənah-*;
- 2) for unknown reasons he got out from this place of refuge and committed his sins, pretending to be the creator of the world.

In any case, it is difficult to imagine that Ahura Mazdā might have given him his own divine support against the arriving winter, if Yima had already lost this divine symbol of recognition and authority. Only after the threefold loss of the *x^varənah-*, in any case after getting out of the *vara-* and, thus, being in a place where he was no more protected, Yima should have been attacked by the fastest demons sent forth by Aṇra Mainiiu (*Yt.* 19, 46) in pursuit of the *x^varənah-*; they were Aka Manah, Aēšma *xruui.dru-* (“having a bloody club”), Aži Dahāka, and finally, Spitiura *yimō.kərənta-*. According to the *Pahlavi Rewāyat to the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, 47, 8, Yima offended Ohrmazd by showing contempt towards him, because he declared that Astwihād (death) would have never come upon him;²⁵¹ on the other hand, because of these words, the demons cut him apart. This “contempt of

²⁴⁸ WILLIAMS 1990, I: 134-138; II: 57-58; cf. also HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 109-110.

²⁴⁹ Cf. also HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 110.

²⁵⁰ See HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 109. Cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 161.

²⁵¹ WILLIAMS 1990, I: 170-171; II: 78.

death” perhaps means that Yima went out of the *vara-* because he presumed to be still immortal also into the (external) world, although it was now contaminated because of the arrival of the winters and of the demons. The already mentioned Pahlavi passage from the *Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 39, 16-17, which states that Īmāšēd was deceived by the Druj, must be referred to an event that has taken place only out of the *vara-*, because that *refugium* was obviously free from any demoniac presence. We have, of course, only theoretically, another possible explanation, if we assume a perpetual existence of Yima in his *vara-* until the final resurrection, or at least after the appearance of the daēuuić Mahrkūša on the earth. As stated in *Vd.* 2, 41, every forty years a couple of a man and a woman was generated by another couple, and the same happened to the (couples of) animals. We may presume that they were twins and that this basic form of marriage was incestuous. According to this paragraph the people and the animals lived a beautiful life. No information is given about any interference by the demons; only the final paragraphs (*Vd.* 2, 42-43) simply add that the Mazdean Religion was propagated into the “compartments”, *varəṣṣuua*²⁵² (of the *vara-*), by the bird named Karšiptar,²⁵³ and that Uruuāt.nara (i.e. Zoroaster’s second son) and Zaratuštra himself were the *ahu-* and *ratu-* of that place and those people.²⁵⁴ Probably, this is a later epilogue, composed in order to make clear that also the *vara-* was under the control of Zoroaster and that the real Mazdean Religion was introduced also there.

Consequently, we may assume that the *Widēwdād* version of the myth contains many reflexes of a particular tradition (which in any case was old and, probably, pre-Zoroastrian) that was reassessed and presented into the extant sources avoiding any *direct* clash with the Gāthic explicit damnation, patently excluding any reference to the development of Yima’s story, which

²⁵² It is reasonable to postulate a stem *varəp-*, as suggested by BAILEY (1943: 223), who fittingly compared it with Toch. A/B *wārp-* “to enclose”, and Ved. *vārpas-* “form”. See also SIMS-WILLIAMS (2001: 334-335, n. 20), who gives an additional term of comparison with Hittite *warpa-* “enclosure” (cf. TISCHLER 2008: 221). KELLENS (1974: 358-361) accepted *varəp-* (< **uləp-*, athematic), but proposed the meaning of “coppice” (cf. Ved. *ūlapa-*, “shrub, bushes”, < **uləp-a-*, thematic). Cf. also *Vd.* 2, 28, 30 and 38, but where, as SIMS-WILLIAMS has shown, the occurrence of *varəṣṣuua* could be radically be emended because of the bad status of the text.

²⁵³ This fantastic bird (*karšift*) is mentioned in *Ir.Bd.* 24, 25 (Section G; PAKZAD 2005: 275), again with direct reference to the *war ī jam-kard*; in addition, this passage states that people there (i.e. in the *vara-*) recited the Avesta in the language of birds.

²⁵⁴ LINCOLN 1986b: 471.

was narrated also in the *Yašts* and in the *Yasna*. A patent confirmation of the archaic common patterns linking the story narrated in the *Widēwdād* with the cycle of the Vedic Yama (who was the first to find the way to go), has been emphasized by SKJÆRVØ. He actually remarks that the presence of two corresponding formulas in *RV*. 10, 14 and in *Vd*. 2:²⁵⁵

“make the two myths inseparable, *gātu-* “place to go” + *vinda-* “find” and “assembly of people/mortals”: Yama was the first to go along the path into the distance of the great slopes for the sake of the many; he found the way to go (*RV*. 10.14.1, 2: *gātūm viveda*). Yima expanded the earth for the sake of those who did not find a way to go (*Vd*. 2.8 *nōiṭ gātūuō viṇḍən*). Yama is the one who assembled people (*RV*. 10.14.1 *saṃgāmanam jānānām*), and Yima organized an assembly together with the best men (*Vd*. 2.20: *hañjamaṇam frabarata . . . haθra vahištaēibiiō mašīākaēibiiō*).”

In that way, while the Pahlavi commentary to the *Widēwdād* 2, 1-4 (and later also the modern scholarly tradition that doubtless follows the “Jam’s Confession of Sins”),²⁵⁶ assumed that the only evident fault committed by Yima would have been the fact that he was too primitive to accept the new religion, we must consider the serious alternative that this story simply meant that he just refused to die immediately and to join his *daēnā-*. The later re-interpretation of the passage, as a reference to an explicit refusal to memorize and support the Mazdean Religion by Yima, was perhaps the fruit of a compromise that permitted to justify the arrival of Zaraθuštra (who was now placed in the line of Manušcihr, as we have seen) as the actual founder of the true Mazdean religion, whose role is visible also in the *vara-* (according to *Vd*. 2, 43, which is surely a later addition). In this sense, I agree with KELLENS, when he suggests that a direct link between Yima and the role played by Zaraθuštra is quite probable. This link is direct because Ahura Mazdā has shown the *daēnā-* to Yima, but also to Zaraθuštra. Then, they both have already seen (before dying) their own female double. Some *Yašts* simply emphasize the beauty of Yima’s age, so that *Yt*. 13, 130²⁵⁷ can move also a direct reference to his *frauuaši-*, which is protective against a number of daēuic dangers (*yimahe vīuuaṇhanahe ašaonō sūrahe pouru.vqθβahe frauuašīm yazamaide* “we worship the *frauuaši-* of Yima Vīuuaṇ^vhana, right, strong, owner of many herds”). Furthermore, in *Yt*. 19,

²⁵⁵ SKJÆRVØ 2008: 511.

²⁵⁶ WILLIAMS 1990, I: 134-138; II: 57-59.

²⁵⁷ Cf. SKJÆRVØ 2008: 503-504.

32, Yima takes away (from the Daēuuas) their own ritual advantages.²⁵⁸ A bold and highly interesting contradiction emerges, as it was underlined, from the fact that some Avestan sources do not mention Yima's death (see again the account in *Widēwdād*), because he remained hidden in the *vara-*,²⁵⁹ while, according to *Yt.* 13, 46, he was actually killed by Spitiiura (evidently after leaving this place). This death is referred to also in those Pahlavi texts which contain references to some sources originally attested in the lost *Nasks* of the Abestāg. In any case, we can suspect that an earlier version (but, perhaps, already a Zoroastrian one) of the myth explicitly considered the age of Yima as practically unaffected by the "mixture" with evil forces,²⁶⁰ and that in the *vara-* Yima was still living in a dimension of perfect happiness. On the other hand, according to *Dk.* VII, 9, 3, the *vara-* will be opened only at the end of Zoroaster's millennium, 300 years after the period of Ošēdar, when the winter Markūsān will come on the earth. This version seems to be a part of an older mythological material, which is in contradiction with the story of Yima's homicide, but not with the second chapter of the *Widēwdād*, as it was still preserved in the extant version. We must also remark that other strong contradictions about Yima may occur; for instance, while in the "Confession of Sins" Ĵam, summoned by Ohrmazd, arrives from the northern direction, i.e. from hell, because he stood on the path of Ahreman and the demons when Ohrmazd showed the *dēn* to him, the Pahlavi commentary of *Vd.* 2, 5 openly states that, although Ĵam had a lack of priestly and student's qualities, "he was of good religion" (*weh-dēn*) and "truthful" (*ahlaw*); every statement is supported by an Avestan quotation, and it is particularly clear the one (*Vd.* 2, 5, Av. fr. 2), which recalls that the *frauuaši-* of Yima was venerated (*yimahe vīuuāṇhanahe ašaonō frauuašīm yazamaide* "we worship the *frauuaši-* of the right Yima Vīuuāṇhana"). HUMBACH and ICHAPORIA assume²⁶¹ that after his death Yima was rehabilitated; this solution is apparently supported from the last part of Ĵam's "Confession of Sins". According to the *Pahlavi Rewāyat to the Dādestān ī Dēnīg* 31c8, Ĵam was forgiven by Ohrmazd, the Amahraspandān and the Yazadān, so that he "went from the northern direction to the state of limbo and to the lordship of limbo".²⁶² Although WILLIAMS suggested that the doctrine which attributes

²⁵⁸ HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 37, 107-108; see also HINTZE 1994: 176-185.

²⁵⁹ See CHRISTENSEN 1935: 55-59.

²⁶⁰ See CHRISTENSEN 1935: 47.

²⁶¹ 1998: 106.

²⁶² WILLIAMS 1990, I: 138-139; II: 58-59.

the lordship of the limbo (*xwadāyih ī hamēstagān*) to Jam seems to be attested only in this place and it results to be, as he writes, “a tidy, scholastic resolution of the discrepancy of the various traditions”,²⁶³ we can note that its impact was still visible e.g. in a later poem in New Persian written by a certain Nūšīrvān.²⁶⁴ I prudently suggest that this peculiar introduction of the limbo corresponds to a later reflex (and also memory) of the *vara-*, which, in fact, originally had nothing to do with hell, paradise or the purgatory as well.²⁶⁵ Although such a solution represented a new *variatio* on the original theme, it confirms the embarrass produced by that part of Yima’s cycle. In any case, we do not know any Avestan story about an eventual rehabilitation of Yima, and I think that it would be better to explain the passages that mention the worship of Yima’s *frauuaši-* as probably belonging to another tradition in which he simply did not sin at all.²⁶⁶ In any case, we cannot avoid to note the presence of a serious problem here.

At this point of our discussion, if we would simply take again into consideration LINCOLN’s interpretation of the myth (or in any case if we simply use it as a potential, although partial, means of interpretation), it is no more in the *Widēwdād* cycle that we can find a fitting piece of comparison, but we must turn our attention to the second version of the story, where Yima

²⁶³ WILLIAMS 1990, II: 186.

²⁶⁴ See CHRISTENSEN 1934: 71-73.

²⁶⁵ In itself the *hamēstagān* was a later invention, although it should have been introduced in a relatively earlier period. In any case, it had nothing in common with the *vara-*, where only adequate persons were allowed to go. The limbo, on the contrary, is the place for the persons whose merits and sins result equal.

²⁶⁶ In the later history of Țahmuraš and Ğamšid, the role of the latter is clearly positive; see now the edition of the pertinent texts by KÖNIG 2008. As SHAKED noted (1987a: 243-244), Yima “puts his hand through Ahreman’s buttock in order to wring out from Ahreman’s entrails his brother Tahmurath”, remarking that “here again he acts unconventionally, and is accordingly punished by having his hand, where it touched Ahreman, covered with leprosy. The final point of that story is aetiological: Yima discovers the purifying effect of bull’s urine, the substance considered in Zoroastrianism most beneficial for ritual cleansing, and can impart thus knowledge to mankind”. It is evident that also this story confirms the positive role played by him, and shows that his punishment was due to an accident and not to a ritual mistake or a sin; practically, it can be considered as a wound received in battle. Another fitting aspect assumed by Yima, as a positive personality, is that of his descent into Ahreman’s realm in order to take away the *paymān*, i.e. the Right Measure, described in *Dēnkard* 3, 286 (see SHAKED 1987b: 236-238). Although he acts, as SHAKED remarks (1987a: 243) “in an outrageous manner”, the results of his behaviour are surely positive. See also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 502-503, 504-506, 507, 508.

probably was the first hero, while his (half)-brother, *Manu, the first priest, should have sacrificed him.²⁶⁷ Later the figure of Manu would have been diminished (and more importance would have been assigned to Manušciθra, probably his son),²⁶⁸ while Yima became the first person to die, because of a ritual and alimentary fault,²⁶⁹ and then he was killed by Spitiura–(Manu). In any case, *Y.* 32, 8, attributes to Yima something very tremendous, which should be connected with a radical change in human history, but reassessed according to a new perspective, the one that sees Angra Mainiiu as an original conception of Zaratuštra, as LINCOLN suggested.²⁷⁰ This means, indeed, that the emphasis on the myth of Gayōmart (Av. *gaiia- mərətan-*),²⁷¹ which appears meaningless if it should be located into the framework of the *Widēwdād* version, was developed on the base on some common Indo-Iranian elements, to be connected — as we know — with the origin of the Vedic Mārtāṇḍa (see below), but in any case not later than the composition of the early Young Avestan sources. This also means that the myth of the origins attested in the *Bundahišn*, although recent, was probably connected to the primordial role attributed to Gayōmart himself, and, if the supposition advanced by FALK,²⁷² assuming that the first Iranian prototypical man was a solar image (as it is),²⁷³ is sound, a direct link with Vivasvant turns out to be more appropriate.²⁷⁴ Thus, the cosmological killing of the primordial bull and of the first man was later attributed to Ahreman, while, according to an

²⁶⁷ It was BERGAIGNE (1878, I: 274) who showed that Yama was identified with the sacrificial horse, a fact that underlines the strong relation between this figure and the sacrificial victim itself.

²⁶⁸ CHRISTENSEN 1916: 64, 66, 69.

²⁶⁹ An alimentary sin is also a ritual one, because it represents a break in the tradition and a new form of violence contrasting with the past.

²⁷⁰ LINCOLN 1975: 136.

²⁷¹ I fully agree with SHAKED (1987a: 249-250) against HARTMAN (1953), about the fact that there is no distinction between *Gaiia- Mərətan-* and another *Gaiia-* in Avesta. See SHAKI 2001.

²⁷² FALK 1994: 17-18. ZAEHNER (1961: 137-141) tried to associate the solar image of Yima with that of Miθra, a solution, in my opinion, weak.

²⁷³ According to *Y.* 9, 4, Yimaxšaēta – epithet that he shares with the Sun – was also called *xʷarənaŋʰastəmō zātanəm huarə.darəsō mašiiānəm* “most glorious among the born, sunlike among the mortals” (cf. HUMBACH – ICHAPORIA 1998: 104 with the Pahlavi version of this passage). On this subject see now SKJÆRVØ 2008: 502, 504, who has collected many data about the solar image of Yima in ancient, middle and new Iranian (and Islamic) sources.

²⁷⁴ Cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 153-154, and n. 7.

inverse parallelism, at the end of the limited time, it will be Ohrmazd to sacrifice the white bull Hadayans²⁷⁵ in order to restore an endless age of happiness.

²⁷⁵ See *Ir.Bd.* 34 (cf. ANKLESARIA 1956: 282-293).

7. ARE THE MYTHOLOGICAL CYCLES OF YAMA AND YIMA RECONCILABLE?

It is clear that a definitive assessment of all the contradictory versions of the myth of Yama and Yima as well as of its original formulation in the Indo-Iranian period (if already then only one!) would be never definitively established, and any kind of reconstruction will maintain its hypothetic value. If we just consider the different theories produced by a number of highly renown Indologists and Iranists (but also by many historians of ancient religions) between the end of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, well summarized by CHRISTENSEN,²⁷⁶ but also discussed, e.g., by SCHERMAN, EHNI, SÖDERBLOM, GÜNTERT, ARBMAN, DUMÉZIL, LINCOLN, KELLEN, etc.,²⁷⁷ we cannot be completely sure that a final solution has been established yet for all the versions we have found. We cannot avoid ARBMAN's²⁷⁸ conclusion, which shows the double nature of Yama, who in the *Rgveda* was the king of paradise, but also, in later sources, the king of hell, who set human's life a limit. Thus, I do not pretend to offer a general theory, but simply, in the light of the wider analysis proposed by LINCOLN, to focus on the fact that if Yama and Yima were strictly connected with death and sacrifice²⁷⁹ (and very probably also with the idea of self-sacrifice, which results to be more clear in the Vedic sources),²⁸⁰ their role would have naturally appeared at least partially

²⁷⁶ CHRISTENSEN 1935: 32-62; see also the discussion offered by LINCOLN (1975: 121-123) about the general theories proposed by GÖTZE (1963) and GÜNTERT (1923). An attempt of comparison with some Babylonian beliefs was proposed by CARNOY (1916: 313-320), but, today, this hypothesis seems too far-fetched.

²⁷⁷ A remarkable overview about Yima has been recently offered by SKJÆRVØ (2008: 514-518, also with a very useful summary of the most important theories), by ŞEDİQİÂN 1976 and OMIDSALAR 2008 (for the later Persian and Islamic sources).

²⁷⁸ ARBMAN 1928: 221. We should also take into consideration the mythological data emerging from the complex material of the Nuristān and Dardestān peoples, where the Vedic Yama (*yama rāja*) corresponds to Im-rō (Imra). Cf. PARKES 1991; FUSSMAN 1977: 49-50. A particular evaluation of the function played by Imra in this pantheon has been proposed by ALLEN (1991).

²⁷⁹ Cf. WAYMAN 1959: 50 (with reference to *RV*. 10, 13, 4).

²⁸⁰ See GÜNTERT 1923: 386-387. DANDEKAR (1945: 201), who considers Yama's act as a self-immolation. DANDEKAR (1945: 196) rightly recalls that "The metres, which

dubious and dangerous (although it shows some positive hues related to the function of civilizing hero and magician). This is true for what concerns the Indian past, in later Vedic literature, where Yama assumed some obscure aspects, and is true in the very case of the Mazdean mythology, where we have found a number of peculiar and partly contradictory or unclear stories about him.

The position represented by the *Gāθās* shows a radical change of orientation in its basic patterns and discharges Yima's position, putting this personage in a very negative light. It is also evident that some elements belonging to the cycle of the Vedic Vasu Uparicara, in particular the motif of his lie, the travel on a chariot in the air, the institution of a new festival connected with the meat alimentation, have been assumed by Yima (as shown in particular by the Sasanian and Persian literatures), as DUMÉZIL²⁸¹ and KELLENS²⁸² have fittingly underlined.²⁸³ These correspondences show that a large portion of Indo-Iranian mythological material was maintained for centuries and, then, after having been transferred to later Iranian literature, particularly in its folklore,²⁸⁴ without an official "Zoroastrian" legitimacy and a definitive assessment throughout the so-called "orthodox" literature. My suspicion is that, with the progressive zoroastrianization of his cycles, the fault committed by Yima was interpreted (or explained) as a kind of support and help to the *Daēuuas*, i.e. to the presence of death and sufferance in the living world, or at least so it should have been considered by the author of the *Gāθās*. In this general framework, *RV.* 10, 13, 4, could be instructive, with regard to the reversed pattern adopted in the *Gāθic* assessment of the actual condition of the world. Thus, the so-called Zoroastrian version could reflect an interpretation (negative, of course) of the same material attested in the *Rgveda*. In this context, the theory,

symbolise the sacrifice, are said to be deposited in Yama (10, 14. 15; *AV.* 18, 2. 6; 2. 32)", adding that "In such cases, Yama seems to be exalted almost to the position of an All-god". Cf. MALAMOUD (2002: 122-124).

²⁸¹ DUMÉZIL 1986: 301-315 and *passim* (= 1995: 969-983)

²⁸² KELLENS 1984b: 276-277.

²⁸³ Although SHAKED too (1987a: 242-243, and n. 15) rightly considers unclear the nature of the sin committed by Yima, he is very sceptic about the Pahlavi interpretation of *Y.* 32, 8, which connects this sin with the fact that Jam had thought men to eat flesh; furthermore, he shows some critical considerations about TAFAZZOLI's interpretation (1354H.: 125-127; 1975) of a pertinent passage contained in *Mēnōg ī Xrad* 26, 33, from which it seems that an elephant was substituted to the cattle as sacrificial victim by Yima.

²⁸⁴ See again SHAKED 1987a: 245-246, *passim*.

assumed by KELLENS,²⁸⁵ but in part anticipated by SÖDERBLOM, that the Iranian version of the myth of Yima presents us with a reversed conception with respect to the Vedic one, raises a number of interesting perspectives, because, according to the *Widēwdād*, Yima gives immortality and he was provided with magic instruments in order to enlarge the living space and, later, with the power to build up a microcosmic world, without death and sufferance. If it belongs, as it is very probably, to an earlier tradition, the function of founder of immortality finds now a better framework after the proposed explanation of the refusal of the *daēnā*-. This act was the necessary premise in order to play the role of enlarger of the earth. In this respect, the double nature of Yima/Yama finds also in Iran its peculiar results, although the motif of the *aēnah*- in Iran later interrupted the positive role played by Yima and opened the definitive way to death and human mortality. We can simply say that something in Yima's behaviour and speech (according to the Gāōic circle) worked against Ahura Mazdā's plan and gave a certain support to Angra/Aṅra Mainiiu and the Daēuua. But it is also true that the arrival of the demoniac winters had nothing to do with any bad action accomplished by Yima. In other words, Yima's fault could be placed in a period when he was ruling on the earth or, more probably – as I noted before – after the period in which he was in the *vara*-, from which he later escaped. In addition, when Spititiura killed him, splitting symbolically him in two parts, this event emphasized his double condition of twin (without any apparently mentioned twin-sister), and opened to his *uruuan*- the way to meet his *daēnā*-, i.e. his female double. Also in the apparently paradisiacal dimension of the *vara*-, where a day seems to be a year, any couple generates another one every forty years (*Vd.* 2, 41); in this kingdom of Yima, all beings are doubtless twins like him.

It is quite probable that Yima's cycles underwent another complication connected with the introduction of the cosmic doctrine of the 12,000 years; one version, already established before the definition of the chiliadic doctrine, emphasized his role of hero and magician; the other one, surely later,

²⁸⁵ KELLENS 1984b: 277-281; cf. also KELLENS 1999-2000: 727-735. It is fundamental to recall that in the third book of the *Dēnkard*, the ancestral sin committed by Īm is never mentioned (TERRIBILI 2009-2010: 85-97;); on the contrary, he was considered as the founder of immortality of creatures or of the world (ch. 227: *wišuft dāmān amargih*; ch. 229: *īm amarg dahišnīh ī gēhān*; TERRIBILI 2009-2010: 318, 321; 326, 328; DE MENASCE 1973: 240: “établit l’immortalité des créatures”; 242: “et Īm fit aux créatures don de l’immortalité”). See also SKJÆRVØ 2008: 502, *passim*.

was based on the doctrine of the “mixture” (later named *gumēzišn*), and reduced his role, giving him also a negative function in order to justify the presence of death in the positive creation of Ohrmazd and the future arrival of Zoroaster. In the final reassessment of this cosmology, the image of Jam became a pale reflex of the original one.

We must remark, however, another peculiar fact confirming the complexity of the figure of Yima in the framework of the Zoroastrian tradition. Jam is never mentioned in the *Ardā Wīrāz Nāmāg*; in this text, actually he does not appear in the hell,²⁸⁶ where we should reasonably expect to find him, neither in the paradise nor in the purgatory. This kind of *damnatio memoriae*, as I would define it, confirms the number of problems connected with his position and underlines the presence of some contradictions,²⁸⁷ which perhaps have never been completely resolved in the Zoroastrian milieu.

Before to conclude this chapter, it would be useful to pay attention to the fact that two of the four versions of the famous Middle-Persian inscriptions engraved by order of the Great Priest Kirdēr in the third century A.D. contain a very important text describing an apparently very peculiar ritual.²⁸⁸ In fact, the Sasanian Great Priest stated that he himself had installed a kind of liturgy, denominated *'dwyān mḥly*, syntagm variously interpreted (but that I explain, following other scholars, as *ēwēn mahr* “mantra of the vision”),²⁸⁹ and by means of which certain *lysyk* (pl.) were able to

²⁸⁶ The position of Yima, interpreted as king of the dead, has been questioned by GNOLI (1989) in particular with regard to Kushan iconography; GNOLI also referred to the classical Greek and Latin sources that suggest an identification of Ahreman as the real king of the hell. This is the case of Hesychius (see GNOLI 1980: 151, n. 164), who expressly associated Ἀρειμάνιος with Ἄιδης. Also the book of *Ardā Wīrāz* (52, 2) mentions the cries of Ahreman, the *druz* and the souls of the impious, while Ahreman is collocated into the hell only in the last chapter of this book. Cf. also GRENET 1996: 283-284.

²⁸⁷ It is a fact that also Gayōmart, Mašya and Mašyāne do not appear in this text, a circumstance which, in my opinion, confirms the complexity of the mythological situation concerning the beginning of humanity on the earth and the probable difficulties that it produced in the framework of the Sasanian speculations about the *post mortem*.

²⁸⁸ A more detailed discussion of these sources and of the esoteric ritual there described has been discussed in PANAINO 2011a. For this reasons I will not enter a number of problems, which I have dealt with in that contribution and I will not quote here all the bibliographical references concerning the interpretation of Kirdēr's inscriptions.

²⁸⁹ See SKJÆRVØ 1983: 292; SHAKED 1994: 132-133 (“ritual-and-formula”); HUYSE 1998: 119-120; SUNDERMANN 1993: 186-187 (“a spell of vision”); GRENET 2002: 14-19;

present him with a superb vision of the afterlife, in which, not himself, but his “double”, *hangerb*, met a beautiful woman, *zan*, (corresponding to the *dēn*). During that vision (narrated to Kirdēr, and, then, not directly seen by himself, as sometimes has been mistakenly suggested), different princes (*šahryar*), whose identifications still remain a matter of open discussion, made their appearance. Furthermore, Kirdēr’s “double” was represented as advancing with that woman towards the paradise, passing the bridge, and finally taking part to a special banquet. The ritual enacted by these *lysyk*, whom in my opinion, should have been assistant priests, i.e. *rehīg* (< O.Ir. **raθβja-ka-*;²⁹⁰ cf. Av. **raθβiia-*),²⁹¹ and not a sort of “pages”/“children” (*rahīg*), or of “mortal, deadly (persons)” (*rēhēg* < **raēθiia-ka-*), was a strong esoteric performance, which can be directly linked with the Old Avestan practice of the *maga*;²⁹² in which a superior insight, *cišti-*, later *mēnōg-wēnišnīh*, in the unmixed dimension of the afterlife was created. Thus, differently from most of the common interpretations of that event, I do believe that neither Kirdēr nor these *lysyk* actually fell in a state of *trance*, while, on the contrary, I assume that the “mantra of the vision” corresponded to a dramatic representation of the future destiny of the Great Priest, as a *ritual* anticipation of his final salvation. What is most pertinent for the present discussion concerns the motive of the “double”, *hangerb*, which is represented during his meeting with the *zan*, and hand in hand with her. The Great Priest, in fact, was not dead, and for this reason the ritual presented the action of his “double”, not that of his *ruwān*. In this context, *mutatis mutandis*, we can introduce a comparison with the peculiar situation attributed to Yima, when he was shown the *daēnā*- by Ahura Mazdā. In fact, he saw this splendid maiden, but refused to join her (not the “Religion”), in order to perform his future duties necessary for the development of the living world, as god probably expected by him. We must

SCHWARTZ 2009: 368-372 (**āyēn mahr*; “formula of/for mirroring/reflection”). Both MACKENZIE (1989: 67-69) and GIGNOUX (1990; 1991) have proposed to explain this syntagm as “a kind of death”. GIGNOUX in these and many other works has stressed a shamanic interpretation of the whole framework. For other solutions and details see PANAINO 2011a.

²⁹⁰ This solution has been already suggested by MACKENZIE (1980: 290-291), but later abandoned by him (1989: 68) in favour of the reading *rēhēg* < **raēθiia-ka-*, from the verbal root *raēθ-* “to die” (Ahuric form).

²⁹¹ BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1507.

²⁹² GNOLI 1965; 1971; 1979: 402-404; 429-420, *passim*.

observe that in the ritual enacted by Kirdēr, the union with the *dēn* is not real, but only a simulation, performed, as I remarked, not by his *ruwān* but by his *hangerb* (in the ritual drama described by the *lysyk*). The introduction of this “double”, exactly described as “this man of the same aspect of Kirdēr” [*ān mard ī Kirdēr hangerb*]) – a third “person” between the *ruwān* and the *dēn* –, can be explained as a speculative solution fittingly introduced in order to justify a direct experience of the final destiny of salvation and beatification, without the occurrence of a real death and, thus, the direct involvement of the *ruwān*. The creation of such a symbolic twin of Kirdēr reminds us the pattern of twinning, of which this is another re-elaboration,²⁹³ and recalls the image of Yima, the twin *par excellence*, in front of his own *daēnā*-, although the situation was different for a certain extent.

We must also note that a possible presence of Yima in the dramatic representation of the afterlife, as presented in the so-called “vision” of Kirdēr, has been suggested by SKJÆRVØ²⁹⁴ and GRENET.²⁹⁵ The third of the “princes” appearing in this text (§ 28), in connection with a “wall” (*čiyēnew* [cy(d)yn-1]) and an infernal place, could be, in fact, Yima himself, still considered in his (partly) positive aspects, as the potential builder of the Činwad Bridge, the bridge of the “impilator” (*cinuuant-*, who would be the same Yima, as suggested by KELLENS).²⁹⁶ In their turn, GRENET²⁹⁷ and SIMS-WILLIAMS²⁹⁸ have shown that in the Kushan monetary iconography and in the Bactrian and Sogdian onomastics, Yima preserved a divine position in the local *panthéon*, and again GRENET²⁹⁹ has suggested that Yima could be identified with the “guardian” controlling the Gate of Hell, who appears on a Sogdian painting of the VII-VII c. This iconography would show that Yima might later assume also some characters based on the patterns proper of Vaiśravaṇa.³⁰⁰ These facts, although we do not know

²⁹³ We must also consider that the theme of “twin” is attested also in the Manichaean tradition. For a potential comparison with Kirdēr’s *hangerb*, see GIGNOUX 1989: 697, and SKJÆRVØ 1993: 697; 1997.

²⁹⁴ 1983: 297-298.

²⁹⁵ 2002: 21-24.

²⁹⁶ 1988.

²⁹⁷ 1984: 253-258.

²⁹⁸ 2000a: 194; 2000b: 7.

²⁹⁹ 2002: 23.

³⁰⁰ 1995-96: 283-285, 287 and notes 40-49. Cf. also GRENET 1995-1996.

in detail the theological speculations of the Sogdian and Bactrian Mazdeans, confirm the remarkable importance of Yima, and his role in the realm of the *post mortem*, where both positive³⁰¹ and negative elements emerged.

³⁰¹ I think that GRENET (2002: 23, and n. 25) is right when he remarks that there is a number of positive statements about Yima in the Mazdean literature, although his role was “l’objet d’une censure dans l’Avesta”. He fittingly mentions the *Anthology of Zādspram* (GIGNOUX – TAFAZZOLI 1993: 114, 115), ch. 32, 2, where the soul of Yima is still an “object de culte et invoquée” (*yahīzēd ud xwānīhēd*) against all the damages produced by the demons. It is also very interesting his note (*ibidem*) about *Hādōxt Nask* 2, 16 (cf. PIRAS 2000: 16). In fact, if the mysterious right dead man, who is questioning the dead arriving to the paradise, is denominated **paoiriīō* i.e. “the first”, and not *paouruuō*, as the manuscript tradition shows, he could be identified with Yima, to whom (ch. 17) Ahura Mazdā orders to stop his questions. This would, may be, demonstrate that the demonisation of Yima was not at all definitive, and it could confirm the complexity of his mythical cycles and the existence of different solutions about his actual destiny.

8. ABOUT THE PRIMORDIAL (SELF)-SACRIFICE

Another aspect of the Vedic stanza here under discussion (10, 13, 4) deserves to be reconsidered: why had the ritual sacrifice (or immolation) of the god Bṛhaspati to be connected with the death of Yama, who “has left/prolonged/ spread/perpetuated/jutted out his (own) dear body” (verbal root *ric + prā*)? Geldner suggested that, when the gods sacrificed Bṛhaspati,³⁰² they gave Yama the possibility to gain an eternal life after death, then, it was for this very reason that he “has [but, I suggest, “had”] left his body to jut out in order to reproduce it (probably also with sexual hues), or to be perpetuated, but also in order to become an “immortal mortal”, like Soma. Thus, if GELDNER was right, we could focus on another important point concerning the idea of earthly life. This speculative interpretation of the ritual implies a vision of human life only in part compatible with the Mazdean patterns, in which, contrariwise, the alternation of life and death was inserted into the framework of a crude conflict, substantially different from the Vedic model.

In the Zoroastrian context the creation is absolutely positive; the presence of sufferance and death has an extra-cosmical origin, and only through the final regeneration, the *frašō.kərəti*-, the divine positive order will be re-established. Thus, death is a temporary and not a definitive condition. No Mazdean *yazata*- has to be sacrificed. Men and women die not in order to obtain eternal lives in the *post mortem*, but they die because of the Daēuuas and Anra Mainiiu; their eternal lives are already granted in afterlife. Death testifies the progress of earthly times and is necessary in order to reach its (historical) end with the final salvation, while incest is an instrument that reproduces the divine form of wedding, and makes humans closer to a divine and primordial dimension, which is reproduced also in the afterlife meeting with the *daēnā*-.

This way, the Mazdean dualism resulted to be strongly different from the basic Vedic antagonism between order and disorder, where the interests of the (“positive”) Devas are sometimes in contrast with those of the humans. If we raise the question: *unde mors?*, the answer would be apparently similar,

³⁰² OLDENBERG (1912–1913: 138) underlines that the comparison with the sacrifice is frequently attested in the *Brāhmaṇas* also in the case of Prajāpati.

but in reality deeply different, in Vedic and in Avestan literatures. On the one hand, it is due to the Devas, for the sake of whom Yama (to be assimilated with the Puruṣa, as DANDEKAR has shown)³⁰³ made his choice, his preference for mortality. The sacrifice of Br̥haspati, if it was so, would be only a kind of ritual death, without permanent effects neither on this *deva*-nor on his divine fellows. On the other hand, the answer to the question of the provenience of death would be apparently the same (i.e. from the Daēuuas), but this solution is embedded in the framework of a reversed (“ethical”) perspective, because the idea that the kingdom of the dead, the realm of afterlife, might be preferable to earthly living dimension (or *gētīg*) was considered false and misleading. Aṇgra/Aṇra Mainiiu’s and the Daēuuas’ aims are patently nihilistic, and the very presence of life is in itself in contrast with their own “ipseity”. Then, the real “immortality” should be achieved in this dimension, after the final *Frašgird*; it is for this reason that the Pahlavi eschatology suggests that, by the end of the limited time, the *gētīg* condition will be purified, but not extinguished, because the creation was perfect from its origin, although it was conceived as a trap for the extracosmic power of the Darkness. In this sense the entire Zoroastrian afterlife during the *gētīg* period is only provisory, because the real state of beatitude will be achieved and enacted with the final regeneration of the world, and not in a more or less tolerable paradise of the dead, which is in its turn limited in time. For all these reasons, the meaning of the original sacrifice was reversed in the Zoroastrian framework, and attributed to the role of Ahreman and of his demons.³⁰⁴ Contrariwise, we must note that, according to some later Vedic sources,³⁰⁵ it was only after Yama’s death that the gods created the night, in order to comfort Yamī and help her to forget his departure. In the earlier Gāthic tradition (*Y.* 44, 5b), light (*raocāscā*) and darkness (*tāmāscā*), i.e. night and day, were immediately fixed by Ahura

³⁰³ See again DANDEKAR 1945.

³⁰⁴ In its turn, the Iranian conception of the self-sacrifice, under some respects parallel to the Vedic one, does not involve the real need of death as in the case of Yama, but it allows the sacrificer to anticipate the highest vision outside the “mixed” dimension by means of a form of interiorization of the sacrifice. See PANAINO 2004a: 66-75.

³⁰⁵ As fittingly WITZEL (1984: 216-217, n. 13) underlines with reference to *MS.* 1, 5, 12; cf. *MS.* 4, 6, 7; 89, 17. The importance of this evidence was focussed on already by SCHERMAN 1892: 141-143 and by VON SCHROEDER 1908: 277-278. Cf. also SCHNEIDER 1967-68: 16.

Mazdā,³⁰⁶ although darkness continue to represent a demoniac impending presence, and they cannot be considered as a sort of means of comfort against death, but as the necessary manifestation of the cosmic disorder, taken provisorily under control by the highest divine power before the definitive defeat of the demons. While *Y.* 44 presents Ahura Mazdā as a cosmic architect of the world, and in this framework also the alternance between night and day is embedded into the pattern of an universal rule, thus blocking the expansion of the forces stemming from the cosmic disorder, later Zoroastrian sources will loose this aspect of the normative function played by Ohrmazd and will simply consider darkness as a demoniac reality, the ipseity of Ahreman. In this regard, later Vedic sources introduce a positive – so to say “pre-Romantic” – image of them, which is strongly in opposition with the Zoroastrian solution.

Another difference with respect to the Vedic tradition concerns the fact that, as KELLENS³⁰⁷ has noted, the incestual pattern of the union of the *uruuan-* with the *daēnā-* is strictly connected with the mythological construction of the three prototypical kinds of incest (Ohrmazd – Spandarmad, Gayōmart – Spandarmad, Mašya – Mašyāne). In this context, we may presume with Cl. HERRENSCHMIDT³⁰⁸ that the incest finds its full justification in the framework of the doctrine of the limited time, which strongly contributed to its preservation and expansion, a phenomenon if not completely isolated, certainly remarkably rare and worth of attention. Actually, it represented the most efficient attempt to stop the time, reproducing the mythical condition of the origins. To these remarks we must add the fundamental example established by Yima. When he saw the *daēnā-*, and refused to join her immediately without fulfilling his duties, he determined the rule that any spiritual reintegration (as it is the union between the *uruuan-* and the *daēnā-*) should take place only after the completion of the earthly experience. Thus, the incest, in particular that with his own twin, not only follows an eschatological model, but is also rooted in the mythological example of Yima and of the other incestual couples, in particular that of Mašya – Mašyāne.³⁰⁹ Such a reintegration should have been considered as another kind of winning strategy against the corruption introduced into the world by the demons, because it anticipates a kind of beatitude in the afterlife.

³⁰⁶ See PANAINO 2007.

³⁰⁷ 1995: 29-46, in particular pp. 39-40.

³⁰⁸ 1994: 116-117, 123-124; 1996: 120-126; KELLENS 1995: 46.

³⁰⁹ Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 347-375.

9. WAS THE PRIMORDIAL CHOICE TAKEN φύσει OR νόμῳ/θέσει?
SIMILARITIES AND DISCREPANCIES IN THE COMPARISON
BETWEEN MĀRTANḌA AND GAYŌMART

We can come to a final consideration now. Some colleagues have argued that, in the framework of the Gāthic texts, the prototypical choice made by the two Mainiius has to be considered as purely formal, both “Spirits” (or better, both “active, willing Thoughts”), the “Good” and the “Bad” one, being as *a priori* ontologically determined, and that such a decision does not represent a real choice, but the fruits of their previous status, positive or negative, respectively, by nature. This interpretation has been suggested, with different arguments, e.g. by Ugo BIANCHI³¹⁰ and Jean KELLENS³¹¹ and has been already discussed and criticized by me in several places.³¹² In this part of the present study, I would like to focus on the evidence that the primordial antagonism between the two Mainiius, as attested in *Y.* 30, 3, presents us — as again LINCOLN underlined³¹³ — with an oblique reference to the myth of the creation. Here, the two Mainiius appear as “two twins (*yāmā*)” through a dream.³¹⁴ The Gāthic remake of the myth of the primordial “twins”,³¹⁵ thus, seems to have been re-established according to new patterns and in a way fitting with the (in my opinion “ethical”) framework of the opposition between *aša-* and *druj-*. According to LINCOLN, Zarathuštra would have “philosophicized the myth, changing its characters into abstract entities, but retaining the essential mythologem that the first living man died

³¹⁰ BIANCHI 1978: 362-363 *et passim*.

³¹¹ See, e.g., KELLENS 1990: 104-106.

³¹² I quote here only PANAINO 2002, but cf. also PANAINO 1997c.

³¹³ LINCOLN 1975: 130.

³¹⁴ About this passage see the commentary in PANAINO 2004a: 119-120, notes 54 and 55.

³¹⁵ See HARTMANN 1953: 18-22; LOMMEL 1930: 136-137; ZAEHNER 1961: 136; cf. also REITZENSTEIN – SCHAEDEER 1926: 211 and in particular HUMBACH 1974: 200. LENTZ (1962: 132-133) gives a different interpretation of *Y.* 30, 3: “(Now), then, (as to) the two primeval spiritual forces, (already) the twins (Yima and his sister), who have become known by their sleep(ing together), (went on to discriminate between) either of them, the better and the evil one, in (their) thought, speech and action [...]”. Cf. also the alternative translation offered by HUMBACH 1991, II: 82: *mainiiū* [...] *yā yāmā asruuātəm* “the two spirits which became famed through Yima”.

at the creation of the world”.³¹⁶ The re-mythologization of Zoroaster’s version, as called by LINCOLN,³¹⁷ would involve the creation of Gayōmart.³¹⁸ If *gaiia-* actually occurs in *Y.* 30, 4, in opposition to *ajiiāiti-*, *marətan-* is attested only two stanzas later, in *Y.* 30, 6, where we find *ahūm marətanō* “the existence of the mortal (?)”³¹⁹ or, as TREMBLAY suggests “the existence of the master of the mortals”.³²⁰ No doubt that this process took a constant place in later Avestan sources, where *gaiia-* was combined with *marətan-* (*Yt.* 13, 87, 145; *Y.* 67, 2, etc.),³²¹ and, then, transformed, though a process of univerbation, into a new compound **gaiiō.marətan-*, although this spelling is never directly attested in the extant Avestan sources,³²² while, nevertheless, it should be placed at the origin of Pahl. *gayōmart*. But we also know, thanks to HOFFMANN,³²³ that the mythical origin of *gaiia- marətan-* is very old. This mythical image corresponds under many respects to the Vedic Mārtāṇḍa, (i.e. *mytām aṇḍām* “the dead egg”),³²⁴ the eighth and last son of Aditi,³²⁵ who has been laid aside by his mother as a miscarriage, while his twin, Indra, was born in perfect state.³²⁶ In addition, in the Yajurvedic legend, Mārtāṇḍa was also clearly identified with Vivasvant, the father of the two primordial men, Yama and Manu.³²⁷ In addition, the references to *āmartya- gāya-* (“the immortal life”) and *gāya-* are well attested in *RV.* 10,

³¹⁶ LINCOLN 1975: 130.

³¹⁷ LINCOLN, *ibidem*.

³¹⁸ Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 346-347.

³¹⁹ But cf. PANAINO 2004a: 119-120, with reference to the bibliography and the problems of interpretation concerning this very passage.

³²⁰ TREMBLAY notes that “*marətan-* n’est pas attesté en VAv. [*marətan-* y est un autre mot; à GSg. *marətanō* trisyllabique >> génitif d’Av. réc. *marətan-*”]; then he remarks: “si c’est un génitif (ce que je pense) *marətanō* ne peut signifier ‘mortel’, mais ‘maître des mortels’ (suffixe possessif de Hoffmann). La forme *Gaiia- Marətan-* serait alors le fruit d’une exégèse erronée ou du moins abusive”. But, if I may add, such a reinterpretation would have been not at all impossible.

³²¹ See LINCOLN 1975: 130, n. 37. Cf. also WINDISCHMANN 1857: 73-75.

³²² See BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 503-504.

³²³ HOFFMANN 1976a: 100-117 = 1992: 715-732 (German original version 1957 = 1976b, II: 422-438; cf. GIGNOUX 1982: 350-351).

³²⁴ Actually M. BOYCE (1975: 97) considered both mythological figures as identical. See also SHAKED 1987a: 239, n. 3.

³²⁵ Cf. BROWN 1942: 89-90; see also LÉVI 1898: 63-64; MACDONELL 1897: 13, 43-44.

³²⁶ See KELLENS – SWENNEN 2009: 74.

³²⁷ HOFFMANN 1976: 107-108 = 1992: 722-723.

63, and 64, and in particular in the (parallel) stanzas 17 of both hymns.³²⁸ Thus, advancing on the path opened by HOFFMANN, but following also the seminal remarks already made by BLOOMFIELD,³²⁹ we could suppose that in the Mazdean framework *Vīuuaij^vhañt*,³³⁰ alias *gaiia- marətan-*, took the same place of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa, who was given by Tvaṣṭar the goddess *Saraṇyū*³³¹ in marriage. Thus, Yama and Yamī have been generated from the

³²⁸ HOFFMANN 1976: 111-112 = 1992: 726-727. Cf. GELDNER 1951, III: 235, 237.

³²⁹ BLOOMFIELD 1893; cf. also MALAMOUD 2002: 16-17.

³³⁰ The patronymic of Yima presents two different alternative tematizations: *vīuuaij^vhana-* (*Yt.* 13, 130; *Vd.* 2, 3, 9, 22) and *vīuuaij^vhuša-* (*Y.* 32, 8 and *Yt.* 19, 35) with respect to Ved. *vaivasvatā-*, which in its turn, shows a *ṽddhi* in the first syllable and another thematization. The first Avestan derivation is built on a stem in **^ovan-* (cf. Ved. *vivásvan-*, n. “Hellwerden, Morgenschimmer”), the second one on a stem in **^ovas-/uš-*. See BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 1451; MAYRHOFFER 1976: 222; 1977a: I/98; 1996: 560; cf. WACKERNAGEL – DEBRUNNER, 1954, II, 2: 894; 1929/30, III: 299 with additional bibliography on the subject. BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 1452, n. 2, sub *vīuuah^vvant-*) assumed that both stems were formed starting from the vocative (Proto-Indo-Aryan **-uan-* and **-uah-*), while in 1888: 532, he stated that the Old Av. patronymic *vīuuaij^vhuša-* was formed as a *vas*-stem, but according to the pattern of the active perfect participle. It is possible that the O.P. name of the Persian satrap under Darius I, *vivāna-*, m. (also attested in the *Nebenüberlieferungen*), could be explained as **vivah-āna-* (**vahana-*), and connected with Ir. **Vivah-vant-*; cf. MAYRHOFFER 1977a: II/29, num. 60; see already BARTHOLOMAE (1904: 1452). In my opinion, the attested difference in the spelling of the patronymic of Yima seems to confirm the presence of different cycles concerning his story, which were also reflected throughout a perhaps dialectological *nuance* emerging from the two forms for his patronymic. In the case of the Vedic name of Vivasvant, two were the possible accentuations attested in the sources: *vivásvant-* and *vivasvant-*, although no difference of meaning can be detected, as WACKERNAGEL – DEBRUNNER (1957: 19) remarked. THIEME (1985: 243) suggested that the stress on the first syllable presents a vocative stress; in the case of Av. *vīuuaij^vhañt-* I wonder if the length of the *-ī-* is a reflex of such an accentuation. About the Indo-Iranian *-vant*-suffix see also BENDER 1910.

³³¹ For the possible relation between *Saraṇyū* and the Greek cycle of *Helenē*, but also for a fitting etymological comparison between the two names, see the interesting articles written by PISANI (1928 = 1969) and by SKUTSCH (1987), where these names are connected to the Indo-European verbal root **sel* “to let lose, to jump”, Ved. *sar*. See now also JACKSON (2006: 86), who affirms that “the name *Ἑλένη* would then reflect an adjective **sel-en-eh₂* (the same formation, without the feminine suffix *-eh₂*, is also seen in Vedic [*su*]*saraṇá-*) and *Saraṇyū* a Pre-Proto-Indo-Iranian innovation **sel-en-juh₂*”. For the problems derived from the attestation of the Greek alternative name like **Welenā*, i.e. with an initial digamma, see the discussion offered by JACKSON (2006: 84-92) with reference to SKUTSCH (1987: 190-193). It is possible that we have to do with two epithets of the same divinity (although the opposite solution is not ruled out): **sel-en-eh₂-* “the hasty one” and **suel-en-eh₂-* “the smouldering one” (< **suel* “to smoulder, to

union of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa (the last of the Ādityas, twin of Indra) and Saranyū (twin sister of Trisiras, also named Viśvarūpa, and daughter of Tvaṣṭar). After their marriage and sexual union, Saranyū fled from Vivasvant, assuming the form of a mare. “In order to make matters till more safe”, as BLOOMFIELD wrote,³³² the gods constructed a *savarṇā*- “one who has the same colour, appearance”,³³³ which took the place of Saranyū in Vivasvant’s bed. An allusion to this myth is already attested in *RV.* 10, 17, 1-2,³³⁴ and in the commentary by Yāska (*Nirukta*, 12, 10-11),³³⁵ but it is

burn”). We must also mention JAMISON’s etymology (2001: 313-314) of the name of Helenē, which is derived from **helh₁enah₂*- “the one who chooses”, and it is based on the fact that Helenē chooses her husband (Menelaus), at least according to Euripides, while one of the most important characterization of Sūryā is the *svayamvara*-, i.e. “the self-choice” of one out of many suitors. JAMISON’s solution has been supported with other arguments by JANDA (2005: 346-348), but JACKSON (*ibidem*) considers this interpretation not definitive. I agree with JACKSON, also because we cannot reduce all the attestations of the name of Helenē exclusively to an earlier form with an initial digamma. The solution proposed by JAMISON would be actually fitting only for one of the two attested stems. I must also mention the discussion of the cycles of Saranyū and Helenē offered by W. DONIGER in the framework of a larger comparison between Sitā and Helenē herself (1999: 8-87, in particular 43-55; 2009: 25-123, in particular 67-82). It is also worth mentioning that VERNANT (1965; 1976-77; 1977-78; 2010: 81-93, 105-140) has dealt with the subject of the “double”, particularly with reference to the implications of the εἰδωλον, but also discussing the image of the κολοσσός in the framework of the funerary and afterlife dimension and with close regard also to the cycle of Helene. REMMER (2006: 81) suggests for **Saranyū*- a different etymology: a compound of *sa*- “together” + *raṇyu*- “pleasant, joyful” (cf. Ved. *rānya*-, *rāṇia*- “pleasant, bringing joy, pleasure”, *su-rāṇa*- “good pleasure”, *rāṇa*- “joy”, all of them from the verbal root *raṇ* “to be happy”).

³³² BLOOMFIELD 1893: 188. Cf. BERGAIGNE 1878, I: 85-97; 1883, II: 506-510; MACDONELL 1897: 42, 51, 116, 125, 139, 171-174. See also MALAMOU 2002: 15-17.

³³³ See MALAMOU 2002: 17. As BLOOMFIELD wrote (1893: 188): “The word *savarṇā* means at the same time one who is like Saranyū in appearance, i.e. her double, and also one who is suitable in her character to the mortal Vivasvant – more suitable than the divine Saranyū, we may perhaps understand”. See also JACKSON 2006: 72.

³³⁴ 10, 17, 1: *tvāṣṭā duhitrē vahatiṃ kṛṇoti ' itīdām viśvam bhūvanam sām eti | yamāsyā mātā parṇuhyāmānā ' mahō jāyā vīvasvato nanāśa ||* 10, 17, 2: *āpāgūhann amṛtām mārtyebhyaḥ ' kṛtvīśavarṇām adadur vīvasvate | utāśvināv abharad yāt tād āśid ' ājahād u dvā mithunā saranyūḥ ||*. See JACKSON’s translation (2006: 72): “1. Tvaṣṭr arranges a wedding for his daughter’ by this (utterance) the whole world comes together. The mother of Yama, brought home (as) the bride of great Vivasvat, disappeared. 2 They (the gods) hid away the immortal from mortals. Having made one of same appearance, they gave her to Vivasvat. And she carried the two Aśvins when that happened. And she left the two behind as a pair, Saranyū”. JACKSON (2006: 72-75) supposes that the expression *dvā*

referred to, with some additions and minor differences, also by Śaunaka (*Bṛhaddevatā*, 6, 33, 162-163; 7, 1, 1-5; 2, 6-8).³³⁶ With this “double”, Vivasvant begat Manu but when he realized the deception, he took the form of a horse, and generated with the true Saranyū the two Aśvins, “the horsemen”.³³⁷ It is useful for the reader to quote *in extenso* these two versions of the myth:

Yāska’s *Nirukta*, 12, 9-11.³³⁸

saranyūḥ saraṇāt / tasyā eṣā bhavati // 9 //

*apāgūhann amṛtām mārtyebhyaḥ kṛtvī sāvarṇām adadur vivasvate /
utā ’śvināv ābharad yāt tād āsīd ājahād u dvā mithunā saranyūḥ //*

*apāgūhann amṛtām mārtyebhyaḥ kṛtvī savarṇām adadur vivasvate / apy
aśvinābharat yad tad āsīd / ajahād dvau mithunau saranyūḥ /*

mithunā mentioned in 10, 72, 2d, is not referred to Yama and Yamī but to the Aśvins. I do not agree with this solution, and still assume that this story refers to the fact the Saranyū first was married by Vivasvant, generated Yama and Yamī, and then, only after the wedding, she disappeared. The fact that Saranyū is called “Yama’s mother”, when she was brought home by Vivasvant, seems to confirm the priority of the birth of Yama (and Yamī). The absence of any mention of Yamī is not a real problem, because her generation is strictly connected with that of his twin brother. When Saranyū disappeared, the gods made a *sāvarṇā*-, a copy of her, and, as later sources state, it was this very double of her that gave birth to Manu. JACKSON is right, when he notes that 10, 72, 2d is a complex passage. In fact, it can mean that Saranyū was already pregnant before the wedding but, in this case, we should admit that she had already generated Yama and Yamī with Vivasvant, because when she goes to Vivasvant’s home she is already called as their mother. On the other hand, the sentence “when that happened”, may mean that only after the creation of her *sāvarṇā*- she carried the two Aśvins. Then, the two *mithunā* may be both Yima/Yamī and the Aśvins as well, as assumed by STEETS (1993: 46-47), or simply the first human couple, what is more probable. About the mother of the Aśvins see also ZELLER 1990: 29-30.

³³⁵ SARUP 1921 = 1967: 209 (text); 187-188 (translation). See also MUIR 1870: 227-229.

³³⁶ MACDONELL 1904a: 78-79; 1904b: 251-253. See LOMMEL 1950: 243-257 (= 1978: 252-267); cf. PISANI 1928 = 1969: 337-340, although his reconstruction of the myth considers the birth of Yama a later element, a solution that I do not accept. See also EHNI 1890: 124. Cf. GONDA 1974: 42-43.

³³⁷ Although JACKSON (2006: 75-78) considers the story to be narrated in these later sources as different with respect to *RV.* 10, 72, 1-2, he does not exclude that Śaunaka used data that belonged to an earlier tradition.

³³⁸ Cf. SARUP 1921 = 1967: 209 (text).

*madhyamaṃ ca mādhyamikāṃ ca vācam iti nairuktāḥ / yamaṃ ca yamīm
cety aitiḥāsikāḥ /
tatretihāsam ācakṣate / tvāṣṭrī saranyūr vivasvata ādityād yamau
mithunau janayāṇ cakāra / sa savarṇām anyāṃ pratinidhāyāśvaṃ rūpaṃ
kṛtvā pradudrāva / sa vivasvān āditya āśvam eva rūpaṃ kṛtvā tām
anusṛtya sambabhūva / tato śvinau jajñāte / savarṇāyāṃ manuḥ /
tadabhivādīny eṣarg bhavati // 10//*

*tvāṣṭā duhitré vahatūṃ kṛnoti. ' .tīdām viśvaṃ bhūvanaṃ sāmeti /
yamāsyā mātā paryuhyāmānā ' mahō jāyā vivasvato nanāśa //*

*tvāṣṭā duhitur vahanam karoti [idaṃ viśvaṃ bhuvanaṃ sameti] / imāni
ca sarvāṇi bhūtāny abhisamāgacchanti / yamasya mātā paryuhyāmānā
mahato jāyā vivasvato nanāśa / rātrir ādityasya / ādityodaye
'ntardhīyate // 11 //*

12, 9-11: (9) “Saranyū is (so called) on account of her moving. The following stanza is addressed to her”. [End of the ninth section]. (10) “They concealed the immortal lady from the mortals; having made one like appearance, they gave her to the sun. And Saranyū bore the Aśvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins. They concealed the immortal lady from the mortals. Having made one of similar appearance, they gave her to the sun. Saranyū supported the Aśvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins, ‘The atmospheric (Indra) and the atmospheric speech (are meant),’ say the etymologists; ‘Yama and Yamī,’ say the historians (*aitihāsikah*). With reference to this they relate a legend. Saranyū, daughter of Tvaṣṭr bore twins, Yama and Yamī, to Vivasvat, the sun. She, having substituted another lady of similar appearance, and having assumed the shape of a mare, ran away. He, Vivasvat, the sun, having also assumed the shape of a horse, pursued her, and joined her. Thence the Aśvins were born. Manu was born from the lady of similar appearance, this is indicated by the following stanza. (11) Tvaṣṭr celebrates the marriage of his daughter: hence this entire universe comes together. Being married, the wife of the great Vivasvat, and the mother of Yama, disappeared. Tvaṣṭr celebrates the marriage of his daughter. [This entire universe comes together.] All these created beings come together. Being married, the wife of the mighty Vivasvat, and the mother of Yama, disappeared, i. e. the night, who is the wife of the sun, disappears at sunrise”.³³⁹

Śaunaka’s *Bṛhaddevatā* 6, 33, 162-163; 7, 1, 1-5; 2, 6-8:³⁴⁰

*abhavan mithunam tvaṣṭuḥ, saranyūs triśirāḥ saha /
sa vai saranyūṃ prāyacchat, svayam eva vivasvate // 162 //
tataḥ + saranyvām [conī. Macdonell] jajñāte, yamayamyau vivasvataḥ /
tau cāpy ubhau yamāv eva, jyāyāms tābhyām tu vai yamaḥ // 163 // 33 // 6 //*

³³⁹ Cf. SARUP 1921 = 1967: 187-188 (translation).

³⁴⁰ Cf. MACDONELL 1904a: 78-79.

sṛṣṭvā bhartuḥ parokṣaṃ tu, saranyūḥ sadṛśiṃ striyam /
nikṣīpya mithunaṃ tasyām, aśvā bhūtvāpacakrame // 1 //
avijñānad vivasvāṃs tu, tasyām aṇanayan manum /
rājarṣir abhavat so 'pi, vivasvān iva tejasā // 2 //
sa vijñāya tv apakrāntām, saranyūm aśvarūpiṇīm /
tvāṣṭrīm prati jagāmāsu, vājī bhūtvā salakṣaṇaḥ // 3 //
saranyūś ca vivasvantaṃ, viditvā hayarūpiṇam /
maithunāyopacakrāma, tām ca tattāruroha saḥ // 4 //
tatas tayos tu vegena, śukraṃ tad apatad bhuvi /
upājighrac ca sā tv aśvā, tac chukraṃ garbhakāmyayā // 5 // // 1 //
āghrātāmātrāc chukrāntu, kumārau sambabhūvatuḥ /
nāsatyaś caiva dasraś ca, yau stutāv aśvināv iti // 6 //
itihāsam imaṃ yākaḥ, saranyūdevate hṛce /
vivasvataś ca tvaṣṭṛś ca, tvaṣṭeti saha manyate // 7 //

6, 33, 162 “Tvaṣṭṛ had twin children, Saranyū as well as Trisiras. He himself gave Saranyū in marriage to Vivasvat. Then Yama and Yamī were begotten on Saranyū by Vivasvat”. (163) “And these two also were twins, but the elder of the two was Yama”. (7, 1, 1) “Now Saranyū having created, in the absence of her husband, a female similar (to herself) and having entrusted to her the pair (of children), turned into a mare and departed”. (2) “But Vivasvat, in ignorance (of this), begot Manu on that (substitute). He (Manu) became a royal seer, like Vivasvat in brilliance”. (3) “When, however, he (Vivasvat) had become aware that Saranyū had departed in the shape of a mare, he quickly went after the daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ, having turned himself into a horse with similar characteristics (to hers)”. (4) “And Saranyū, recognizing Vivasvat in the form of a steed, approached him for sexual intercourse, and he covered her there”. (5) “Then in their agitation the semen fell on the ground. And the mare, through desire of offspring, smelt the semen”. (6) “Now from the semen which had just been smelt there came into being two youths, Nāsatya and Dasra, who are praised as ‘Aśvins’”. (7) “Yāska regards this as a story of Vivasvat and Tvaṣṭṛ together in the couplet ‘Tvaṣṭṛ (*tvaṣṭā*: X. 17. 1, 2) which has Saranyū for its deity”.³⁴¹

Other later sources, like the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, the *Matsya Purāṇa*, etc., conveniently resumed by W. DONIGER,³⁴² develop this myth, and introduce a new variant, in which, Chāyā, the “dark shadow”,³⁴³ or the shadow wife of Vivasvant, left by Saranyū, mistreated Yama and Yamī, so that Yama kicked her. Enraged, Chāyā cursed him, that his foot would fall.

³⁴¹ MACDONELL 1904b: 251-253.

³⁴² 1975: 60-65; 1979: 4-6; 1980: 174-185.

³⁴³ As noted by PISANI (1928 = 1969 : 345-346), *chāyā-* is a fitting correspondent of Gr. σκιά, which also means “phantasm”, and then he considered this parallel as one of many other Indo-Mediterranean motives.

The rest of the story runs as follows:

“When Yama reported this to his father, Vivasvant realized that she was not his true wife, as a mother could not harm her child that way; he modified the curse so that Yama did not lose his foot, but became the first mortal king of the dead in the underworld. Then Vivasvant went to Saranyu’s father, Tvaṣṭṛ, who told him that Saranyū had fled because he blazed too fiercely; Vivasvant asked Tvaṣṭṛ to place him upon his lathe and trim his form, and this was done. When Vivasvant had been given a handsome body by Saranyū’s father in this way, he went to seek his wife. He found her in the form of a mare; taking the form of a stallion, he approached her. She turned to face him, protects her hindquarters, and his seed entered her nose. In this way the two Aśvins were born. Then Saranyū resumed her own form and went back home with Vivasvant”.³⁴⁴

Notwithstanding the continuous evolution assumed by this myth, it probably contains a number of very archaic patterns concerning not only the theme of twinning and its direct relations with incest and mortality, but also with the sacrifice. Saranyū, as noted by DONIGER, in fact has two doubles, her shadow (*Chāyā*), but also the mare, and the latter transformation compels also Vivasvant to assume a new form (the stallion). DONIGER’S³⁴⁵ reconstruction of an Indo-European pattern, although in the form of a mytheme, concerning the sexual role of steeds and mares in connection with the Irish ritual of the copulation of the king with a mare, and with that of the Vedic queen with a dead stallion (in the framework of the *aśvamedha*-) deserves new consideration in the light of the evidence that, in the Vedic context, the stallion is Vivasvant, who has regained his divine dimension thanks to the sacrifice. Furthermore, also the earlier versions of the myth, in which Saranyū left Vivasvant because he was round or had “no form at all”, reminds us his original condition of “dead egg”, assumed at the moment of his unfortunate birth. Another later arrangement of this myth, as presented in the *Harivaṃśa* 8, 1-48,³⁴⁶ narrates that Saṃjñā³⁴⁷ (= Saranyū), the daughter of Tvaṣṭar, gave birth with Vivasvant firstly to Manu, who was indeed Vaivasvata, then to Yama and Yamunā. After, she created a Saṃjñā-shadow, who remained with Vivasvant, while the true Saṃjñā came back to his

³⁴⁴ DONIGER 1979: 5-6. Cf. LOMMEL 1950: 246-247.

³⁴⁵ 1979; 1980: 149-211, *passim*; 1994 See also PUHVEL 1970.

³⁴⁶ DONIGER 1999: 44-46, and *passim* (= 2009: 45-46).

³⁴⁷ About the meaning of *saṃjñā*-, “mutual understanding”, “consciousness”, then also “sign”, “image”, “name”, and finally “recognition”, see DONIGER 1999: 52, and *passim* (= 2009: 78). About Sanskrit *saṃdhyā*-, and Prakrit *saṃjñā*-, “twilight”, in relation with Saranyū and Saṃjñā, see LOMMEL 1950: 250, 256.

father. With such a double Vivasvant generated a second Manu, i.e. Manu Sāvarnī,³⁴⁸ the “Similar”. The discovering of the real identity of the second Saṃjñā occurs more or less in the same way we read in the *Purāṇas*, as the following birth of the Aśvins, and the reconciliation of the divine couple.

But, while in the later moralistic accommodations of the myth, Saranyū went back with her husband as a diligent wife, we may assume, as BLOOMFIELD suggested,³⁴⁹ that Saranyū abandoned her (human and divine) sons and Vivasvant, resuming forever her independent position among the gods. Then, it is absolutely incorrect to consider Yama/Yima to be the primordial being placed between divinity and mankind.³⁵⁰ This was Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt/Vivasvant (= Gaiia Marətan/Mārtāṇḍa),³⁵¹ while his first male son (Yima/Yama) became the hero of the old age, provided with magic power – but also the first to die really (and in Iran also the first to sin, at least, according to a certain tradition), because we do not know what exactly happened with his father (at least in his solar form). In Iran, Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt was another man, while in Vedic mythology Vivasvant was rescued from mortality thanks to his primordial sacrificial act. In the Pahlavi literature, contrariwise, Gayōmart, whose “breadth was equal to his height”, just as it

³⁴⁸ Denominations like *sāvarṇya-* or *sāvarṇi-* are well attested also in Vedic literature. See DONIGER 1999: 53 (= 2009: 79, and n. 5).

³⁴⁹ BLOOMFIELD 1893: 188; see also DONIGER 1999: 49 (= 2009: 75). A number of interpretations of this myth has been proposed in the past: see in particular, KUHN (1852: 454) and MÜLLER (1868: 480-510); both, in particular, assumed (pp. 483-484, 516-517) that the name of *Saranyū-* corresponded to that of Gr. Ἐρινός; MUIR 1870: 227-229, 287-288.

³⁵⁰ HOFFMANN 1976: 109 = 1992: 724.

³⁵¹ In any case, it is clear that the earliest Zoroastrian literature was involved in a process of continuous re-elaboration of Indo-Iranian mythological material. The solutions we find already in the *Gāthās* and, then, in the later Avestan sources (which, in their own turn, as particularly in the very case of the *Widēwdād*, can preserve older patterns and versions), show a number of contradictions and various assessments, confirming the presence of different and, perhaps, contrasting elaborations of a common mythological cycle. The same phenomenon, in its turn, is to be observed also in Vedic and later Hindu sources. The role and destiny of Yama/Yima, in any case, cannot be separated from that of their father, Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa / Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt/Gaiia Marətan); indeed, the solar character of their father was no doubt strongly connected with the idea of death, and it is also quite probable that the round image of the sun was associated to that of the dead egg and of a “round” mortal man. The connection between solar characteristics and mortality of the primordial father of humanity could be, perhaps, related to the image of sunrise and sunset in a continuous cycle.

was the case with Mārtāṇḍa, who “was as high transversely as he was vertically”,³⁵² generated the first couple of human beings, who assumed the original function of the Vedic Yama and Yamī. But in Iran, at least in the Zoroastrian version of the myth (see also *Yt.* 13, 87, where it is stated that Ahura Mazdā created the navel and the descendance of the Aryan lands from Gaiia Marətan; *gaiiehe marəθnō ašaonō frauuašīm yazamaide yō paoiriio ahurāi mazdāi manasca gūšta sāsnašca yahmaṭ haca frāθβərəsaṭ *nāfē airiianqm daxiiunqm ciθrəm airiianqm daxiiunqm [...]*),³⁵³ Gayōmart’s position became very different from the Vedic one. In the Iranian tradition, he was no more the offspring of a ritual mistake committed by Aditi, just as in the case of Mārtāṇḍa, but the first earthly being, killed by Ahreman’s powers and probably seduced by Ğeh.³⁵⁴ In addition, the sequence *mṛtyúm prajāyai* attested in the Vedic passage of 10, 13, 4, here discussed, cannot be separated by the curious – and difficult – *pāda* 9c, *prajāyai mṛtyāve tvat* “for offspring, but also for death”,³⁵⁵ attested in *RV.* 10, 72, 9, and referred to the destiny of Mārtāṇḍa. Clearly, Mārtāṇḍa/Gayōmart are not directly responsible for their own deaths, the first one because he was brought back (*pūnar mārtāṇḍām ābharat*) by his mother for her ritual fault,³⁵⁶ the latter because he was killed by Ahreman. Furthermore, the abortion of Mārtāṇḍa himself was provoked by his divine brethren, afraid because of his increasing power, while the origin of Gayōmart has been reversed. He was considered the sixth creation fashioned by Ohrmazd (*Ir.Bd.*, 1) with his daughter Spandarmad (as the fruit of the first prototypical incest), and not the discharged offspring of a female ritual, wrongly performed. In this respect, the origin of humanity (or — but the question is open — of the Iranians, as rightly HOFFMANN suggested)³⁵⁷ seems to be theologically and ontologically different. Also this radical change in his mythical position and role points out to a radical revision due to the earliest Zoroastrian theology (although in part anticipated by some proto-Iranian developments), which should be directly connected with the (new) antagonism between the twin

³⁵² HOFFMANN 1976: 111 = 1992: 726.

³⁵³ HOFFMANN 1976: 110 = 1992: 725.

³⁵⁴ See PANAINO (in press). In future, it should be determined to which extent Saranyū’s role could be compared to that of Ğeh; See also PANAINO 2009a and 2009b.

³⁵⁵ See HOFFMANN 1976: 101-102 = 1992: 716-717.

³⁵⁶ MOLÉ (1963: 222-226) assumed that according to Pahlavi sources (*Dk.* 9, 32, 12) also Yima’s sin was a ritual fault.

³⁵⁷ HOFFMANN 1976: 110 = 1992: 725.

Mainiius as well as with their primordial choice (*var-*), attested in *Y.* 45, 2.³⁵⁸ Thus, in this framework, also the particular choice made by Yama in *RV.* 10, 13, 4 offers to us one of the missing *pendants*, in order to better understand the inversion of an Indo-Iranian myth as represented by one of its Iranian results. The idea that something was wrong in an ancestral ritual performance has been, for instance, preserved in Iran, too, through the myth of Zurvan's sacrifice as the origin of Ohrmazd and Ahreman,³⁵⁹ while in the standard Zoroastrian tradition of the Sasanian period it was the direct opposition between the two Principles to make the "Time" to an instrument of Ohrmazd. In such a context the theological solution became clear and simple: since Ahreman does not properly exist after the later Mazdean speculations, we can conclude that, paradoxically and in a special sense, also death does not really exist anymore, because it can happen only in this provisional (i.e. limited) time, but it does not destroy the *frauuāši-s* and the other components of the souls that remain immortal. It is only by means of death that human beings can meet the *daēnā*-, and the beatification she offers (only extraordinary persons as Yima and Zaratuštra had the privilege to see her before their own physical death). As man was created "immortal" in the *mēnōg* state, he is mortal only in the *gētīg* but the *gētīg* is limited, while the *mēnōg* remains eternal and after the *Frašgird*, with the complete defeat of Ahreman and the demons, human beings will find a new body and a complete and perfect eternal life on a new purified earth. This elaboration is later, but it is based, at least in part, on an older interpretation of an Indo-Iranian tradition.

³⁵⁸ PANAINO 2004a: 122-135.

³⁵⁹ Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 367-368.

10. DEATH, GENERATION AND THE DILEMMA OF INCEST

The opposite solutions of the myth concerning the sexual intercourse of the primordial twins have to be again re-considered. According to *RV.* 10, 10 incest was refused by Yama as a kind of immoral behaviour,³⁶⁰ while it was considered absolutely positive in the Mazdean framework, where the incestuous union by Mašya and Mašyāne seems to be a revival of that between Īm and Īmāg (who sometimes is called Īmīg in Pāzand; see, e.g., *Ind.Bd.* 12, 31).³⁶¹ It is difficult to say *a priori* which one of the two versions was the older one. I suspect that the idea of a primeval incest has more probabilities to be considered the original one, as already CASARTELLI,³⁶² VON SCHROEDER³⁶³ and DANDEKAR³⁶⁴ suggested.³⁶⁵ If DANDEKAR is on the

³⁶⁰ A sort of *nīrti*-, according to WAYMAN 1959: 61-62.

³⁶¹ Cf. CHRISTENSEN 1934: 38-39; see also MACDONELL 1899: 118; LOMMEL 1950: 254-255 = 1978: 254-255.

³⁶² CASARTELLI 1889: 201-204; 1890a: 99.

³⁶³ 1908: 275-291. These were the conclusions proposed by VON SCHROEDER (p. 291): “Der Dialog von Yama und Yamī ist nur der erste Akt eines grösseren kultischen Dramas, das nach Analogie des Agastyadramas auf einen Generationsritus, resp. phallischen Fruchtbarkeitszauber in großem Stil hinauslief. Das erste Menschenpaar vereinigte sich zu einer rituellen Zeugung, und unermeßliche Fruchtbarkeit mußte die Folge sein”. Against this interpretation see SCHNEIDER (1967-68: 29) with literature. Although SCHNEIDER is right when he affirms that we cannot speculate about the rest of this hymn, which ends with stanza 14, also the idea suggested by SCHNEIDER himself that the same hymn was part of a ritual of purification for twins of different sex, is in its turn speculative, although, for instance, GONDA (1975: 153) considered plausible such an explanation. I do not want to enter the large and difficult subject of the origins of the Indian drama, introducing new hypotheses about the theoretical continuation of this Vedic text or about its functions in the framework of the ritual. I only think that it is remarkable that also VON SCHROEDER noted that the Indo-Iranian comparison on this subject clearly shows that the incest was an original motif, and that its earlier myth later became a moral problem, and was censured or covered by a number of taboos in India. The Iranian tradition remained, in this respect, and against the “normal” evolution of sexual morality, more archaic and conservative. About the so called “legend spell” in connection with the story of Agastya, who surrendered to Lopāmudrā’s seduction, see THIEME (1963 = 1984: 202-212) and GONDA (1975: 145-156, 202). For the pertinent comparison of the dialogue between Indra and his wife Indrānī (*RV.* 10, 86), and that between Urvaśī and Purūravas (10, 95), with the one between Yama and Yamī, see MACDONELL 1899: 119-120.

right way, when he supposes that Yama was originally a bisexual being (or an androgynous primordial figure, as GÜNTERT already had suggested),³⁶⁶ which, as an hermaphrodite *Urwesen*,³⁶⁷ “gave place to a pair of twins who were regarded as the parents of mankind”, we should admit that it was only in a later period that “the conception of an incestuous intercourse between the twin brother and sister, Yama and Yamī, giving rise to the human race, became offensive to the conventional moral sense of the Vedic poets and priests”.³⁶⁸ In addition, DANDEKAR³⁶⁹ underlines the fact that, according to *RV.* 10, 10, 3, “Yama was the only male in existence at that time”, and explicitly states that “The poet does not make clear whether the incest actually took place or not, obviously because the answer to that question would have nullified the poet’s purpose”. It is true, on the one hand, that already HILLEBRANDT tried to show that these statements do not demonstrate anything, because other humans should have existed, too (although this is not at all the Iranian case of Mašya and Mašyāne); but, on the second hand, it would be far-fetched to suppose that Yamī, for instance, had sexual intercourse with Manu later on, although we must in any case consider his presence and that of his descendance, because in Old Indian sources human beings have been named the progeny of Manu (*māṇavá-*). In any case the original myth is clear: humanity is the result of a primordial pair of twins, the male one having an additional twin, i.e. another double. In this case, also the potential union between Yamī and Manu should be considered another incest as well. The subject of the “double” (and a double can be multiplied thus forming other additional copies) represents, in its turn, another important problem, because it recurs constantly in our sources and needs much more reflections. At the moment, we can accept the idea that, in this respect, the Iranian side preserves the older version of the myth, which became a

³⁶⁴ 1945: 203-206. On this problem see also WINTERNITZ 1905: 91-93. A different opinion in GONDA 1975a: 153.

³⁶⁵ See also LÉVI-STRAUSS 1993: 213-214. Cf. already ROTH 1853: 334-336.

³⁶⁶ 1923: 365, *passim*. GÜNTERT interpreted *yamá-* as originally meaning “der Zwitter” (“hermaphrodite”), who generated a twin-sister (1923: 334-335). Cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 158-159.

³⁶⁷ The myth of Zurwān repeats the same scheme; see GÜNTERT 1923: 393-392. About the androgynous character of Gayōmart see WIDENGREN 1980: 301-302.

³⁶⁸ DANDEKAR 1945: 204-205.

³⁶⁹ 1945: 205.

taboo in the Vedic sources. With reference to the idea of the androgynous *Urwesen*, DANDEKAR³⁷⁰ also underlines the fact that:

“The *Urwesen* (Puruṣa) created out of itself a female form, *virāj*, who, in her turn, produced the Puruṣa, who may be regarded as the symbol of further procreation”.³⁷¹

In this framework, the choice made by Yama, to have a mortal progeny, could be reasonably connected also with this sexual intercourse, i.e. with a primordial incestuous union with his own sister Yamī. This interpretation seems to be supported also by *ṚV.* 10,13, 4, if we accept to see there a “covered” reference to a sexual union. This would mean that Yama choose to die in order to have a descendance, but that some memory of his “prolongation” was still maintained, and that such a primordial “hierogamy” was taken as a sin, and then put under censure. Thus, when Yama accepted death, he implicitly accepted the sexual means of reproduction, and, consequently, although not expressly declared (on the contrary, sometimes explicitly denied) the *incest*. I think that this possibility is not far-fetched. Death, then, can be also considered as the (inevitable) “consequence” of a (necessary) primordial incestuous sexual intercourse, which later became a sin – at least in India – and then it was not explicitly mentioned in the sources, because Vedic mythology imposed a fundamental taboo on this behaviour. Such an embarass was not only present in India, but perhaps also in Iran. Otherwise we could not explain the apparent tabuization of part of the myth of Yima, whose sister seems to disappear in Avestan literature, although, there, Yima not only maintains his lordship and civilizing power, but also he can overcome Ahura Mazdā’s “temptation” in front of his own *daēnā*-, so becoming worth of enlarging three times the terrestrial space. In this framework, the ancient myth of the *vara*- and the continuous reference to human couples (of twins?) seems to confirm that *Yamī (or *Yimī) existed in Iran too, as the later sources confirm. But the embarrassing position of Yima’s cycle in the *Widēwdād* emerges also from the inexplicable arrival of a winter on a living world which is consider *aya*-. If this passage were attested outside of the Avestan literature, I would be seriously tempted to define it as “non-Zoroastrian”. More probably, we do not know the doctrinal complexity of early Zoroastrianism, and try to infer a coherence, which never existed. In any case, these data show that in Iran, at least for some

³⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

³⁷¹ See also KELLEN 1995: 45. Cf. already GÜNTERT 1923: 343.

priests, Yima was not guilty at all, and the position of his sister and twin was, perhaps, a sort of secret or of “initiatric knowledge”.

In contrast with the Vedic situation, later Mazdean sources give Yama’s and Yamī’s place to Mašya and Mašyāne (but do not erase the memory of Ğim and Ğimag), while Yima was no more the first human and sacrificer, and additionally (but this is another central fact) the incest was not at all considered a taboo. Is this particular difference with regard to the primordial taboo a fact that presents much more implications than those considered before in our studies? With the incest of the twins, the reintegration of the family line was restored and any sexual union became a repetition of the primordial act of creation. As Yama died (perhaps being sacrificed like the chaplain of the gods, thus assuming the role of *soma*-), his descendance, born from two twins, restored what the parents were, but also the unity of the most remote ancestor, the “mortal egg”, Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa. The blood was not mixed and the change from the original paradisiacal dimension was limited; new life, but through the most strict endogamy, the incest maintained (and actualized) a kind of eternal condition. Then, was it like a victory over death, as the Pahlavi exegesis that justifies the incest generally states? The fact that Yima’s refusal of the *daēnā*- could be now explained as a temporary delay in front of death should be re-discussed. According to this explanation of the myth, Ahura Mazdā could be wrongly considered as the installer of death, who would ask Yima to die and to join the *daēnā*-. But such an unnecessary conclusion would counter what we have underlined about the Mazdean orientation against any form of *ajiiāiti*-, ever since the *Gāθās*. Contrariwise, we can consider Ahura Mazdā’s proposal not as a kind of punishment, but as an offering of beatitude, a restoration of a perfect state. In other words, Ahura Mazdā asked Yima to become mortal (*mərətō*) and to join (to marry or to be offered, depending on the interpretation of *bərātaca*, occurring in *Vd.* 2, 3-4), so passing directly to the highest condition of spiritual pleasure through such a kind of *unio mystica*, although – as we have suggested – he did not expect that Yima would have really accepted his proposal. Thus, when Yima answered that he was not “created” (*dātō*) and “thought” (*cistō*) for that purpose, we may assume he probably gave the right answer – I mean the answer that Ahura Mazdā desired –, because only by means of such a renounce to an immediate (sexual) union with his spiritual double (the celestial *daēnā*-), Yima might begin his positive role of a civilizing hero. Unfortunately, the extant sources do not explain the way he increased the number of the primordial humans. We may suppose that, as a

son of Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt/Gaiia Marətan (Gayōmart), he had in himself the mark of death, but also the potential attitude to copulate with his own twin *Ya/imī (never mentioned in Av. sources *expressis uerbis*), who appears only in later texts. The (posthumous) meeting of the *uruuan-* and of the *daēnā-* is a kind of symbolic incest inside the ipseity of every individual, a sort of re-integration of all the male and female aspects of every human being. The duality is subsumed into a new unity, which opens the way to a state of perfection (obviously, if the afterlife judgment has been positive). Then, the model of the meeting with the *daēnā-* should be placed behind the pattern of the incest between a couple of twins. It looks like as if they observed their own images in a mirror: only their sexual identity was reversed, so that a perfect union could finally be restored by means of the complete fusion of the male and female natures. Being twins who were born from a mortal egg (just like Mašya – Mašyāne born by Gayōmart, who was round like a ball or an egg [as noted above]), they contain one of the two sides of the genitor's identity. Then, it is clear that their union symbolically corresponds to that between the *uruuan-* and the *daēnā-*. As we know, Yima must have already seen his own *daēnā-*, because Ahura Mazdā showed her to him (*Vd.* 2, 2). So it was Yima who refused to meet her, to die (immediately) and to become her husband (*Vd.* 2, 3-4: *mərətō bərətaca*), insisting on the fact that his mission was different: to enlarge the earth and the number of the living beings. The absence of any reference to Yamī in the Avestan literature probably depends also on a motivation of esoteric character and not on a simple accident in the transmission of the text, although we cannot exclude the possibility that the actual incest with her was not expressly mentioned. If Yima already had seen her *daēnā-*, this vision³⁷² should have apparently made the explicit narrative of a subsequent earthly union with his sister unnecessary. On the other hand, the incest with Yamī should have been the logical result or actualization of such a primordial vision, because Yima knows that he must increase the living world. It is only when he has already taken a refuge into the *vara-* that, at least according to a version of his cycle, something wrong happens, the *x^varənah-* escapes him and, thus, he must exit

³⁷² PIRART's supposition that Vedic *venā-*, f. "vision", a *hapax legomenon* attested in *RV.* 1, 34, 2, is a designation of the daughter of Sūrya, appears very interesting (1995: 55), because she seems to assume some aspects comparable with the image of the *daēnā-* and her role in the *post mortem* (PIRART 1996: 28-30).

and die by the hands of Spitiiura, who splits him (probably in two parts).³⁷³ This kind of punishment is also pertinent from a symbolical point of view, because it is a kind of wound, which patently represents an inverse correspondence to the union of a man with his own (female) double. While the latter act is a sort of beatification, the first one (the punishment) results to be a violent division of the male person, whose meeting with his double has been symbolically subjected to frustration. I cannot state that this punishment should be considered an interdiction to see the *daēnā*- again and finally meet her, but we must seriously reflect upon its implications in the framework of the Mazdean ideas of afterlife.³⁷⁴ Probably also Mazdean priests were in troubles when asked about Yima's final destiny; some would have damned him (as in the "Confession of Sins", but where, at the end, he becomes the lord of the limbo),³⁷⁵ while others considered the invocation to his *frauuāši*- a protection against the *daēuuas*. In any case, later traditions preferred to introduce two new twins, Mašya and Mašyāne as sons of

³⁷³ According to the *Āmasp-nāmag*, Āmšīd was sawed by Spitūr by means of a "saw with hundred teeth", while, in the Persian poem written by Nūšārvān, Ām, hidden into a tree, was sawed by Iblīs and Bēvarāsp-Dahāg; cf. CHRISTENSEN 1934: 29-30; 72-73. See also SKJÆRVØ (2008: 508-509) with a presentation of the later sources. SKJÆRVØ (2008: 509) very interestingly notes that in a passage from the *Dēnkard* (9, 21, 5), Ōdag, the mother of Dahāg, is allusively presented as trying to harm the genitals of Āmšēd (*kēr ud gund*), making him an eunuch. The mention of this attack, in my opinion, confirms the positive characters of Yima, whose relations with fecundity and human generation were still perceived. The castration of Yima, would in fact, imply a demoniac action, against reproduction and prosperity. In the same article, SKJÆRVØ remarks that the "cutting apart" of Yima can be also reminiscent of Plato's myth in the *Symposium* (XIV-XV, 189e-191d), where Aristophanes presents the story of the primordial androgynes cut in two parts in order to generate men and women, but he also noted that such a comparison does not lead further insight on the matter of the twins (but it leads indeed to a certain fitting typological comparison in the framework of the theme of the "double"). SKJÆRVØ puts also in evidence the myth of Uranus's castration by his son Kronos (with reference to Hesiod's *Theogony*, 178-182). In any case, he is absolutely right when he insists on the theme of the incest, which relates the Iranian myth with the Vedic one. Then, it is more probable that, at least in a certain extent, the castration could be connected with the incest. Additional remarks (also of psychoanalytic nature) about the subject of Yima's castration have been focused on by OMIDSALAR (1987: 349; 2008: 523).

³⁷⁴ Some Old Persian forms of torture may implicate a symbolic force also with regard to the afterlife; see on this subject, PIRART 1996; LINCOLN 2007 83-96; cf. also PISANI 1966.

³⁷⁵ I must underline that this location into the limbo seems to be a sort of unconscious reference to Yima's role of architect and builder of the *vara*-, and can be considered as a modern justification of that mythological place.

Gayōmart in order to avoid other problems. Thus Yima (Pahl. ǰim) became, according to these later versions, a member of the fifth (in some cases of the ninth) generation,³⁷⁶ while his father frequently disappears or his identity changes, producing of strong confusion. In a recent work, KELLENS³⁷⁷ tries to place Yima in the fourth generation (Gaiia Marətan > Mašya – Mašyāne > [on the same level] Haošiianḡha, Urupi.azinauuant³⁷⁸ and Vīuuay^vhaṇt, and from the last one, of course, Yima). But this solution, if his reconstruction is correct (the relations between the members of the third generation are unclear), is nothing but the result of a radical transformation of the original genealogy, where Mašya – Mašyāne corresponded to Yima and Yamī, and where Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḡa and Vīuuay^vhaṇt/Gaiia Marətan (*alias* Gayōmart) had the first place. Unfortunately, the absence of any direct mention of Mašya and Mašyāne in the Avestan sources makes any stable location of Vīuuay^vhaṇt/Gaiia Marətan very risky. Presently, it is impossible to presume a priori that Vīuuay^vhaṇt was not associated, at least in earlier times, with another solar divinity such as *Atu, whose existence we may presume, according to an insightful suggestion made by HOFFMANN,³⁷⁹ from the name of Āθβiia- (*āθβiia-* probably being the patronymic [**atya-*] of **atu-* “Gänger” = Sun, later modified in *āptyá-* for a popular etymology).³⁸⁰ I think

³⁷⁶ See CHRISTENSEN 1934: 78-80.

³⁷⁷ 2002: 24-25.

³⁷⁸ According to KELLENS (2007a: 25-26; cf. also KELLENS 1997-1998: 751, n. 24) these two mythical figures correspond to the imperfection of the discharged part of the “egg”, since the elephant was made by the Aśvins from the dead matter of the egg of Aditi. Although this interpretation seems to be correct, I do not believe that we may accept the scheme proposed by KELLENS (2007a: 29), from which we should deduce that Gaiia Marətan was transformed into a hero of animal qualities and into another solar hero, son of *Atu. On the contrary, Haošiianḡha, Urupi.azinauuant and Vīuuay^vhaṇt cannot be sons of different heroes, because they are the direct descendants of the same “embryo” (although in its two possible results), and therefore, they should be brethren.

³⁷⁹ Apud HINTZE 1994: 201-2092; KELLENS 2007a: 26; 2007b: 318: “Le premier soleil serait celui qui va de l’aurore au zénith, le deuxième celui qui va du zénith au couchant et le troisième (Tritā āptyá) le soleil caché de la nuit”.

³⁸⁰ For a summary of the various interpretations concerning the etymology of the name of Trita Āptya in Vedic, and, of course, in Avestan, cf. VON WESENDONK 1924: 154-155 and in particular RÖNNOW 1927: XX-XXVIII. With regard to Ōraētaona, see now JACKSON – OETTINGER 2003; JACKSON 2006: 104. Trita Āptya killed Višvarūpa (with three heads) just like Herakles had to kill Geryon, who was “trikephalos”, in order to capture the bulls. This comparison, involving also Cacus, was firstly noted by ROSEN (1838: XX of the final commentary to 6, 5); see also BURKERT 1977: 276-277, and n. 8 (with additional

that this solution avoids introducing a new separate protagonist of the myth, whose identity is practically unknown, but allows us to connect him with Vīuauṇ^vhaṇt and Gaiia Marətan. HOFFMANN³⁸¹ assumed that Vedic Vivasvant was not originally a Sun-god, his direct identification with Mārtāṇḍa being established only in a later Vedic period,³⁸² and presently also JACKSON follows him.³⁸³ Contrariwise, St. JAMISON³⁸⁴ has remarked that, if Sun was called *āditya-* or *āditeya-* already in the *R̥gveda*, this happened because Vivasvant's association with him was earlier, although (perhaps) not original (but, in any case, not later than the elaboration of the myth concerning his birth as attested in the *Yajurveda* prose).

Thus, I think that we can start from the observation that Indo-Iranians had a common myth concerning the origin of humanity, in which a divine being was born, because of an accident, with an onthologic defect, and a new class of beings, who were mortal, was generated thanks to him. As father of Yama/Yima (and of his twin Yamī), Vivasvant/Vīuauṇ^vhaṇt, whose solar character is particularly clear in Avestan, was originally conceived as a divine being. Then, the idea of the “mortal embryo” or “mortal egg”, patent metaphor of a “mortal testicle”, gained ground, and, while the Indian tradition developed the myth of Mārtāṇḍa, who became the alter ego of Vivasvant,³⁸⁵ the Iranians created the figure of Gayōmart. But the constant mythological *topos* concerning the presence of a primordial creature of solar nature, from whom the first couple was generated (as a kind of division of a lost and immortal unity), seems to be a common place. The phenomenon of mortality must have been introduced into the world, starting from the generation of his sons: in Iran they have been reduced to a human status, as it happened for other minor gods, like Av. Θrita with respect to Vedic Trita.³⁸⁶

bibliography), who fittingly compares Viśvarūpa with Περικλύμενος, a witchcraft, able to change his shape, who tried to oppose Herakles.

³⁸¹ 1976: 107 = 1992: 722.

³⁸² *Ibidem*.

³⁸³ 2006: 79.

³⁸⁴ 1991: 207-208.

³⁸⁵ About some earlier attempts of identifying Vivasvant with Gandharva, and their refusal, see SCHNEIDER 1967-68: 15, and notes 14 and 15.

³⁸⁶ According to *RV*. 1, 163, 2, Trita has yoked the sacrificial horse, which is a gift by Yama, while Indra rode it. See SWENNEN 2004: 307-308.

At a certain point, Gaiia Marətan has definitely been separated from Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt, and the position of his son Yima was given to a new twin pair, Mašya and Mašyāne.³⁸⁷ These become the children of Gaiia Marətan and Ārmaiti, who took the place of the Vedic Saranyū, Vivasvant's wife. Such a change triggered the whole pattern of the three basic forms of incest, as also KELLENS assumes,³⁸⁸ but it produced a strong reduction of the primary functions of Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt himself and practically erased Yima's mythical role as primordial civilizing hero of humanity. Actually, Yima's rank was reduced, although Īm (*alias* Īamšēd) maintained the prestigious part of principal king of the first millennium in the history of humanity, during which he reigned for 616 years.³⁸⁹ In this change we can probably see one of the Iranian developments with regard to the Indo-Iranian doctrine of the original embryo (the primordial egg), from which mortality took its origin. Although the story of Mārtāṇḍa does not exist in Iran, and considering the way Vedic sources preserved it, we must observe that the form and the destiny of the "round", solar, Gayōmart is a clear resonance of the same pattern. His sperm, namely, was purified on the Sun, and generated the first human couple (a couple of sinners, as we know) on the earth, clearly identified with his mother, Spandarmad. Thus, the Mazdean solution took any responsibility away from Ahura Mazdā and the Ahuric sphere. Simultaneously, it considered the presence of death in the world as an extracosmic phenomenon caused only by the demons. But in the Avestan texts, different cycles that belonged to earlier mythological stories were not yet harmonised, so that we still can see and detect portions of different (and sometimes contrasting) traditions. Thence, Avesta presents Yima as the fruit of a ritual act performed by his father after a sacrifice in honour of Haoma. KELLENS³⁹⁰ suggests that Yima could not have been generated as normal humans were, i.e. by means of a sexual intercourse; he should have appeared in the ritual space by magic, just as it happened in the case of the birth of Draupadī and her brother Dhṛṣṭadyumna, who, according to the *Mahābhārata*, *Ādi Parva*, 1, 2, 85, emerged from the sacrificial fire after their father, Drupada, had completed his sacrifice under the direction of two Brāhmaṇas, Yaja and Upayaja. Thus, their birth was independent from the

³⁸⁷ A Persian source about Kayūmurt, edited by LAZARD (1956: 203), states that Kayūmurt and his female partner were associated by some of the Persians with Mišī and Mišāna. Cf. also GIGNOUX 1982.

³⁸⁸ 2007a: 29-30.

³⁸⁹ See al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology* (SACHAU 1879: 111, 113-114).

³⁹⁰ 2007a: 27; 2007b319-321.

participation of Drupada's wife, who, in fact, did not take part to the ritual. The attempt of hiding the female role in the process of human generation is a well known phenomenon, studied, for instance, by LINKE; it was very common in the Indo-European framework,³⁹¹ and this could be another example of this scenario. On the other hand, we know from the Vedic sources that Yama and Yamī were children of Vivasvant and Saranyū, begot in the framework of a complex mythical cycle, involving also the Aśvins. If the Indian side does not support the occurrence of a magical birth, we must observe that *Y.* 9, 4,³⁹² explicitly declares that Yima was “the most given with *x^varənah-* among the mortals, the only one who had the aspect of the Sun among (humans) who have been born” (*x^varənaṇ^vastəmō zātanqm huuarə.darəsō mašiiānqm*). The fact that the text refers to Yima as one of the *zāta-* is in my opinion a strong limit to the attractive idea that he was not given birth by a woman. I suspect that, thanks to the pressure and consumation of Haoma, Yima's father was given magical power, which enabled Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt to transfer his own seed (bestowed with special power) to his partner. Actually, we cannot exclude that *haoma-*, when mixed with milk, assumed a certain aphrodisiac force. This way, Yima, who is described with superb qualities in *Y.* 9, was born and was given such a remarkable power. The absence of any mention of his mother raises a problem, but the behaviour of Yama's mother, and in particular her direct links with Uṣas, open a number of new perspectives. As JACKSON has noted,³⁹³ although Uṣas is never associated with Yama, she is invoked with Vivasvant (“the one who shines far and wide”) in *ṚV.* 10, 39, 12, and it is possible that the names of both of them “contain the verbal root *VAS* «to shine, flash» [*h₂ues*]”, an evidence suggesting that “the two figures were sometime conceived as a pair”.³⁹⁴ Although JACKSON concludes that these facts do not prove that Vivasvant was “a reflex of an immortal Sun-God, because Uṣas and Saranyū adhere to the pattern of the Goddess and her mortal lover/husband,” he does not exclude that “a figure represented as the personified Sun was understood as a mortal”.³⁹⁵ The last solution is in my opinion much more reasonable, because it does not exclude the possibility that a divinity could be mortal (as Yama), and that Vivasvant, associated with the “dead egg”, could be considered as an aspect of the rising

³⁹¹ LINKE 1992.

³⁹² KELLENS 2007a: 48-50.

³⁹³ 2006: 79.

³⁹⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

and setting sun. In addition, this possibility avoids the peculiar solution of admitting two later solar connotations of Vivasvant – Vīuuaṇ^vhaṇt, independently developed in India and Iran (cf. all the solar aspects connected with the Iranian representation of Gayōmart). In this respect “*saranyū-* would be a fitting epithet of the Dawn-Goddess, who is seen to disappear when the sun rises”, as again JACKSON remarks.³⁹⁶ It is not the aim of the present study to investigate the subject concerning the origin of the Aśvins, but the fact that they were considered not only sons of Saranyū, but sons or brethren of Uṣas as well,³⁹⁷ underlines the complexity of the relations that exist between these two goddesses. Coming back to the second chapter of the *Widēwdād* and to Yima’s meeting with his *daēnā-*, we must again focus on the fact that, when Yima declares that he was not *cistō* (past passive participle of the verbal root *cit-*),³⁹⁸ in using this form with reference to himself he raises another explicit relation with the auroral aspects of the *daēnā-*. As already GERSHEVITCH suggested,³⁹⁹ *daēnā-* and *cistā-* maintain a special relation, because they could be considered the same divinity in different forms.⁴⁰⁰ In other words, we have to do with a remarkable symbolic game or with a hidden reference to the twinning between “Yima *cistō*” and his *daēnā-*, “*cistā-*” *par excellence*. Thus, as in India the mother of the Aśvins and of Yama has some aspects of Dawn, the she-double of Yima assumes an auroral image.⁴⁰¹ She is called *āhūiri-*, which can also mean that the *daēnā-* belongs not only to Yima, but also to Ahura Mazdā, as a female manifestation of his ipseity. In this case, the incest would have a double symbolic level: The one level comprises the unity of the two sides of

³⁹⁶ 2006: 80.

³⁹⁷ See also ZELLER (1990: 100-104) about the relations between the Aśvins, Uṣas and Sūryā.

³⁹⁸ BARTHOLOMAE 1904: 427-428. Cf. BENVENISTE in BENVENISTE – RENOU 1935: 63, n. 1.

³⁹⁹ 1967: 167.

⁴⁰⁰ See KELLENS 1995: 49-50. Cf. also SWENNEN 2010b.

⁴⁰¹ In the present net of relations we must include the fact that Uṣas, in *ṚV.* 3, 30, 13, is called *vivásvaitī-*, f., “die aufleuchtende” (GELDNER 1951, I: 365). In *ṚV.* 1, 44, 1, *vivasvat-* appears in the locution *vivasvad uṣāsaḥ citrām*, and GELDNER (1951, I: 44, n.) considered it as a haplological derivation from **vivasvat-vāt* “wie bei Vivasvant”, but cf. MAYRHOFER 1976: 222, in note. RENOU (1964: 8, 80-81) remarked that, here, *vivasvat-* could mean “lumineux”, with reference to 3, 30, 13, and perhaps 1, 96, 2, but he preferred “lumière” considering the presence of *vivásvan-*, n. (“l’éclairement [des monts par l’aurore] 1.187.7 et l’instr. *vivásvabhiḥ* 8.102,22 (“avec les lumières de l’aurore”)), but he assumed that an “allusion latente” to Vivasvant was present (see also RENOU 1964: 97; 1967: 95). SKJÆRVØ (2008: 502) notes that the Vedic verbal stem *vi- vas-* “is commonly used of dawn”, while the Avestan one, *vī.usa-* is attested “in the description of the third morning after death”.

the animical complex, *uruuan-* and *daēnā-* (as a kind of Dawn), which symbolically corresponds to the unification of two twins. The other symbolic level includes the unity of Yima with the female side of god (corresponding to Cistā and Ušas), offered to a male protagonist as a gift of beatification. In this case, Yima's *daēnā-* would be both his sister and his mother.

Apart from the references to Vivasvant, some Vedic passages state that the father of Aśvins (or, at least, of only one of them) is Dyaus,⁴⁰² who, in any case, should have begot them with his daughter Ušas. This fact puts the birth of the Aśvins in the framework of the myth of the primordial incest, which can be compared with (and possibly linked to) the myth of Heaven's incest. In this framework, Dyaus (or Tvaṣṭar,⁴⁰³ who can in some occurrences take the place of the latter)⁴⁰⁴ commits an incest with his daughter (Ušas), a sin attributed to Prajāpati in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 1, 7, 4, 3-4, etc.⁴⁰⁵

I cannot enter the whole problem of Prajāpati's rise "to a higher rank", a subject already investigated by Gonda in an homonymous book,⁴⁰⁶ but some additional Indo-Iranian aspects of this mythologic cycle can be revealed by his direct connections with Dyaus and Tvaṣṭar, on the one hand, and with Yama, in the framework of the idea of the self-sacrifice, as first mortal being, on the other hand.⁴⁰⁷ Generally, this story is evaluated from a Vedic

⁴⁰² JACKSON 2006: 57-62, *passim*.

⁴⁰³ See GÜNTERT 1923: 362. About later developments of Prajāpati's cycle see MACDONALD 1953.

⁴⁰⁴ See the presentation of the data offered by St. JAMISON (1991: 204-208) and by JACKSON (2006: 63-72). Cf. MACDONELL 1897: 51.

⁴⁰⁵ See VARENNE 1967: 47-49. Cf. also JAMISON 1997: 128-129.

⁴⁰⁶ See GONDA 1986. Cf. also DANGE 1963.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. also GÜNTERT 1923: 345-346. KELLENS – SWENNEN (2009: 72-76) have proposed a convincing re-interpretation of the consecration of the Vedic *yajamāna-*, as presented in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 1, 3 (see KEITH 1920: 108-109; SWENNEN 2010a: 111-112) and particularly in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (Mādhyandina), 3, 1, 3, 2-5 (see SWENNEN 2010a: 117-118, 122; where the offering is given to Aditi), in the framework of the *dīkṣā-*, and where the sacrificer becomes a *gārbha-* "embryo". Very interestingly they connect this initiatic ritual to the myth of Mārtāṇḍa, openly mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* *Mādhyandina*, thus showing that "le sacrificant qui reprend l'apparence d'un embryon ne le fait pas pour exprimer sa nouvelle naissance dans l'espace sacré. Il le fait plutôt pour se remettre dans la peau de l'avorton qui sut reconquérir sa divinité en offrant le premier pressurage de *soma*" (2009: 74). Although, in my opinion, the contemporary idea of a rebirth cannot be excluded (as already stated by HUBERT – MAUSS 1899: 47-52 = MAUSS 1968: 212-217), this ritual establishes a new link with the divine dimension, and in any case it represents another example of self-sacrifice. The attested differences with the

perspective; but if we consider the Iranian side of the problem, it appears that the three prototypical incests attested in the Zoroastrian tradition are no more isolated.

The incest of Ahura Mazdā (as god of Heaven)⁴⁰⁸ and his daughter⁴⁰⁹ corresponds to that of Dyaus/Tvaṣtar/Prajāpati with Uṣas. The incest between Ārmaiti and Gayōmart (= Vīuuaṇ^hhaṇt) can be compared with the one between Uṣas/Saraṇyū and Vivasvant, while the last one between Mašya and

Avestan tradition are not sufficient, as both scholars show, to deny the evidence that also in the *Yasna*, the *zaotar*- “D’une part, il abandonne son corps au dieu afin de le ressusciter, d’autre part, il assimile sa pensée transcendante pour la mettre au service du sacrifice. Après avoir ainsi procédé à l’immolation symbolique de sa part mortelle (son corps donné à Haoma), mais aussi son âme *uštana* lors du Y.11.18), le *zaotar* n’est plus un homme fait de matière et d’esprit; il est un cadavre dont la pensée, libérée du corps, a acquis la puissance de la pensée du dieu” (2009: 75). Very pertinent are SWENNEN’s (2010a: 130, n. 7) remarks, in particular with regard to the initiation of the sacrificer: “Cosa fa il sacrificante che, nell’ambito della sua consacrazione, prende l’apparenza di embrione sotto una tettoia che deve rappresentare la matrice? Gli studiosi del passato hanno tutti sottolineato un valore simbolico generale: il sacrificante deve essere consacrato per poter entrare nel sacro, cioè nell’universo chiuso dove si sviluppa il sacrificio. Prende dunque l’apparenza di un embrione perché deve prepararsi a una nascita spirituale. In altre parole, la simbologia è interna al codice simbolico del sacrificio stesso, ma non ha alcun valore né mitologico né antropologico. L’analisi di *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (Mādhyandina), particolarmente la discussione dedicata all’uso di una stanza estratta dell’inno 10.72, prova che il senso originale della consacrazione era totalmente diverso e iscriveva il sacrificante in una dimensione mitologica. Anche se questo senso sta morendo per lasciare il posto a dei nuovi come Viṣṇu e Prajāpati, i sacerdoti si ricordano che il sacrificante prendeva le apparenze di un aborto per poter diventare un Vivasvant nuovo, cioè per offrire un sacrificio così perfetto come il primo, e conquistare uno status divino. Se la mia analisi è corretta, la consacrazione ci insegna anche la natura dell’antropologia vedica antica. Gli uomini non si vedevano come creature degli dèi. Pensavano che la loro natura fosse divina, e che la vita umana risultasse dall’aborto criminale provocato dai figli primogeniti di Aditi, gelosi del loro potere. Il sacrificio doveva permettergli di cominciare a recuperare il loro statuto vero, quello di gemelli di Indra, il re degli dèi”. Furthermore, he fittingly notes (2010: 131, n. 15) that “È probabile che l’offerta del budino per onorare i figli di Aditi rifletta una visione arcaica; e questo per due ragioni. La prima sta nella coerenza della spiegazione: se il sacrificante rappresenta veramente un aborto, l’allusione ad Aditi all’inizio del sacrificio è spiegata dalla mitologia vedica stessa: il sacrificante onora prima sua madre mitologica. L’uso della stanza 10.72.8 del *Rgveda* (qui a p. 48) sembra logico, mentre la dottrina dello *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* Mādhyandina, che vuole offrire il budino a Viṣṇu non dà senso”.

⁴⁰⁸ See SKJÆRVØ 2002.

⁴⁰⁹ See again SKJÆRVØ 2002: 406-408, with a direct reference to the theme of the incest.

Mašyāne is the later reflex of the incest between Yama and Yamī. In the Iranian framework, the mythological complex of the incest between god-Heaven and Dawn has been adapted and inserted into the myth of the incest between Heaven and Earth, but the background remains probably common. The radical difference do not actually lie in the discrepancies concerning the single protagonists, but in the “moral(-ist)” evaluation of these sexual strategies that have been considered a sin in India, a merit in Iran. In this case, it is the Iranian side to continue the earlier Indo-European mythological pattern, and the story of the anticipated vision of Yima’s *daēnā*- (i.e. before dying and not only in the afterlife) demonstrates the existence of a particular connection between human and divine levels, in which the auroral side of god was offered to humanity.

11. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS ABOUT “DOUBLES”, “PAIRS” AND “TWIN PAIRS”

Along this “travel” we have found an impressive number of twin pairs.⁴¹⁰ No study of this evidence can be carried on without regarding the fact that in many ancient (and modern) cultures the birth of twins was considered not simply uncommon⁴¹¹ but also dangerous and in any case uncanny,⁴¹² as also GONDA noted.⁴¹³ A number of legends and taboos was connected to their appearance, as, for instance, the widespread idea that “twins — also human twins — were reputed to be [...] of one mother, but of different father and that of a pair of heavenly twins one is mortal, the other immortal”.⁴¹⁴ Very significant for our discussion is the connection of divine twins with fertility, which has been underlined by various scholars.⁴¹⁵ In order to resume some of the problems we have discussed and the various cases we have mentioned, I think it could be useful to offer a final look on the comparative situation concerning the mythological pattern of twinning in India and Iran, thus distinguishing the following categories:

- 1) real twins;
- 2) doubles;
- 3) simple pairs.

⁴¹⁰ See ZELLER 1990: 18-22.

⁴¹¹ See VON NEGELEIN 1902; HARRIS 1904: 4.

⁴¹² HARRIS 1904: 10-23.

⁴¹³ 1974: 33-34. See also HARRIS 1904 and HARTLAND 1924.

⁴¹⁴ GONDA 1974: 47. Cf. JACKSON 2006: 59-62.

⁴¹⁵ HARRIS 1904: 30-42; GONDA 1974: 34 (with bibliography). According to SCHNEIDER (1967-68: 23-32), the Ṛgvedic hymn 10, 10, was part of a lost ritual performed in order to prevent twins of different sex from a future incest and as a purification for the same sin, which should have been committed by them already in the womb of the mother.

INDIA	IRAN
Real twins	
Indra – Mārtāṇḍa ⁴¹⁶	
Saraṇyū – Trīśīras(-Viśvarūpa) ⁴¹⁷	
Yama – Yamī	Yima – *Ya/imī (Ĵim – Ĵimāg) ⁴¹⁸
	Mašya – Mašyāne
	The couples living in the <i>vara-</i> generate another pair of twins (one male, one female) each every 40 years. The incest between the new pairs of twins, then, is quite presumable.
	Although the <i>uruuan-</i> and the <i>daēnā-</i> are not defined as twins, they represent a kind of specular (animical) couple. This evidence is particularly relevant in the case of the myth concerning Yima and his (provisory) refusal of the <i>daēnā-</i> .
	Spənta Mainiiu – Aṅgra Mainiiu (both referred to as <i>yəma-</i> in <i>Y.</i> 30, 3).

⁴¹⁶ Both, in fact, are the last sons of Aditi: Indra, when he was born, immediately rose with all his powers and started his demiurgic activity, while Mārtāṇḍa fell down as a dead egg. Then, the gods fashioned him, and he might assume human proportions; see KELLENS – SWENNEN 2009: 74.

⁴¹⁷ According to *RV.* 10, 10, 4, Yama and Yamī are children (in the text *nābhīḥ*; cf. BERGAIGNE 1878, I: 36-37) of a Gandharva in the waters and of a Lady of the water (*gandharvó apsv ápyā ca yóṣā*), but GELDNER (1951, III: 183, 184) shows that in the Vedas Vivasvant can be associated to the Sun. See on this problem also SCHNEIDER 1967 and KUIPER 1996: 247-249.

⁴¹⁸ I must recall the presence of two sisters, *Saṇhauuācī-* (“she who speaks solemn announcements”) and *Arəṇauuācī-* (“she who speaks faults”), captured by Aži Dahāka and liberated by Θraētaona. They are considered sisters of Jam in later sources (see chapter 5, n. 212). Potentially they could be twins and, thus, represent a unique identity (divided in a mirrored double, one positive and one negative). Which kind of link with Yamī could be theroretically posed is a question to which I do not dare to venture, but the problem remains pertinent. In any case, they must be mentioned in this conspectus of the most relevant cases attested in the Indo-Iranian framework. Cf. the alternative solution proposed by REMMER (2006: 218-225).

The two Aśvins	
The Vedic divine charioteers are the sons of Heaven and of Saranyū, while Uṣas (whose links with the latter female divinity are complex too)⁴¹⁹ is their sister or mother.⁴²⁰ According to some sources, one of them is mortal, the other one immortal;⁴²¹ without doubts, this trio finds a correspondence in another Greek trio, composed of Kastor and Polydeukēs, sons of Zeus, and their sister Helenē.⁴²² The latter female figure is very pertinent for our research: it was already EHNI⁴²³ to propose some fitting thematic correspondences between the cycle about the Tyndarids and the Vedic group. He suggested a certain (but imprecise) comparison between Helenē and Yamī. Few years later, FAY⁴²⁴ raised a direct comparison between the name of Ἑλένη and that of the goddess <i>Saranyū</i>; but the largest discussion about this Indo-Greek common theme has been independently developed and underlined by PISANI,⁴²⁵ who focused on some patent similarities between Helenē, in particular as εἰδωλον,⁴²⁶ and Saranyū – Savarṇā, whose importance in the myth of Yama has been already noted. Furthermore, SKUTSCH has recently brought⁴²⁷ new arguments in support of a possible etymological link between the Greek name Ἑλένη and that of <i>Saranyū</i> – <i>Savarṇā</i> – <i>Sāvarṇī</i>, a comparison which deserves to be seriously considered.	

⁴¹⁹ See PISANI 1928 = 1969: 342, 345-346. About the Purāṇic tradition concerning Saṃjñā-Saranyū and the twilight, see LOMMEL 1950, and the various contributions by DONIGER.

⁴²⁰ JACKSON 2006: 56-72, 79-93.

⁴²¹ *ṚV.* 1, 181, 4. See ZELLER 1990, *passim*; cf. PARPOLA 2002: 366.

⁴²² It is also worthwhile to recall that, according to Athen. II 57 F, Helenē was born from an egg that fell down on the earth from the moon; PISANI 1928 = 1969: 342. See also GONDA 1974: 45-47.

⁴²³ EHNI 1890 proposed a very large comparison between the Indian and the Greek mythological figures, already involving also some Germanic correspondences (cf. also EHNI 1896). SKUTSCH's declaration (1987: 190) that EHNI allegedly proposed a comparison between the names of Helenē and Saranyū is incorrect, as well as his claim that PISANI perhaps might have not known EHNI's book; indeed, this study was quoted in PISANI's article frequently and in detail. It is also peculiar that FAY's article (1896) is never mentioned by SKUTSCH. See also JACKSON 2006 and EDMUNDS 2007: 2-11.

⁴²⁴ 1896: 17-18.

⁴²⁵ 1928 (= 1969).

⁴²⁶ SKUTSCH 1987: 189. Cf. GÜNTERT 1923: 364.

⁴²⁷ 1987: 189-193.

The problem has been re-assessed in detail by JACKSON, ⁴²⁸ who basically accepts this Indo-Greek parallel. We recall that, according to another version, <i>RV.</i> 10, 17, 1, Vivasvant, in the form of a horse, generated the two Aśvins, “the horsemen” with the true Saraṇyū.	
Doubles	
Vivasvant – Mārtāṇḍa	Vīuuṇ ^h ṇṇṇ – Gaiia Marətan (Gayōmart)
Saraṇyū – Savarṇā /Sāvarṇī or Chāyā	
Mṛtyu – the sacrificial horse	
Saraṇyū in form of a mare	
Vivasvant in form of a steed	
	Kirdēr and his “double” (<i>hangerb</i>)
Simple pairs	
The two messengers of Yama	
The two dogs of Yama ⁴²⁹ (one “black”, the other one “spotted”).	
Half-brothers	
Yama – Manu	Yima – Spitiiura(-*Manu?)
Manu Vaivasvata – Manu sāvarṇya- or sāvarṇi-	
Yama, son of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa and Saraṇyū	
Manu, son of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa and Savarṇā	

The ratio behind these recurrent patterns partly escapes our horizon of knowledge, but we cannot avoid a reflection on their continuous elaboration, upon which already Malamoud focused, noting for instance that a twin is a special form of the double, while the double is an *alter ego* with similar (but

⁴²⁸ 2006: 84-92.

⁴²⁹ See HOPKINS 1915; cf. already DE HARLEZ 1887; CASARTELLI 1890b; LINCOLN 1979; 1980; KRICK 1972. About the positive aspects of Iranian origin regarding the dogs in ancient folklore see DÄNHARDT 1907: 107-110.

also diverging) characters. Anyway, also a twin, although similar, can be, in some cases and at the same time, the opposite (antagonist [e.g. Spənta Mainiiu vs. Angra Mainiiu, expressly called *yāma-* in *Y.* 30, 3] or simply correspondent in a certain regard [e.g. male – female, Yama – Yamī]), while the double tries to substitute its original *pendant* (Saraṇyū – Savarṇā/Sāvarṇī). In general, when the twins are male, antagonism is very frequent, as it appears in the most evident case of the opposition between the two Avestan primordial Mainiius. When the twins are of different sex, then the possibility of the incest, although sometimes hidden, is very strong. In this context we must also recall the existence, in a Pahlavi source (*Selections of Zādspram*, ch. 9, 1), of Manušag, the sister of Manu (and then wife of Ēšm).

We must also remark that the relation between Indra and Mārtāṇḍa shows that, in principle, humanity was strictly related with the divine dimension, although its semi-human earliest ancestor, the dead egg, was fashioned by the gods so that he might assume a new shape, and behave as another god himself, although in the form of his alter ego Vivasvant, the first sacrificer. This tremendous invention, the sacrifice, re-established a divine status and offered him the opportunity to generate gods (as the two Aśvins, whom, at least according to some sources, Vivasvant generated with the true Saraṇyū, when he assumed the form of a horse) and humans (Yama and Yamī, sons of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa and Saraṇyū, Manu, son of Vivasvant/Mārtāṇḍa and Savarṇā). It is remarkable that in later Yajurvedic framework, Mṛtyu, as a primordial cosmological being, creates a double of himself in form of a horse, to be sacrificed to himself. Thus, the double can be a real substitute of the ipseity in the sacrificial framework, as Vivasvant, the sun, who is the founder of the sacrifice, can mate with Saraṇyū, he in form of a stallion, she in that of a mare, in order to generate the Aśvins. While the Iranian mythology developed a new set of primordial couples, like Mašya – Mašyāne, without forgetting the earlier one corresponding to Ğim – Ğimāg (Yima – *Ya/imī), the Indian tradition created a double identity for Manu, Manu Vaivasvata – Manu *sāvarṇya-* or *sāvarṇi-*, but this creation was just followed by that of many other Manus.⁴³⁰ Thus, although the duplication was, perhaps, an attempt of synthesis regarding the ambiguous identity of the human race, the later developments showed how difficult it was to resume the origin of humanity.

⁴³⁰ See DONIGER 1999: 53-55 (= 2009: 80-82).

One additional element in this discussion concerns the importance attributed in Iran to the meeting of the *uruuan*- and of the *daēnā*- as a kind of mystic union between two parts of the spiritual ipseity, which is divided in two images and which finally can restore a primordial unity. The present interpretation of the vision and the refusal of the *daēnā*- by Yima has thus opened new perspectives, which invite us to revise the Iranian approach to the problem of the incest. Thus, the incest – basically that between twins – is a symbolical anticipation of the future state of perfection, of spiritual re-integration. Thus, it anticipates the afterlife in its perfect condition, and the vision of his/her own opposite double, respectively, brings the most fitting (narcissistic?)⁴³¹ satisfaction. In any case, the splitting of the ipseity into a pair of a male and a female components attributes any human being a remarkable complexity and should have been the fruit of a deep esoteric speculation, which represented one of the diverging points in the religious elaboration developed by Mazdean priests with respect to the Indo-Iranian background.

I hope that this object of analysis could find some interest, opening the way to future investigations.

⁴³¹ I have discussed this problem in another forthcoming article. Although GÜNTERT (1923: 357-361) assumed that Yamī was a later figure, he made a very interesting comparison between the image of Echo (in the “Narcissus-Sage”), and that of Yamī. Also the subject of the myth of Ĵeh has been taken into consideration by GÜNTERT (1923: 360-361) in the same framework. See PANAINO 2009a and 2009b. In this context, I would like also to mention that WINDISCHMANN (1857: 76-78) assumed that Gayōmart saw in the water an image of Ĵeh, and that this vision was responsible of his death. WINDISCHMANN (1857: 76-78) suggested a comparison between this myth and a less known version of the story of Narcissus, which has been reported by Pausanias (9, 31, 7). According to this ancient author, Narcissus had a twin sister, who suddenly died. Thus, looking into the waters, he fell in love with her image, and not with himself. Although this direct comparison has no grounds, because WINDISCHMANN’s interpretation of the most pertinent passages of the *Bundahišn* was based on the inadequate translation offered by ANQUETIL-DUPERRON (1771, 3), the basic idea that this Greek story concerning the existence of a twin sister of Narcissus was worth of consideration in the framework of the mythological complex of the twins needs indeed a new assessment.