The Variety of Expressions for Heaven and Earth in the Rgveda

ABSTRACT

This article investigates coordinative nominal constructions in the Rgveda, focusing on grammatical patterns of the so-called dual deities—pairs of gods whose names are joined in dvandva compounds or in other coordinative constructions (i.e. asyndeta, elliptic duals, and syntagms constructed with copulative conjunctions). It overviews the role of dual deities in the Rgveda and emphasizes the significance of the Rgvedic poetic style in the research of dual deities. The main focus of the article is the divine pair dyāva-prthivī “Heaven and Earth”—the only prominent male-female pair in the Rgveda. It identifies the variety of coordinative constructions comprised of the names of Heaven and Earth, and the stylistic paradigms in which this pair occurs. The article argues that all types of dvandva compounds and other syntagms signifying dual theonyms are a reflection of the style of Rgvedic language and, as shown in the case of Heaven and Earth, the specific stylistic features and the ambiguities of gender of Heaven and Earth reflect the belief in magical power attributed to the names of deities—the frequent articulation of divine names in a variety of coordinative constructions, following specific formulae, was believed to produce greater magical effect in Vedic rituals.

BIOGRAPHY

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THE VARIETY OF EXPRESSIONS FOR HEAVEN AND EARTH IN THE Rgveda

The Rgveda, the oldest recorded Indian scripture, is a collection of 1028 hymns (grouped into ten books), addressing various deities; it is composed in the Vedic language—the most archaic form of Sanskrit which has a very complex grammatical structure. Rgvedic hymns are dedicated to a single god or goddess, or they address a pair or a larger group of deities. A considerable number of Rgvedic deities are joined together to form pairs, expressed in coordinative nominal compounds (dvandva) and other coordinative constructions. Some Vedic deities occur very frequently in pairs (e.g., Mitra and Varuṇa), others only occasionally (e.g., Indra and Viṣṇu) or never (e.g., Savitar, Aryaman, Bhaga). Some deities are prone to enter into a considerable variety of associations (e.g., Indra occurs in pairs with numerous Vedic deities), others have only one or two associations. Some are very closely associated but never join in dvandva compounds (e.g., Soma and Vāc), others are very loosely connected yet often appear in dual dvandvas. Some of these dual deities are perceived as unities, as one single deity; others retain their individuality. These divine pairs usually consist of two male deities, with very few exceptions, e.g., dyāvā-prthivī ‘Heaven and Earth’—a male-female pair, and naktā-uṣasā “Night and Dawn”—a group of two females. In this respect the Vedic dual deities are clearly distinguished from the well-known divine couples in other Indo-European cultures (e.g., Zeus and Hera) as well as from the post-Vedic pairs comprising a male god with his female sākti.

THE ORIGIN AND ROLE OF DUAL DEITIES IN THE Rgveda

Many scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, interested mainly in historical development and the evolution of religions, tried to explain the origin of dual deities and to determine which of them could be regarded as the prototype. Keith1 and Macdonell2 and, with some hesitation, also Oldenberg3 believed that the pair Dyaus and Prthivī (‘Heaven and Earth’) was the prototype, representing the primeval parents, and following that analogy many other deities were joined together. They did not try to explore why almost all dual deities are pairs of male gods. A more recent attempt to explain the origin of dual deities was made by Renou who also believes in the evolution of this phenomenon, starting with the divine pairs Dyaus and Prthivī, and Mitra and Varuṇa, and ending with the AŚvins, the divine twins, as the final stage in the development.4 The AŚvins are the most unified among the divine pairs in the Rgveda—they are always addressed as a single deity whereas all other Vedic dual deities are separable and often addressed also on their own. A substantial amount of research has been done on the mythological and religious role of twins in various past and present cultures of the world. Several attempts have been made to explain the origins of the AŚvins, connecting them with the morning and evening stars, water and fire, heaven and earth, etc.5 Gonda believes that the AŚvins are the Indian variant of the prehistoric Indo-European idea of a divine or heroic pair; later on, in the Vedic period, they may have influenced or modified the spread of the dual deities in Vedic religion.6 Similarly, other scholars, e.g., Bergaigne,7 Geldner8 and Renou,9 also believe in a great influence of the AŚvins on the development of the Vedic dual deities.

The dual deities play an important part in the Vedic pantheon and have a significant role in Vedic rituals. One of the scholars who first recognized their ritual role and function was Bergaigne: he emphasized that apart from

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their mythological connections, attention has to be paid also to their purely liturgical association.\textsuperscript{10} He even regarded the requirements of the Vedic rituals to be of primary importance for the formation of the dual deities. His views were followed by Bloomfield, who believed that pairing of deities was not always based upon any special natural affinity, but often only upon liturgical association.\textsuperscript{11} Ritual texts, the Brāhmaṇas, certainly provide enough evidence for the strong liturgical connection of many divine pairs. From the ritual point of view the dual deities were often considered equivalent to a single deity and the ritual texts use special terms for them (i.e., divīdevata ‘relating to two deities’). On the other hand, there are also numerous ritual techniques which are described in pairs, corresponding to dual deities, e.g., two kindling sticks, two sacrificial cakes, two sacrificial jars and two ladles, sacrificial butter (corresponding to Agni) and milk (corresponding to Soma), two Vedic metres (gāyatrī and triṣṭubh), etc.

Only one extensive study of Vedic dual deities has been written so far, a monograph by Gonda.\textsuperscript{12} This work is a philological study of some of the most prominent dual deities, providing valuable information about them from various Vedic exegetical sources. Gonda tries to draw parallels between the phenomenon of the dual deities and other forms of duality in ancient Indian culture and literature and also compares them with similar phenomena in other parts of the world. He places the origin of dual deities in the so-called ‘pair-system’ of the ancient Indo-Europeans, who supposedly regarded the pair as the fundamental unit. The idea of duality, of a unity achieved by combining two together, is expressed, according to Gonda, in all ancient Indo-European cultures.\textsuperscript{13} He provides evidence for this mainly from ancient Indian literature and some scanty information from other cultures of the world. Old Indian textual evidence is quite abundant: there are many examples of the twofold nature of the world and society as it was perceived in ancient India: heaven/earth, men/animals, gods/men, gods/priests, gods/demons, lower/higher gods, soma-drinkers/non-soma-drinkers, etc.\textsuperscript{14} However, it is possible to find equally abundant evidence for a tripartite nature of old Indian social organization: this has been explored by several scholars, particularly by Dumézil.\textsuperscript{15} Gonda’s evidence for the dual nature of society and religion outside Indian culture is rather limited, drawn mainly from a few anthropological sources. He does not address the question of gender of dual deities.\textsuperscript{16}

Many questions about the origin and function of Vedic dual deities remain unanswered. Dual deities of the same gender, who are strongly represented in the religion of the Vedas, are a unique phenomenon, not found, at least not as diversely and extensively, in any other recorded Indian religious tradition or in any other religion outside India. The Vedic dual deities only rarely occur in post-Vedic literature and the male dual deities of the post-Vedic pantheon (e.g., Harihara, Śrīyāmmya) are far less common or significant; their association is of a secondary nature. These post-Vedic male dual gods express manifestations of one single god rather than the cooperative duality of the Vedic gods and have had hardly any popularity or importance in Hinduism. The well-known divine couples of male gods with their female consorts have had the most prominent position in the Hindu pantheon since the post-Vedic period.

**Ṛgvedic Poetic Style and the Magical Grammar of the Ṛgveda**

The main source for the investigation of Ṛgvedic dual deities is the Ṛgveda itself: research into any aspect of the Ṛgvedic culture is inevitably linked with the examination of the linguistic and stylistic features of the poetic language of the Ṛgveda. Although the style of the Ṛgveda has been the subject of scholarly examination for a long time, initially it was investigated as a part of studies on internal chronology of the text.\textsuperscript{17} The research on the correlation between language and style started much later; Renou was one of the first scholars who recognized the interconnectedness between language and style in his monograph on the historical development

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\textsuperscript{10} A. Bergaigne, “Recherches sur l’histoire de la liturgie védique,” *Journal Asiatique* 1889 (I), 12.


\textsuperscript{12} Gonda, *The Dual Deities in the Religion of the Veda*, 50-52.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 32-33.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 21-28.


\textsuperscript{16} Gonda (*The Dual Deities in the Religion of the Veda*, 59-66) discusses only divine androgyny as a primeval formula for the divine bi-unity, following M. Eliade (*Patterns in Comparative Religion* (New York: New American Library, 1974), 420-425) who also does not address the question of male dual deities.

\textsuperscript{17} E.g., W. Wüst, *Stilgeschichte und Chronologie des Ṛgveda* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1928).
of Sanskrit.\textsuperscript{18} Gonda complemented Renou’s work and established, in several monographs, a foundation for the stylistic study of the Rigveda.\textsuperscript{19} In his works he identifies the problems of the style of the Vedic poetic language, collects and classifies an extremely large amount of data and recognizes the basic principles of the Rgvedic stylistic study of the style of the Vedic poetry have been established. Jakobson made a significant contribution to the area of linguistics and poetics that has had a great influence on all later researchers: he investigated the interrelationship between language and communication and studied poetic language as a semiotic system.\textsuperscript{22} Watkins has made further important contributions to this area: he approached Indo-European poetics with genetic and typological methods, investigating the form and function of poetic language in ancient Indo-European societies.\textsuperscript{23} He is especially interested in the pragmatic approach, what he calls the domain of themes, which reflects the culture and the ideology of Indo-Europeans. Theme is the deep structure of formulae, i.e., the carriers of themes, which are the expressions of an underlying semiotic system.\textsuperscript{24} The focus of his research is these formulae in Indo-European: he compares Rgvedic, Avestan, Hittite, Old Greek, Old Germanic and Celtic sources.

More recently, Elizarenkova has approached the Rgveda with a new method, combining classical Vedic philology with semiotics, investigating the causal interconnection between the linguistic system (i.e., Vedic language) and the style of the text which represents that language (i.e., the Rgveda).\textsuperscript{25} She emphasizes that a


\textsuperscript{24} Watkins, “How to Kill a Dragon in Indo-European”, 270-299; “Questions linguistiques de poétique, de mythologie et de prédroïtd en indo-européen”, 3-30.

study of the linguistic system of the *Rgveda* should take into consideration its broad extra-linguistic background: its genre, function and social environment. She interprets the complex grammatical system of the *Rgveda* in connection with the world-model of the Vedic people; e.g., the concept of cyclical time, the idea of constant renewal of the universe with the help of ritual, the idea of magical power attributed to the name of a god, etc. The extra-linguistic background underlies many peculiarities of the ‘magical grammar’ of the *Rgveda*, e.g., polysemy, synonymy, semantic bifurcation (e.g., *ari*—‘friend’ or ‘enemy’), ambiguity of gender (abstract noun/proper noun), creation of a sound-image of the deity addressed, a play with pronouns (pronouns referring to the god and to the devotee himself are placed side by side), repetitions (especially of nouns in the accusative case), ellipsis (any word in the sentence may be dropped, causing ambiguity, suggestiveness and double meaning). She attempts to build semantic models for the typical units of the hymns and then describes transformations involving different parts of these models and the switching over of the codes: myth/ritual/reality. She analyses the hymns in the *Rgveda* as an act of verbal communication between the devotee and the deity, which on the surface level is a monologue, but at the deep level is a dialogue with an exchange of voices, texts and gifts.

Her methodology draws from several sources; it is largely based on the Moscow-Tartu school of semiotics, which developed and successfully applied semiotic analysis to ancient cultures. She is also influenced by the communication theory of Jakobson, especially his groundbreaking works on grammar of poetry and poetry of grammar, by several studies of Old Indo-European poetic style and language, modern investigations of oral poetic techniques, and the studies of the functions of the poet in Old Indo-European society. In her analysis of the *Rgvedic* poetic language she also applies methods, developed by Watkins, for the research of comparative Indo-European poetics. She agrees with Watkins that the study of *Rgvedic* poetic language should be simultaneously synchronic and diachronic. The poetic language of the *Rgveda* should be considered, she says, as a sort of grammar with several components: phonological (the domain of metrics and phonetics), morphological (the domain of grammatical figures), syntactic (the domain of ‘formulas’), semantic (the domain of thematics) and pragmatic (the domain of poet/performer/audience) which dominates the entire grammar.

Elizarenkova’s methodological approach is particularly relevant and applicable for the study of the coordinative nominal constructions expressing dual deities in the *Rgveda*, which display a number of stylistic characteristics discussed in her works, e.g., polysemy, synonymy, ellipsis, repetition, frequent use of vocative case, specific sound-images, expressive paradigms, code change between explicative and appellative functions. It is shown in this paper—on the example of the most frequently addressed dual deities, i.e., Dyaus and Prthivi (‘Heaven and Earth’)—how the ‘magical grammar’ of the *Rgvedic* poetic language is reflected in alternative usage of a variety of coordinative nominal constructions for dual theonyms (i.e., asyndeta, elliptic duals, *dvandva* compounds and syntagms constructed with coordinative particles), following specific stylistic formulae, especially in hymns addressing the pair.


28 Elizarenkova, “Problems of a Synchronic Description of Language and Style in the *Rgveda*”, 49.


30 Jakobson, Selected *Writings* II; Selected *Writings* III; and other works.


32 Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics*; and other works.

DYAUS AND PRTHIVĪ (“HEAVEN AND EARTH”)

Dyaus and Prthivī are one of the most frequently invoked Vedic dual deities and the only prominent male-female pair in the Rgveda. As mentioned earlier, many scholars believe them to be the oldest prototype, from which other dual deities developed. They are invoked in numerous hymns and their names occur in a rich variety of coordinative constructions. They display several linguistic and stylistic idiosyncrasies which reflect their special role in the Rgvedic religion. They are perhaps the most closely related pair in the Rgvedic pantheon and their specific stylistic features indicate their antiquity.

When Dyaus and Prthivī are conjunctively connected their names can be expressed in several ways: in coordinative compounds (dvandva), asyndeta, elliptic duals, and syntagms constructed with coordinative conjunctions. In my past research I have shown that the distribution of coordinative constructions comprising theonyms does not reflect the usually accepted internal chronology of the Rgveda which situates the family books (mandalas 2–7) and mandala 10 at opposite ends of the chronological spectrum; e.g., the oldest types of dvandva compounds have often considerably more attestations in the later mandalas than in the oldest family books. These specific features of dual theonyms reflect the Vedic beliefs about the extreme importance and magical power of divine names.

The most common coordinative nominal construction for Dyaus and Prthivī is dvandva. Although the compound dyāvaprthivī belongs to the oldest type of dvandva (both constituents in the dual, both declinable, each has its own accent) its distribution in the ten mandalas shows that there are considerably more attestations in the later mandalas, especially in the latest mandala 10. Dyaus and Prthivī have also five attestations in the elliptic dual dyāvā which occur mostly in the later mandalas. The elliptic duals are used as an alternative expression—a very infrequent one though—for the dual deities that occur in the oldest types of dvandva compounds. Asyndeton is, apart from the elliptic dual, the least frequent coordinative expression of Dyaus and Prthivī; it is outnumbered by dvandvas and constructions with coordinative particles. The names of the deities often occur connected with a coordinative particle: the most frequently used particle is uṇā, followed by the particle ca, two of the particle ca, and, rarely, the particles nā and ā. These syntagms are most frequently attested in younger layers of the Rgveda, (especially in mandala 1), nearly always in hymns addressing another deity/deities.

The theonyms Dyaus and Prthivī often occur alternatively in different coordinative constructions which create several types of expressive paradigms. These paradigms, formed by repetition of divine names in various constructions, depend on the type of the hymn in which they are attested: dual theonyms occurring in hymns which address the very same pair follow different stylistic patterns from those in hymns addressing all deities, or a different deity. Dyaus and Prthivī are addressed in hymns which are dedicated to the pair, in hymns which address several or all deities, or another deity. Several types of stylistic paradigms which are used to express a copulative relationship between the two deities can be identified.

Six hymns are dedicated to Dyaus and Prthivī: in these hymns the pair occurs by far most frequently in dvandva compound (20 attestations), and only once in asyndeton and once in a syntagm constructed with two particles ca. In hymns addressing Dyaus and Prthivī the following types of stylistic paradigms can be identified:

1. In four hymns (RV 1.159; 1.160; 4.56; 7.53) the stylistic paradigm consists of dvandva compounds only; e.g., RV 4.56: 1a … dyāvaprthivī …; 3b … dyāvaprthivī …
2. In one hymn (RV 6.70) the two theonyms occur in several dvandva compounds and a syntagm constructed with two particles ca; e.g., RV 6.70: 1c dyāvaprthivī … ; 4a … dyāvaprthivī … ; 5a … dyāvaprthivī …; 6a … dyauī ca prthivī ca …; and in one hymn (RV 1.185) in several dvandva compounds and one asyndeton, e.g., RV 1.185: 2d … dyāvā … prthivī … ; 5d …

35 Ibid.
36 There are 103 attestations of this pair in dvandva: the pair has the largest number of occurrences in dvandva among all dual deities.
37 Prthivī is not attested in the elliptic dual.
38 Only those pairs of deities that occur in the oldest types of dvandva compounds, are attested in the elliptic dual, e.g., Mitra and Varuṇa, Uṣas ans Nakta, Dyaus and Prthivī.
39 RV is an abbreviation for the Rgveda.
Dyaus and Prthivī are addressed as a pair in forty hymns which are dedicated to several or all deities: the most frequently used coordinative construction is *dvandva*, followed by asyndeton. In these hymns the pair is addressed in several types of coordinative constructions:

1. In nineteen hymns the deities occur in *dvandva* compounds only; e.g., RV 2.32: 1a ... *dyāvāprthivī* ...
2. In nine hymns they appear in asyndeta only; e.g., RV 5.46: 3b *prthivīm dyām* ...
3. In seven hymns the deities occur in syntags constructed with a coordinative particle: with the particle *utā*; with the particle *ca*; and with the particle *ā*; e.g., RV 1.105: 19d ... *prthivī utā dyāḥ*.
4. In five hymns they appear in a variety of coordinative constructions: in two hymns the pair is expressed in *dvandva* and asyndeton; e.g., RV 10.63: 9d *dyāvāprthivī* ...; 10a ... *prthivīm dyām* ...; in two hymns in asyndeton and a syntagm constructed with the particle *utā*; e.g., RV 6.47: 27a *divās prthivyāḥ* ...; 6.47.29a ... *prthivīm utā dyām*; and in one hymn in *dvandva* and a syntagm constructed with two particles *ca*; e.g., RV 10.36: 1d ... *dyāvāprthivī* ...; 2a *dyauś ca* ... *prthivī ca* ...

The predominant expression for Dyaus and Prthivī in hymns which address several or all deities comprises either *dvandva* compounds only or asyndeta only and, less frequently, syntags constructed with a coordinative particle (most frequently with the particle *utā*). In several hymns Dyaus and Prthivī appear as a part of a group of several deities that are expressed in asyndetic constructions. Dyaus and Prthivī seem to be always addressed as a pair within those groups: usually they are attested in *dvandva* or connected with the particle *utā* or, rarely, their names appear in asyndeton, always in immediate succession. Most of the constructions with the particle *utā* appear in the group of hymns from *manaḍala* 1, i.e., RV 1.94–1.115, attributed to Kutsa Āṅgirasa, and seem to follow specific stylistic patterns—Dyaus and Prthivī always appear connected by the particle *utā* in the final stanza, together with other deities.

Dyaus and Prthivī are also attested in one hundred and fourteen hymns which are dedicated to another deity. The most frequently used coordinative construction in these hymns is *dvandva*, closely followed by asyndeton, syntags constructed with the particle *utā* and, less frequently, the elliptic dual and syntags constructed with the particles *ca*, *nā*, and *ā*. In these hymns Dyaus and Prthivī are attested in several types of coordinative constructions:

1. In thirty-five hymns the pair is addressed in asyndeta only; e.g., RV 1.33: 10a *divāḥ prthivyāḥ* ...
2. In thirty-four hymns the pair occurs in *dvandva* compounds only; e.g., RV 2.1: 15d ... *dyāvāprthivī* ...
3. In twenty-six hymns the deities occur in a syntagm constructed with a coordinative particle: most frequently with the particle *utā*; e.g., RV 5.62: 3a ... *prthivīm utā dyām*; followed by constructions with the particle *ca*; two particles *ca*; the particle *ā*; and the particle *nā*.

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40 RV 2.32: 2.41; 5.43; 5.47; 5.49; 5.51; 7.35; 7.43; 7.52; 10.31; 10.35; 10.64; 10.65; 10.66; 10.70; 10.92; 10.93; 10.110; 10.114.
41 RV 1.89; 3.54; 4.36; 7.34; 7.38; 7.104; 8.25; 10.58; 10.59.
42 RV 1.105; 1.106; 1.107; 1.110; 1.111.
43 RV 1.22.
44 RV 7.39.
45 RV 6.50; 10.63.
46 RV 6.47; 6.51.
47 RV 10.36.
48 Five of these hymns (RV 1.105; 1.106; 1.110; 1.110; 1.111) are dedicated to all deities, others mainly to Agni, Indra and a few other deities.
49 E.g., RV 1.94.10c: *tān no mitrō vāruno māmabhantām ādīthī śāndhuḥ prthivī utā dyāḥ*.
50 RV 1.33: 1.56; 1.91; 1.190; 2.40; 3.1; 3.5; 3.22; 3.34; 3.61; 4.21; 4.44; 4.53; 5.59; 6.30; 6.58; 6.71; 7.60; 7.64; 7.97; 8.35; 8.40; 8.50; 8.57; 9.31; 9.57; 9.109; 10.7; 10.29; 10.55; 10.77; 10.88; 10.94; 10.111; 10.119.
51 RV 1.31; 1.35; 1.52; 1.63; 1.143; 2.1; 2.2; 2.12; 3.3; 3.25; 3.26; 3.58; 4.14; 4.54; 5.55; 5.83; 6.11; 6.44; 6.75; 7.44; 8.22; 8.42; 8.48; 9.86; 9.68; 9.69; 9.81; 10.1; 10.2; 10.45; 10.47; 10.67; 10.113; 10.149.
52 RV 1.94; 1.95; 1.96; 1.98; 1.101; 1.103; 1.108; 1.113; 1.114; 1.154; 4.39; 5.62; 5.85; 10.10.
53 RV 6.68; 8.97; 10.121; 10.190.
54 RV 4.51; 9.86; 9.100; 10.10; 10.91.
4. In nineteen hymns the pair is expressed in a variety of coordinative expressions: in *dvandva* and asyndeton; e.g., RV 3.32: 8c … *prthivīm dyām*; 10c … *dyāvaprthivī* …; in *dvandva* and a syntagm constructed with the particle *utā*, e.g., RV 9.97: 13b … *prthivīm utā dyām*; 42d … *dyāvaprthivī* …; in two syntags constructed with the particles *utā* and *ca*; e.g., RV 1.100: 1b … *dvāḥ prthivyāḥ ca* …; 19d … *prthivī utā dyāḥ*; in asyndeton and a syntagm constructed with the particle *utā*; e.g., RV 7.5: 1a *dvāḥ* … *prthivyāḥ*; 4a … *prthivī utā dyāḥ* …; in asyndeton, elliptic dual and a syntagm constructed with the particle *ca*; e.g., RV 3.6: 2c *dvāḥ … prthivyāḥ*; 3a *dvāḥ ca* … *prthivī*; 4b … *dyāvā* …; and in *dvandva* and the elliptic dual; e.g., RV 10.37: 2b *dyāvā* …; 6a … *dyāvaprthivī* …

The predominant coordinative constructions for Dyaus and Prthivī in hymns which address another deity are either asyndeta only or *dvandva* compounds only and, less frequently, syntagms constructed with a coordinative particle (mostly with the particle *utā*). In hymns dedicated to another deity, Dyaus and Prthivī are often invoked as a part of a group of deities: as for hymns dedicated to all deities, they seem to be always addressed as a pair within a group.

**CONCLUSION**

In hymns devoted to Dyaus and Prthivī the stylistic paradigm consists mostly of *dvandva* compounds: the dual theonyms occur in several *dvandva* compounds in the same hymn, sometimes alternating with *dvandvas* in tmesi and, rarely, with asyndeton or syntagms constructed with coordinative particles. A variety of coordinative constructions for the pair occurs in hymns devoted to all deities; here the predominant expressions for dual theonyms are either *dvandva* only, or *dvandva* and asyndeton. In hymns addressing another deity dual theonyms usually occur in asyndeton or *dvandva*. There is a considerable difference in style between the coordinative construction comprising two theonyms and those consisting of non-theonyms in the *Ṛgveda*. Two non-theonyms do not occur in such a variety of alternative expressions as do the theonyms. By far the most common coordinative construction for two non-theonyms in the *Ṛgveda* is asyndeton: the components of asyndetic constructions are not alternatively expressed in *dvandva* compounds or elliptic duals and very rarely in syntagms constructed with copulative conjunctions. The idea of magical power attributed to the name of a deity in the *Ṛgveda* is reflected in the rich variety of coordinative nominal constructions for dual theonyms, which display different stylistic patterns from the constructions comprising non-theonyms.

Dyaus and Prthivī are relatively seldom addressed individually in the *Ṛgveda*: Dyaus has no hymns dedicated to him, Prthivī has only one. As a pair, Dyaus and Prthivī have only a small number of hymns dedicated to them (six), however the pair occurs in a very large number of hymns addressing another deity (one hundred and fourteen). A distinctive idiosyncrasy of this pair is the very frequent usage of syntagms constructed with coordinative particles, especially with the particle *utā*. Syntagms constructed with conjunctions, used in expressive paradigms for Dyaus and Prthivī—unlike for other dual theonyms—are attested almost as frequently as asyndeta. Dyaus and Prthivī are often addressed together with other deities. In these groups of deities Dyaus and Prthivī are usually invoked as a pair—they occur in *dvandva*, or connected with the particle *utā*, or, rarely, in asyndeton, having their names always in immediate succession, as mentioned earlier. Several linguistic and stylistic features of Dyaus and Prthivī indicate a very close association of this pair: they have relatively the largest number of attestations in *dvandva* in tmesi and in the elliptic dual; in asyndetic constructions with other deities their names appear in immediate succession; in hymns dedicated to another deity they are attested relatively frequently in *dvandva* compounds or connected with coordinative particles. Furthermore, although Dyaus and Prthivī is a male-female pair, they are often presented as two females and also Dyaus himself is sometimes of feminine gender, at least when used as a common noun.

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55 RV 7.6; 7.24; 8.79.
56 RV 1.38.
57 RV 1.61; 3.32; 3.46; 5.63; 6.18; 10.82; 10.125.
58 RV 1.101; 1.112; 1.115; 3.30; 9.97;10.81; 10.89.
59 RV 1.100; 1.109.
60 RV 7.5.
61 RV 3.6.
62 RV 10.37.
63 E.g., the compound *dyāvaprthivī* is of feminine grammatical gender; the deities are called *devī* ‘two goddesses’ (RV 3.25.3); or *svārā* ‘sisters’ (RV 1.185.5); their frequently used epithet *rodasī* is also of feminine gender; similarly, their epithet *mātārā* can be interpreted as ‘two mothers.’
Most scholars, as mentioned earlier, situate Dyaus and Pṛthivī among the oldest dual deities and ascribe them Old Indo-Iranian or even Indo-European origin. Dyaus is of Indo-European origin, attested in most Indo-European languages, and Pṛthivī is a feminine derivative from pṛthu- (which is of Indo-European origin), but in the meaning 'Earth' it is attested only in Indo-Iranian languages. Several scholars believe that the mythological association between Dyaus and Pṛthivī originates from Indo-European, and consider the pair to be the prototype, representing the primeval parents, from which other Vedic dual deities developed. However, the compound dyāvapṛthivī is attested in Sanskrit only. Although the distribution of coordinative constructions in which the pair is attested in the ten ṛgvedas does not support their ancient origins (Dyaus and Pṛthivī occur most frequently in the later layers of the ṛgveda) their frequent occurrences as a pair and their special stylistic patterns indicate the pair's very close association and antiquity.

The specific linguistic and stylistic features, and the ambiguities of gender of Dyaus and Pṛthivī reflect the model of the universe of Vedic people, namely, the belief in magical power attributed to the names of deities, the belief that the divine name is the very essence of a particular deity, and that the frequent articulation of divine names, following specific formulae (in hymns addressing the pair in particular), produces greater magical effect in Vedic rituals. Therefore, investigation of grammatical categories, such as various coordinative constructions which express divine pairs, ought to incorporate a broader extra-linguistic background of the text, i.e., has to examine how specific grammatical and stylistic features of divine names (e.g., ambiguities of natural and grammatical gender, repetition, ellipsis, expressive paradigms) reflect Vedic beliefs in the magical power of divine names.

64 E.g., Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads, 220-222; Macdonell, The Vedic Mythology, 126; Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, 95; Renou, Religions of Ancient India, 13, 21.

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