

THE INDRA CULT AS IDEOLOGY : A CLUE TO POWER STRUGGLE IN AN ANCIENT SOCIETY

(including a discussion of the semantics of Ṛgvedic *ari* and its
socio-political background)

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PART TWO

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VII MORE ABOUT THE *ARI* – *SURI* DISTINCTION

(1)

RV 6.24 creates the impression that the *ari* referred to in one of its stanzas may be “the strong haughty one who is spurred on by the Dasyu” mentioned in a subsequent verse.³⁵⁰ But could this be possible? Could it be possible that *ari* in this stanza refers to an Aryan chief?

What makes one think that such an interpretation is far-fetched is that we have hitherto not appreciated the weight of evidence that exists in the RV on a peculiar situation: that of many *sūris* contending for the wealth of an *ari*. Is the situation here one of actual war or one of some other type of contest?

First of all, we become confused on the true assessment of this evidence by not appreciating the clear distinction always drawn in the RV between the *ari* and the *sūri*. We have discussed that point and it is no longer necessary to go back to it.

Secondly, we should always bear in mind that in any Vedic contest of an earnest kind the actual contestants were bound to have a second flank of supporters of a different order : the priests who aid the warriors with ‘divine support’.

Let us straightway state the conclusion which our evidence leads us toward. While in some references in the RV *ari* indicates an Aryan chief opposed in war by another Vedic chief (-- hence an Aryan foe, as in the Ten Kings’ War), in others the *ari* appears rather as an Aryan chief whose wealth (i.e. mainly cows) the *sūris* tried to win in some kind of contests that do not seem to be actual wars. But they were certainly contests of an earnest kind buttressed with priestly support.

Now, how does the Dasyu come into all this? Let us seek light on this point by reflecting on what now we may regard as our clearest and least controvertible evidence : the references to the Ten Kings’ War. Here Sudās was opposed by combined Ārya and Dāsa forces and both alike were, in the *ṛṣis*’ view, kings who were “without sacrifice and without Indra”. But when we are also told that they nevertheless called on Indra’s aid, we realize that there is here a partisan point of view expressed. We understand the text to suggest that these Aryan chiefs were not supporting a certain (extreme) form of Indraism which rejected them as much as it rejected the Dasyus. In any case, these Aryans “without Indra” had friendly contact with the Dasyus during the period of Sudās Paijavana, and perhaps also that of Vadhryaśva and Divōdāsa.³⁵¹

350. 6.24.5/8. See nn. 333, 335 above.

351. See Ch. II (1 b, c and e) above.

We do not know very much about this friendly contact, but 6.24 impresses us as a bit of very useful information - which suggests that the Dasyu may have performed a priestly role comparable to what a *ṛṣi-purohita* performed for Vedic princes under normal circumstances. (Compare with *dasyu-jūta* of this context the parallel epithets *viprajūta*, *brahma-jūta* and *daṃsu-jūta* in other Rgvedic allusions).³⁵² A statement such as 6.14.3 becomes especially significant in the light of such a view :

Separately (they call), O Agni,
for aid (from you) - the *āyus*.
For *ari*'s wealth they compete
the Dasyu crushing, hoping to foil,
with *vratas* those
that are to *vrata* averse.³⁵³

Let us examine the contents of this verse in the light of what we know about the *āyus* - namely, that they are Vedic priests-³⁵⁴ and about the general stance that the priests adopted in relation to the *sūris* as against the *ari*.

To win the *ari*'s wealth (for the *sūris*) the priests have to crush the Dasyu. Thus with *vratas* they triumph over the men averse to *vrata*. And they do this competitively, each party for its own gain. It would look as if the *ari*'s wealth was open to be won in a contest, but in the process a Dasyu had to be defeated with *vratas*, i.e, sacrificially, or, following the norms of the cult. The winning of *ari*'s wealth is depicted as a triumph of the *Āyus*' sacrificial acts, just as any victory is depicted as a triumph of the cult. And the situation seems to be (in RV 6.14) :

- (1) *Sūris* aided by *āyus* competing for wealth, to be won from
- (2) an *ari*, aided by a Dasyu.

(2)

If in order to win the *ari*'s wealth for the *sūris*, Vedic priests sacrificially prevailed over a Dasyu performing a priestly service for the *ari*, and yet this probably was not exactly a military encounter, what kind of a contest was this and how could the contenders have confronted one another? Could we legitimately think of a tribal occasion in which it was customary to compete for some one's wealth with priestly aid and also it was customary on that one's part to defend that wealth with priestly aid? Not nearly a battle, but a kind of tribal ritual occasion?

352. See above, n. 331.

353. *nānā hy agne* 'vase / spardhante *rāyo aryah* / *tūrvanto dasyum āyavo* / *vrataiḥ sīkṣanto avratam* // 6.14.3 See n. 287, above.

354. See appendix 1, below.

Let us examine two of the most important stanzas that seem to allude to such sacrificial events. These stanzas contain uncomplimentary references to other practitioners of ritual whose very participation seems to be denounced with a degree of violent emphasis. The two passages in question are RV 5.42.9 and 7.21.5.

We have already referred to 7.21.5 in a different context,³⁵⁵ but here one point has to be particularly emphasized. “May *śisnadevas* not come close to our sacred work”³⁵⁶ says the singer, after asserting his immunity from *yātu* influence, and after desiring that Indra should triumph over the *ari* of the adverse *jantu*.

Such references seem to point to one fact: that it was not only the protagonists of the Indra cult that had access to certain ritualized occasions. In other words, such occasions were not closed affairs restricted to the observance of an exclusive form of the ritual. What we have is more like evidence of a community event with a strong ritualistic basis allowing in its physical precincts the worship of gods in a variety of forms.

This is even more evident in RV 5.42. Here the stanzas 8-10 are centred round a single key idea, the supremacy or the sacredness of the *ṛṣis*' observances. It is a protest against a state that exists, in favour of an ideal state that the *ṛṣis* seem to wish to bring into being.

“United with your aid, O Bṛhaspati, are the *maghavans* free from harm, rich in heroic men. They who give cows and clothes, among them (may) wealth (there be), that gets fair allocation!” (stz. 8)

“(But) they who secure enjoyment by virtue of our songs, (and yet) do not adhere to (the duty of) giving - cause their wealth to melt away. Remove from them the (light of the) sun, who find prosperity in the *prasava* (but) do not observe (its) vows, the haters of *brahman*” (9)

“He who glorifies the *rakṣas* in the divine feast, come down upon him with your wheelless (cars), O Maruts! Whoso shall deride the service to you of (the priest) that labours (thereon) - vain wishes will he, (though) toiling, entertain!” (10)³⁵⁷

355. n. 330.

356. See n. 332 above.

357. *tavotibhiḥ sacamānā ariṣṭā| bṛhaspate maghavānaḥ suvīrāḥ|ye aśvadā uta vā santi godā| ye vastradāḥ subhagās teṣu rāyaḥ|| visarmānaṃ kṛṇuhi vittam eṣāṃ| ye bhūñjate aprṇanto na ukthaiḥ| apavratān prasave vāvṛdhānān| brahmadviṣaḥ sūryād yāvayasva|| ya oḥate rakṣaso devavitāv|| acakrebhis tān maruto ni yāta| yo vaḥ śamīṃ śasamānasya nindāt | tucchyān kāmān karate siṣvidānaḥ|| 5.42.8-10*

Schmidt seems to us to have understood the situation depicted in these stanzas somewhat correctly when he observes that the reference here (stz.9) is to “those persons who in deceitful ways come by the enjoyment of the success of the ritual although they adore the Rakṣas and not the gods”.³⁵⁸

Of course the background of activity 5.42 alludes to is a sacrificial session of some kind or other. Stanza 3 of the hymn refers to “the treasures that are set”³⁵⁹ which obviously are the same as what is elsewhere called “the wealth that is set” (i.e. the wealth made available for contestants to win). In the stanzas translated above reference seems to be made to 3 kinds of persons:

- stz. 8: The generous patrons who divide their wealth (i.e. winnings). These *maghavans* are the persons who are elsewhere called *sūris*.
- ” 9: Those who are ill-disposed to Brahmanical practices and priests. They profit by the ritual though they do not offer rewards: thus they have departed from the *vratas*.
- ” 10: “He who esteems the *rakṣas* in the divine feast.” The reference here is in the singular. This man derides the labours of the devotee. He has his own brand of ritual acts, which are performed in the *devavīti* itself.

Thus 5.42.8-10 depicts a situation strikingly comparable with what 7.21.5 seems to allude to. It seems to us that the picture of the ritual event that emerges from these stanzas is of a gathering consisting of (a) Brahman priests with their practices, (b) their patrons, the *sūris* as well as (c) another participant (*ari* in 7.21.5; “he who esteems the *rakṣas*” in 5.42.10) who did not comply with the standards set by the *brahman* priests altogether and was allied with or supported by (d) other practitioners following different forms of ritual observance.

(3)

We mentioned above the 5.42.3 reference to “the treasures that are set”. Who possibly could be the one from whom these treasures came?

Without exception the RV depicts the *ari* as a rich and powerful personage. Reference is made to the *ari*'s cows, his wealth or riches, his splendour, his manly power and his renown.³⁶⁰

358. Schmidt, p. 94.

359. *vasūni*.....*hitāni* - 5.42.3. Cf. *hitam dhanam* of 6.45.2 etc. etc.

360. See Añjali, p. 93, note.

That this wealth was available for brave heroes to win is indicated in the RV in diverse ways, some quite unambiguous. Compare for example verses such as the following:

The *ari's* many (treasures) / with song shall we win//(1.70.1)³⁶¹
 In *ari's* contests / may we the prize win//(1.73.5)³⁶²
 (The *sūris*-) they'll the strengthening (treasures) choose;/
 (so) make us the *ari's* cattle share, O generous lord!//(1.121.15)³⁶³
 Like a winning gambler / with you (for aid), for gain of wealth
 would we the *ari's* contest win//(4.20.3)³⁶⁴
 Like a winning gambler / has he the stakes taken /
 the *ari's* nourishing wealth//(2.12.4)³⁶⁵
 Like stakes, he reduces / the *ari's* nourishing wealth//(2.12.5)³⁶⁶

And 10.76.2, speaking of the ritual draught, the Soma sap, says that (for the *sūris*) it

shall find that manly strength / which supersedes the *ari's* (strength)/
 which fast coursers overtake / for gain of mighty wealth.//³⁶⁷

—so to put down the *ari's* strength is to win mighty wealth. And how is it won? With strength that helps one to overtake fast horses -- in other words with triumphs in contests of horsemanship.

Just how much the wealth that was to be won from the *ari* meant to the *sūris* is forcefully brought out by 6.20.1:

The *ari's* wealth, O Indra, / which subdues men, by might, in battles /
 as heaven does earth, / and which a thousand booties brings, /
 wins fertile land and conquers foes /
 that give unto us, O Son of Force!//³⁶⁸

That it was the youthful heroes that far more deserved that wealth which the *ari*, old and languishing, is allowed to gather (or hold), seems to us to be the import of 6.13.5:

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361. *vanema pūrvīr aryo manīṣā* / 1.70.1. (*pūrvīr* as epithet of an implied word like *iṣaḥ*; *manīṣā* inst. sg. as e. g. is *matī* in a context like 2.24.9: *vājaṃ bharate matī*)
 362. 1.73.5 : See n. 292 above.
 363. ...*sam iṣo varanta* / *ā no bhaja maghavan goṣv aryaḥ* / 1.121.15
 364. *śvaghñīva*..... *sanaye dhanānām* / *tvayā arya ājīm jayema* / 4.20.3.
 365. *śvaghñīva yo jīgvāṃl lakṣam ādad* / *aryaḥ puṣṭāni* 2.12.4.
 366. *so 'ryaḥ puṣṭīr vija ivā'mināti* / 2.12.5c
 367. *vidad by aryo abhibhūti paumṣyaṃ* / *maho rāye cit tarute yad arvataḥ* / 10.76.2.
 368. *dyaur na ya indra abhi bhūma aryaḥ* / *tasthau rayiḥ śavasā pṛtsu janān* / *taṃ naḥ sahas-rabharam urvarāsām* / *daddhi sūno sahaso vṛtraturam* / 6.20.1

O Agni, Son of Might/for our manly heroes bring those (states)/
in fine glory abounding - and excellent sons - /
that (they) may thrive/
what time you in your might / the herd's life-strength magnify/
the wolf to benefit, and the languishing *ari*!//³⁶⁹

Might we not ask: Is the *ṛṣi* impatient at the staid and hoarding tendencies of the older *ari* which stand against his wealth being utilized to further the expansion of Aryan power?

A reference like 7.60.11 fortifies such conjecture. Here the singer speaks of the *sūris*, the fury of the *ari* which they must confront, as well as the role of the *ṛṣi* in the process of winning wealth, and in the same breath he refers to the notion of securing expansive dwelling-sites:

Who (in sacred act) will seek
the pleasure (of gods) for his holy word
in the winning of *vāja*, lofty wealth,
(with him) let the generous ones
the *ari*'s wrath to vanquish wish.
(For them) to dwell (secure) they have made
a wide well-founded (site).³⁷⁰

And this a statement from Vasiṣṭha, the architect of Bharata victory in the Ten Kings' War, the hero of which he explicitly mentions' in stz. 9 of the same song.

(4)

It is of course not our view that the *ari*'s occasional association with Dasyus etc. amounts to a total repudiation of the old religious tradition which for want of a better term we would designate the tradition of the *yajña*. Our evidence only indicates that the *ari* was generally less enthusiastic for Indra, not that he was an out and out rejector of Vedism. If the *ari* needed the Dasyus for some purposes in which they were considerably more adept than the heroic but still predominantly 'barbarian' Aryans, it is reasonable to surmise that he would have had to accommodate himself to the Dasyus' own

369. *tā nrbhya ā sauśravasā suvīrā | 'gne sūno sahasaḥ puṣyase dhāḥ | kṛṇoṣi yac chavasā bhūri paśvo | vayo vṛkāya araye jasuraye || 6.13.5*

370. *yo brahmaṇe sumatim ā yajāte | vājasya sātāu paramasya rāyaḥ | sīkṣanta manyuṃ maghavāno ariya | uru kṣayāya cakrīre sudhātu|| 7.60.11*

ritual practices associated with those purposes. In our view the *ari*'s occasional friendly relations with the Dasyus explain both his lesser enthusiasm for the cult of the Aryan god of war as well as the considerably more frequent opposition of the protagonists of that cult to him.

However, we must note that that opposition to the *ari* has another dimension. He is one from whom something is to be won and is therefore depicted in the role of a 'defendant' in contests. And just as the competing *sūris* operate with cult support, so does the defending *ari*, who depends on the services sometimes of a Dasyu, but by no means always so. For clearly the *ari* is represented as being ritually strengthened in various ways : by *yātu* magic (: 4.4 and 7.21 discussed above), and also by priests of an undefined type. Such e.g. is the case at 8.1.4:

The *vipaścits*' conjuring-word / and those of the *ari*'s men /
compete, O generous one ! ..//³⁷¹

The *vipaścit* of course is here the *sūri*'s supporter, while the *ari*'s supporters are simply called his men. But at times it looks as if the *ari*'s priests too were *vipaścits*, as one can see from 8.65.9:

All the *vipaścits* of the *ari* / overlook, and swiftly come! /
To us give lofty fame! // ³⁷²

It would appear that this request calls on Indra to 'overlook' all other *vipaścits*, including the *ari*'s, although the text is not quite explicit on that point here. In any case, why *overlook*?

(5)

This brings us to a very interesting aspect of the events which were the background for these statements. Let us go into the evidence itself.

Subdue with song / the *ari*'s song, O *vipras*! / And do retain,
O Singer, / Indra at (our) libation // (10.42.1)³⁷³

So the success of "our song" ensures that Indra is 'retained' on our side, that none will win but us. It is pertinent to reflect on the particular significance of the notion of 'retaining Indra' that we see in such a context.

There are several statements in the RV which indicate that the occasion they refer to was one of competition - with many priests and many *yajamānas* participating. This is particularly significant, because it shows that we have

371. *vi tartūryante maghavan vipaścito / 'ryo vipo janānām/8.1.4*

372. *viśvām aryo vipaścito / 'ti khyas tūyam ā gahi/ asme dhehi śravo bṛhat // 8.65.9*

373. *vācā viprās tarata vācam aryo / ni rāmaya jaritaḥ soma indram/ 10.42.1*

here to visualize a scene of competing *sūris* rather than of several priests competing for one patron's favour. This is very clearly brought out in RV 2.18, where stanza 3, after referring to the singer's act of magically causing the car of Indra to be harnessed that he may visit the ritual scene, goes on to make the following statement : "May not the other *yajamānas* halt you (:attract you to their rites) - for there are many *vipras* here!"³⁷⁴

After thus signifying that the atmosphere is one of many priests and many patrons, the hymn alludes to the fact that Indra has been (on that occasion) invoked competitively at many a place. That these many places are close to each other (forming a complex of competitive rites all seeking the attention of Indra) is what appears to us to be the meaning of *here* (: *atra*) in stanza 3 of the hymn.

With this clear delineation of the situation in mind, we may consider other such references as the following :

- 3.35.5 : May not the other *yajamānas* hold up your bay horses!³⁷⁵
- 1.131.2 : In all the Soma pressings, they of impetuous spirit urge you singly and urge you in common, each for himself, hoping to win the sun.³⁷⁶
- 5.75.2 : Come, O Aśvins, passing all (other libations) (so that) I may win!³⁷⁷
- 7.69.6 : Come to our libations today. They invoke you two at many a place. May not the other devotees of gods hold you up, O Aśvins!³⁷⁸
- 8.5.16 : Competitively do singers invoke you two at many a place!³⁷⁹
- 10.160.1 : May not the other *yajamānas* halt you, O Indra; for you are these (Soma draughts) pressed out.³⁸⁰

Further light on the role of priests in these ceremonial occasions is thrown by the hymn RV 6.45 in which the expression *hitam dhanam* ("the prize that is set" i.e. offered as stakes) occurs 5 times.³⁸¹ The statement "with your aid, spur on our car!" (stz. 14)³⁸² suggests that chariot racing formed one

374. *mo su tvām atra bahavo hi viprā | ni rīraman yajamānāso anye | - 2.18.3*

375. *mā te harī ni rīraman yajamānāso anye | 3.35.5*

376. *viśveṣu hi tvā savaneṣu tuñjate/samānam ekaṃ vṛṣamanyavaḥ pṛthak | svaḥ saniṣyavaḥ pṛthak/ 1.131.2*

377. *aty āyātam aśvinā tiro viśvā ahaṃ sanā | 5.75.2*

378. *asmākam adya savanopa yātam/ purutrā hi vām matibhir havante/ mā vām anye ni yaman devayantaḥ | 7.69.6*

379. *purutrā cidā hi vām narā/ vihvayante manīṣinaḥ | 8.5.16*

380. *indra mā tvā yajamānāso anye | ni rīraman tubhyam ime sutāsaḥ/ 10.160.1*

381. 6.45.2c, 11b, 12c, 13b, 15c.

382. *ta ūtiḥ...../tayā no hinuhī ratham./6.45-14*

of the features of the event, as also does stanza 12: “With songs and with fast steeds we shall win the (other) horses swift, and winnings that (to us) bring fame, and with you, O Indra, the prize that is set”.³⁸³ In stanzas 28-29 occurs the important phrase “the competition of eulogists” : “These songs reach you at every (Soma) pressing...in the competition of eulogists who by trophies seek the gain of quickening-wealth”.³⁸⁴

The word for competition here, *vivāc*- clearly suggests ‘speaking from many sides’, a competition where many invoke the gods to their own rites.

Essentially similar to *vivāc* of this context are the words *vihava* (: calling from many sides) in 3.8.10 and *ṛṣiṇām śrava eṣa* (: the fame-seeking of the *ṛṣis*) in 5.66.5. And in each of these instances too, we have other indications that it was not just a priestly competition but a twofold activity - of princes as well as of priests.

The significant phrases of each of these hymns (6.45, 3.8 and 5.66) can be tabulated as follows:

	Priestly activity	Princely activity
6.45	Competition of eulogists	“with steeds... let us win the prize that is set”.
3.8	Competitive invocation with other priests	Martial contests ³⁸⁵
5.66	<i>ṛṣis</i> ’ seeking of fame	The speeding of cars ³⁸⁶

This twofold activity is well summed up at 8.19.10:

For whose ritual you rise high (O Agni), /he gains success, commanding men. / With fast steeds is he the winner, / with singers (skilled in song). / The prize he wins with heroic men.//³⁸⁷

The basis of the competition of priests must naturally have been the fact that, as in war,³⁸⁸ so in these ritualized contests too the princes were supported by their respective priests. To the latter it would be a case of which one

383. *dhībhir arvadbhīr arvato| vājāṃ indra śravāyyān| tvayā jeṣma hitaṃ dhanam|* 6.45.12

384. *imā u tvā sute sute nakṣante...giraḥ... stotṛṇām vivāci vājebhir vājayatām|* 6.45. 28-29

385. Cf *vāgadbhir vihava... and pṛtanājyeṣu* - 3.8. 10c, d.

386. Cf. *ṛṣiṇām śrava eṣa* - 5.66. 5b and *eṣe rathānām* - 5.66. 3a

387. *yasya tvam ūrdhvo adhvarāya tiṣṭhasi| kṣayadvīraḥ sa sādhatē|| sa arvadbhīḥ sanitā sa vipanyubhiḥ| sa śūraiḥ sanitā kṛtam||* 8.19.10

388. On the role of magical rites in war, cf. AV 8.8. in its ritualistic setting : see Lanman’s notes added to Whitney Atharva Veda, 8.8.

among them would succeed in winning over the gods. “With whose devotions are you pleased?”, asks 5. 74. 3³⁸⁹ and the hymn goes on to say: “Who among many mortal men this day has won gain to himself, what bard ...with sacrifice?”³⁹⁰

According to the Vedic view, there is hardly any distinction between the objectives of wars and contests and those of the cult as expressed in the ritual. Thus at 7.19.4 the occasion in which Indra kills a multitude of foes is called the *devavīti*, normally a term for the sacrifice.³⁹¹ It would seem that from one point of view, ritual was a continuation of Indra’s celestial war. The two constitute two aspects of the mighty activity of gaining *vāja* (*vājasāti*). There can be no question of separating this activity from the ritual. Says 4.20.2:

The exuberant one, generous wielder of the bolt,
shall stand, favouring, beside this sacrifice,
(this rite) of ours, where *vāja* we gain.³⁹²

But the winning of *vāja* was not only through war. It was also eminently attainable through other similar contests linked to the sacrifice. One may here refer to the many Ṛgvedic references to (race-) cars and swift horses as seekers of *vāja* etc. and to men who invoke Indra, god of martial triumph, in war *as well as in peace*. Thus, for example,

Men seeking *vāja* call on Indra, both they that dwell in peace and they that fight. (4.25.8)³⁹³

These martial contests for gaining *vāja* must have had an enormous cultural significance to the Aryans of Vedic India. They would have provided the motive for the younger men to master the ‘arts of war’ and for the priests the skills of word and ritual act. They also appear to be the forerunners of the famous learned disputes of the Brahmanas of later times.

(6)

We discussed above the Ṛgvedic allusions that seem to depict the *ari* as ritually allied, in some situations, with Dasyu and *yātu* cults.

The *sūris* of course are never represented as tainted with the guilt of such associations. As we found above, they are depicted in the image of the god Indra.

389. *kasya brahmāṇi raṇyathāḥ* - 5.74.3

390. *ko vām adya purūnām/ ā vavne martyānām/ ko vipro... yajñaiḥ...* - 5.74.7

391. See n. 233 above.

392. *tiṣṭhāti vajrī maghavā virapśī/ ’maṃ yajñam anu no vājasātau* - 4.20.2cd

393. *indram kṣiyanta uta yudhyamānā/ indram naro vājayanto havante/ 4.25.8* On this see the author’s article, “Yoga and Kṣema, The Significance of their Usage in the Ṛgveda”, Vidyodaya Journal of Arts, Science and Letters, I/2 (July 1968), pp. 185 ff.

One of the extreme positions of Vedic Indraism was its anti-asuric posture. It would be interesting, in view of this, to find out the evidence, if any, of the *ari* references in regard to asurism.

One of the surest cases of an *ari* that is associable with asurism is found in RV 1.126. The identification is easy because the gift that is won by the priest, Kakṣivant, is described in one of the stanzas of this hymn as “cows that nourished the *ari*”³⁹⁴ (1.126.5). Gifts obtained by Kakṣivant are also mentioned in stanza 2 and are there described as “the cattle that belonged to the *asura*”³⁹⁵. Clearly, *ari* and *asura* here refer to the original possessor of what was donated.

Two other princes in the RV are referred to by the word *asura*. These are Rāma, mentioned at 10.93.14³⁹⁶ and Tryaruṇa, the Pūru prince who is alluded to in RV 5.27.³⁹⁷ Interestingly enough, both of them are linked (as associates and / or relations) with others who are, elsewhere in the RV, indicated by the designation *ari*. We are here referring to Pṛthi Venya of RV 10.148.3 and Trasadasyu of 4.38.2. We have briefly discussed these allusions at the end of chapter II above.

It would then seem that where the word *asura* is applied to human potentates in the RV, these men can clearly be associated with the designation *ari* as well. And what is of further interest is the fact that in 2 of these instances, we have some evidence of the *ṛṣis*' unfavourable disposition to their forbears. This evidence too was discussed in chapter II above.

Incidentally, a matter that cannot be overlooked in view of this *ari* - *asura* association in the RV, is the explicit reference to the Pūrus as *asura-rakṣas* at Śatapatha Brahmana 6.8.1.14.³⁹⁸

The fact that Svanaya and Tryaruṇa (and also Trasadasyu) are not themselves depicted as opposed to the Vedism of the *ṛṣis* does not affect that to which we are calling attention at this point, namely, that in each of the instances mentioned, which also happen to be the only ones of their kind in the RV, it is an *ari* that has been also called an *asura*. The other evidence in regard to these individual princes, found in the references under consideration, seems to us to reflect certain developments in Vedic society which are also explicatory of the other aspect of the *ari* problem to which we must now turn our attention.

394. *aridhāyaso gāḥ* 1.126.5b.

395. *asurasya go* - 1.126. 5c

396. *pra rāme vocam asure* - 10.93.14b.

397. See n. 108 above.

398. Śatapatha Br. 6.8. 1.14

VIII. THE 'FUNCTIONAL' ASPECT OF THE *ARI* - *SURI* DISTINCTION

It was the position adopted by us throughout that the hero of the Vedic *ṛṣis* is the one whom they call the *sūri*. The *sūri* is not only the valiant prince; the usage also seems to imply that the heroes favoured the Vedic priests by accepting the guidance that the priests offered.³⁹⁹ (It is possible that there is a solitary exception in 1.176.4; but, if that is so, it is certainly an exception that proves the rule).⁴⁰⁰

Often the *sūri* contends against an owner of wealth, of cattle, in order to win riches and fame. And often the RV calls such an owner of cows and wealth an *ari*. Although the *ari* is frequently regarded with disfavour for reasons that are tribal-political and cultural, it would be misleading to think that in every context *ari* means a tribal opponent. In many instances the distinction seems to be functional in that a rich cattle-owning chief would most likely be the one whose wealth became an attraction to fame seeking heroes of every type.

Even this appears to us to be only a part of the explanation. The evidence appears to indicate that often the contests were merely part of the tribal life. The cattle owning chief in other words is often an institutor of contests at which *sūris* may compete and, by sheer show of strength, obtain the prizes set. The *ari* and the *sūris* need not for that reason be regarded as implacable foes. It may well be that in some instances the *sūris* were close relations of the *ari* himself, competing for the prizes in the context of a customary tribal institution.

If the *ari* often seems to be cast in this role (of rich man whose wealth was the object of contests), essentially it may prove nothing more than that he is very much a part of the early Aryan tribal life. That is to say, it means neither (i) that every institutor of such contests and events should be called an *ari*, if he was not for other reasons so-called (and of this we cannot be 100% sure), nor (ii) that in every case the *ari* is portrayed as a cultural opponent. The cultural distinction, which in fact we took much pains to emphasize, is independent of the functional distinction. As a tribal chief the *ari* appears as the institutor of festivals and competitive contests and there faces one kind of 'opposition'; he faces another kind of opposition as a chief who (on occasion?) was lukewarm in his adherence to a militant or violent aspect of the *yajña* religious system.

399. Cf. 6.25.7; 4.50.7-9; Also see Ch.V (1) above.

400. *asunvantam samam jahidūnāsam yo na te mayah/ asmabhyam asya vedanam/ daddhi sūris cid ohate//* 1.176.4. Geldner translates: "Jeden der nicht Soma auspresst, erschlage, den unzugänglichen, der nicht deine Freude ist. Gib uns sein Besitzen! Er ruhm sich ein nobler Herr zu sein" and notes thereunder: "Ironische gesagt".

In any attempt to elucidate the meaning of Ṛgvedic *ari*, one would have to offer a cogent explanation of the varied allusions to winning wealth from the *ari*. Part of that explanation, in our attempt to clarify the meaning of the word, is that the *ari's* power was sought to be crushed on grounds that were clearly cultural and tribal-political. The other part is that he was cast in the role of a defender of wealth - as probably any tribal chief would be - in the position of one who instituted contests where others sought to win, *by a show of strength*, the prize he staked (:“the wealth that is set”).

It is not always easy to gain a clear idea of the nature of the early Vedic tribal contests and of the ritualistic atmosphere which they seem invariably to be shrouded in. Fortunately however a glimpse into some aspects of these festivals (of which the contests seem to have formed a part) can be obtained through the *dānastutis* which appear (usually) at the end of some Ṛgvedic hymns.

While in some *dānastutis* we have reference made to the *ari*, in others this is not the case. Indeed, it need not be the case, as pointed out above.

Broadly speaking the *dānastutis* are of two kinds : those that refer to rewards won by *purohita* priests for services rendered in war and foray, and those that speak of rewards received at the end of competitive ritualistic ceremonies or festivals.

We have the first kind of *dānastutis* in RV 6.27, 6.47 and 7.18.

The other variety of *dānastutis* is far more complex in nature, particularly where they mention several donors in the same hymn. (There is of course a simpler type such as e.g. 1.126 which refers to Svanaya Bhāvya's gifts to the singer Kākṣivant).

(2)

As an example of the more complex *dānastutis* we may take RV 5.27. This hymn deals with the gifts received by a priest from king Tryarūṇa of the Pūru tribe, and from another prince, Aśvamedha. It is the latter whom the singer calls “my *sūri*”; he is thus the actual patron of the author of the hymn, and this is further proved by the fact that it is for him that the benediction at the end of the hymn is sung.

The contents of the hymn, verse by verse, are as follows:

- (1) Tryarūṇa has distinguished himself by means of tens of thousands of (gifts). He, the *asura*, has presented the singer a pair of oxen with wagon(s).

- (2) Agni should grant protection to Tryaruna who rewards the singer with 120 oxen and 2 bay horses.
- (3) (Tryaruna, descendant of) Trasadasyu, with a pair of yoked horses, expresses his approval of the singer's many songs, showing his desire for Agni's favour for the 9th time for the newest (song).
- (4) Tryaruna will say to the singer's patron Aśvamedha that he should give the treasure (won) to him who "goes to the win" by means of his song, to the man who follows the *ṛta* (i.e. the singer).
- (5) (Tryaruna) whose 100 dappled bulls enrapture the singer, (coming as) the gifts of Aśvamedha.
- (6) May Indra and Agni maintain royal power in Aśvamedha, giver of a 100 (bulls).⁴⁰¹

This brings us directly to the question of the gifts that were donated to the priest. That both Tryaruna and Aśvamedha gave gifts is clear, but exactly how is the question.

Let us analyse the references to the gifts found in the above statements.

Stz. 1 says T. gave a pair of bulls and (wagons). (The reference to thousands may be a general statement praising T. 's customary generousness).

Stz. 2 refers to a gift of T. of 120 bulls and 2 bay horses.

Stz.3 repeats that T. showed his pleasure with the gift of a pair (of bulls).

Stz.5 refers to a gift of a 100 bulls as Aśvamedha's gifts.

Stz.6 again calls A. a "giver of a 100".

If we now study the contents of the hymn as summarized above it would appear that stz.2 refers to two gifts and stanzas 3 and 5 repeat the reference separately for each gift;but in stz.5 the the poet speaks of the first gift in the round number 100 rather than in the numerically accurate 120.⁴⁰²

But what specific reason induces one to think that the reference to 100 in stz.5 is the same as the reference to 120 in stz.2 ? Essentially it is the presence of the relative pronoun *yasya* (genitive case) at the beginning of

401. RV 5. 27 : (1) *anasvantā. māmahe. asuraḥ. daśabhiḥ sahasraiḥ tryarunaś ciketa.* (2) *yo. śatā ca viṃśatiḥ ca gonām/ harī ca yuktā. dadāti. agne yaccha tryarunaḥ śarma.* (3) *te agne sumatiḥ cakāno navisthāya navamaḥ trasadasyuḥ / me girah pūrvīr yuktēna abhi tryarunaḥ grṇāti.* (4) *yo ma iti pra vocati aśvamedhāya sūraye dadad ṛcā sanīḥ yate dadan medhām ṛtāyate.* (5) *yasya mā paruṣāḥ śatam uddhāraṣanty ukṣṇaḥ/ aśvamedhasya dānāḥ/* (6) *indrāgnī śatadāvny aśvamedhe. kṣatram dhārayatam...*

402. Cf. RV 8.6 where stz 46 refers to the gifts as 100 and 1000; stz 47 refers to them again as 300 and 10000. See n. 434.

stz.5, which connects the gift with Tryaruna mentioned in the previous verses. In this way it appears that the gift of the 100 is associated with both Tryaruna and Aśvamedha.

Thus interpreted, all the gifts mentioned in 5.27 are those ultimately issuing from the possessions of Tryaruna. What then was the role of Aśvamedha?

We may here think of the *dānastuti* in 6.47. Here the gifts of the *sūris* (i.e. Divōdasa and others) are described as *śāmbaram vasu* or Śambara's wealth i.e. what was originally Śambara's.⁴⁰³ It seems to us that in exactly the same way the gift that Aśvamedha gives to his priest is here described as (what was originally) Tryaruna's : which means that Aśvamedha won these in a contest as prizes offered by Tryaruna. Such an assumption seems to us to make sense of

- (i) Aśvamedha alone being called "my *sūri*", and shown the favour of the final benediction,

and

- (ii) The exhortation (to Aśvamedha) "let him give" which Tryaruna is shown here as proclaiming:⁴⁰⁴

Furthermore, such an assumption also (iii) guarantees the unity of the hymn (which by other interpretations it would seem to lack).

And what then of the priest's role in this event? That is explained by stz. 4 : he is the one who "reaches victory by means of the ritual song". In other words, he gave the ritual support to the contesting prince, like *purohiti* service to a war-chief.

We feel it safe to assume that Aśvamedha wins a gift of a hundred and donates it to his priest on account of such clear descriptions of the *sūri's vrata* as the following: the royal victor, true to his *vrata*, "takes the booty in order to donate (it)" (1.180.6)⁴⁰⁵; "Possessors of good horses (go) forth for booty that they may give gifts" (5.65.3).⁴⁰⁶

403. *divodāsād atithigvasya rādhah| śāmbaram vasu pratyagrabhīṣma* 6.47.22 cd.

404. Cf. Geldner's translation of 5.27.4: "Der meinen Lohnherrn Aśvamedha also sagen möge, er solle dem, der mit Versen auf Verdienst ausgeht, schenken; er solle dem, der die Dichtergabe sichtig gedracht, schenken."

405. 1.180.6: See n. 271 above.

406. *svaśvāsaḥ..vājān abhi pra dāvane* - 5.65.3cd, which Geldner translates : "Die Besitzer guter Rosse (gehen)..auf Siegeswinne aus, um sie zu verschenken" adding the note: "Die Besitzer der guten Rosse sind die Opferherren. Sie mögen durch ihre Rosse Beute oder Siegespreise gewinnen und damit die Sänger honorieren".

5.27 thus seems to speak of the contestant's donation of his winnings and also of the institutor's own additional gifts to the priest in appreciation of his many successful songs. Stanzas 1 and 3 seem to refer to this extra gift while stanzas 2,4,5 and 6 indicate Aśvamedha's winning of prizes offered by Tryaruna at a contest and Tryaruna's approval of the donation of these to the *sūri's* priest.

(3)

RV 5.27 does not use the word *ari*, although we know from the genealogical evidence on the Pūrus (of whom he was one), that he is a descendant of one who was called an *ari*. The absence of the word is immaterial to us at this point, because what we wish to gain from this hymn is an idea of the different kinds of participants in Ṛgvedic ritual-competitive ceremonies, and most centrally of the winning of wealth from the institutor and donating it to one's priest. When we add the information that this hymn seems to provide us with to what we have already learned from such hymns as 7.21 and 5.42, it appears that we may visualize a ritual competitive event in which four kinds of participants probably had a part to play:

A	B
1 Institutor	3 Competing princes
2 His ritual supporters	4 Their ritual supporters

And it appears that in many instances it is the institutor that is called the *ari*, but never any of the contestants.

It seems to us that all four parties are mentioned in the long *dānastuti* hymn 1.122. Geldner says that the actual background of the *dānastuti* is unfortunately not easy to visualize. This is indeed the case unless we are able to visualize the alignment of the persons involved. Geldner's translation of the hymn is generally reliable, except where he has made a confusion as to this alignment. And it seems to be the case that the rendering of the hymn makes much better sense when changes are made in consideration of this alignment.

We take it that the institutor of the ritual ceremony in this hymn is the one who is referred to as Nahuṣ in stanzas 8, 10, and 11 and as *ari* in stanza 14. In each instance the reference to him is in the fifth case. Thus,

we shall win (wealth) from Nahuṣ (8);⁴⁰⁷
(the *sūri* is) stronger than Nahuṣ (10);⁴⁰⁸
(Ādityas), come to the *sūri*'s call from Nahuṣ (11);⁴⁰⁹
(Goddesses of Dawn), come to (our) chants from the *ari* (14).⁴¹⁰

The institutor's priest, who by the nature of the event appears as the rival of the singers, seems to be the one who is described in stanza 9 as "the treacherous man...who prepares Soma (as thin) as water" and who is also contrasted with the 'truthful' practitioner "who has success with his offerings"⁴¹¹

As for the *sūris*, they are mentioned several times and in the following way, beginning with several references in the singular:

Stz. 8: this great giver; the person who is a donor to the Pajras; the *sūri* (who will give) me (gifts) rich in horses and cars.⁴¹²

Stz 10: stronger than the strong Nahuṣ; (ritually) strengthened by (the cult's) miraculous power. His fame is sung among men. Strong of movement, he goes, a man liberal with gifts, in every contest ever the hero.⁴¹³

(This patron is not mentioned by name.)

Stz 11: Nabhoju Nirava, (whose) gift is (given) with magnanimity for glory's sake, to (the priest), the owner of the car.⁴¹⁴

The *sūri* however is not alone. Four others make up his 'troop' (*śardha*) and they are next mentioned, along with the *sūri* himself.

Stz 12 (ab): (Here is he), the hero whose troop we shall form.
(cd) (The princes), among whom may splendour and munificence remain!⁴¹⁵ In contests may they all win the prize!

407. *sanema nahuṣaḥ* (1.122.8b):

408. *nahuṣaḥ śardhastaraḥ* (1.122.10ab)

409. *gmantā nahuṣo havam sūreḥ* (1.122.11a)

410. 1.122.14 : See n. 288 above.

411. *janah..abhi dhruḡ apo na..sunoti* (1.122.9 ab), in contrast to *āpa yad im hotrābhīr ṛtāvā* (9d). Geldner renders these as follows: "Der unredliche Mann der hinte listig den Soma wie Wasser bereitet", "...der Rechttuende mit seinen Opfern Erfolg hat".

412. *asya..mahimaghasya (rādhaḥ);.. yaḥ pajrebhyo vājinīvān aśvāvato rathino mahyam sūriḥ* 1.122.8

413. *sa vrādhato nahuṣo daṃsujūtaḥ/ śardhastaro narāṃ gūrtaśravāḥ/ viṣṣṭarātir yāti bālhasṛtvā/visvāsu pṛtsu sadam ic chūraḥ/* - 1.122.10.

414. *nabhojuvo yan niravasya rādhaḥ/ praśastaye mahinā rathavate/* 1.122.11cd

415. *etaṃ śardham..dhāma yasya sūreḥ* (12ab); *dyumnāni yeṣu vasutāti rāran/visve sanvantu prabhṛtheṣu vājam/* (12cd). Geldner's translation is as follows: "ein Patron dessen bekannte (Marut-) schar wir bilden wollen" and "bei denen Glanz und Freigebigkeit gern weilen möge, sie alle sollen bei den Unternehmungen Gewinn davontragen". We differ with him in dropping the "(Marut-)" element, i.e., rejecting the image of Indra and the Marut troop in *ab*, and in rendering *prabhṛtha* in *d* as *contest* (comparable with *bhara*).

Stz.13: Will Iṣṭāśva, Iṣṭaraśmi, (and) these victorious lords shower distinction upon (their) men?⁴¹⁶

Stz.15: Maśarsāra and Āyavasa, the triumphant prince⁴¹⁷.

The priests are throughout referred to as speakers in this hymn and the consistent use of the first person when giving their words is an aid to the proper rendering of the verses. The priests and the *sūris* are together referred to in the 14 th stanza in the traditional way:“(May the dawns rejoice) in both (these groups of men) that are ours!”⁴¹⁸

(4)

We said above that in some instances the *sūris* may be close relations of the *ari* himself. It appears that this was exactly the case in the situation depicted in RV 5.33, which again is a *dānastuti* hymn.

In 5.33 the word *ari* occurs (or, the words *ari/arya* occur) three times. A hymn of this kind should be a good testing ground of any hypothesis which seeks to explain the meaning of Ṛgvedic *ari*.

Like in other hymns where the “competitive ritual ceremony” is the background, here too the four types of persons are referred to: *ari*, his priests; *sūris* and their priests. But, and this is the interesting point, the (chief) *sūri* is one who elsewhere has been called an *ari* i.e., Trasadasyu (who in 4.38 is referred to as *ari* and in 8.19 as an *arya*).⁴¹⁹ It seems likely that one among the *sūris* too is called an *arya* in this hymn (as Trasadasyu is at 8.19.36)....

What could *arya* mean as distinct from *ari*? Obviously, *arya* as a derivative from *ari* must mean “pertaining to an *ari*” or, “descended from an *ari*” e.g. a son of an *ari*.

Now let us examine the different allusions in 5.33.

The *ari* and his priests: Stz.2 Advance, subdue the *ari*'s men⁴²⁰.
6:I will praise the gift of the (*sūri* who is)
liberal, above the *ari*.⁴²¹

416. *kim iṣṭāśva iṣṭaraśmīr eta/ iśānāsas taruṣa rñjate nñn/* 1.122.13cd

417. *maśarsārasya...rājña āyavasasya jiṣṇoh/-*1.122.15ab. (Genitive case to refer to their gifts).

418. (*usrāś cākantu*) *ubhayeṣv asme* - 1.122.14d

419. RV 4.38.2d and 8.19.36c.

420. See n 91 (:5.33.2) above

421. See n. 92 above (:5.33.6)

The competing princes Stz.5: We (priests) and these heroic men who
and their priests: have formed into your host, O Indra⁴²²

- ” 6: See above.
- ” 7: Eulogizing minstrels...and they who
even give the skin...⁴²³
- ” 8: (The gifts of) Trasadasyu, son of
Purukutsa Girikṣit, the *sūri*...⁴²⁴
- ” 9: (The gifts of) Marutāśva Vidatha...
Cyavatāna, the *arya*...⁴²⁵
- ” 10: Gifts of Dhvanya Lakṣmanya...
Samvaraṇa, the *ṛṣi*...⁴²⁶

It seems to us that what this hymn refers to is a tribal event during the youth of Trasadasyu, when he, while not yet in control of the Pūrus' tribal destinies, appears at the ritual festival of a related tribe to win treasures from the *ari* along with other similar princes whose names are mentioned in the hymn.

(5)

“Princes appearing at an *ari*'s contest”.... This would seem to be taking a lot of things for granted. What evidence is there to support such an assumption?

First of all we have the evidence of 4.20.3:

“Through you, O Wielder of the *vajra*, would we, like a successful gambler, the *ari*'s contest win, for gain of wealth.”⁴²⁷

The word for contest here is *āji*, which in itself could mean a battle or a war. But that sense is hardly applicable here. What sense would it make to take *āji* as war here, with the word *ari* in the genitive case? The foe's war? That would be an unusual way to refer to a war, even for the RV Saṃhitā. On the other hand the usage reminds us of “the *āji* of Yama” (1.116.2), of

422. See n.90 above (5.33.5ab)

423. *gr̥ṇataḥ..kārūn..uta tvacam dadataḥ* - 5.33.7bc. (*skin a reference to “das bei der soma-bereitung verwendete Fell”*- Geldner).

424. *purukutsasya sūres trasadasyoh...gairikṣitasya* - 5.33.8add

425. *mārutāśvasya...vidathasya..(rātau); cyavatānaḥ..aryah..* - 5.33.9 (See also n.93 above)

426. *dhvanyasya..lakṣmanyasya.. ; samvaraṇasya ṛṣeḥ* - 5.33.10

427. See n.364 above (:4.20.3)

Khela (1.126.15) and of Vivasvat (9.66.8)⁴²⁸ -- in all of which a contest, a competition, a festival with stakes offered for contenders to win by a show of valour or strength would be what is meant by *āji*.

It is obviously in the same way that the *ari*'s *aji* is referred to at 4.20.3 and possibly also at 4.24.8 (-see above, Ch. VI).

Next, what evidence is there to assume that the contestants were guests, or at least that some of them were guests?

The coming of guest princes with their priests to ritual feasts is referred to at several places in the RV, e.g. in 8.19 and 8.74 both of which contain *dānastutis*.

At 8.19.32 the Sobhari priests proclaim their position as guests in the following words: "To him have we come.....to (Agni), Trasadasyu's imperial prince.⁴²⁹ "Trasadasyu, associated with *ari* at 4.38.2, is here called "the most generous *arya*, the lord of the (ritual) house. "His gift is 500 'maidens",⁴³⁰ while the actual patrons of the singer, who seem to be alluded to in stanza 37 as Prayiyu and Vayiyu present him "thrice seventy cows" with a "dusky horse" at their head.⁴³¹ The hymn makes reference to fast horses, and winning of great wealth through ritual song and devotion to gods. The whole atmosphere in it bespeaks a great Soma festival.

At 8.74.4 the priest says: "To the Anus' ritual fire we have come, before whose face Śrutarvan, son of Ṛkṣa, gains prosperity".⁴³² The priests' *sūri* however is mentioned in the concluding *dānastuti* verses. He is Śaviṣṭha whose fast steeds carry the singer (home) in a beautiful car. "A greater giver of horses than Śaviṣṭha there is none."⁴³³

In the *dānastuti* hymn 8.6, stanzas 46 and 47 allude to the reward of a hundred (horses) from Tirindira (which stz. 47 steps up to 300) and 1000 (cows) from Parśu (which stz.47 steps up to 10 thousand).⁴³⁴ These are styled "the Yādva gifts".⁴³⁴ However, merely because of this we may not conclude that Tirindira and Parśu were Yadu princes. On the other hand, the concluding

428. In each of these contexts Geldner uses *Wettkampf* to translate *āji*. RV 1.176.5 has *āvo yasya dvibarhasaḥ...ājāv indrasyendo* which Geldner translates: "Du Saft halfst im Kampfe den doppelstarken Indra..."

429. *tam āganma sobharayaḥ...saṃrājaṃ trāsadasyavam* - 8.19.32

430. *adān me paurukutsyaḥ pañcāśatam trasadasyur vadhūnām| maṃhiṣṭho aryaḥ satpatiḥ* - 8.19.36. See also n.94 above.

431. *uta me prayiyor vayiyoh...tisṛṇām saptatīnām| śyāvaḥ praṇetā bhuvat..*, 8.19.37

432. *āganma agnim ānavam| yasya śrutarvā brhann| ārkṣo anīka edhate* - 8.74.4.

433. *neṃ aśvadātaraḥ śaviṣṭhād asti* - 8.74.15 ab. In the previous stanza Śaviṣṭha's gift is referred to as follows: *māṃ catvāra āśavaḥ| śaviṣṭhasya dravitnavah| surathāso adhi prayo| vakṣan vayo na tugryam ||*

434. *śatam aham tirindire| sahasraṃ parśāv ā dade| rādhāmsi yādvānām||* -8.6.46;
trīni śatāny arvatām| sahasrā daśa gonām| daduḥ.. - 8.6.47

stanza definitely refers to the Yadu chief who instituted the festival. "Up unto the skies did the *chief* exalt with renown the Yādva folk, giving 4 pairs of camels (as gifts to the priests)"⁴³⁵-- bringing out a situation very similar to that depicted in 5.27, 5.33 and 8.19 discussed above, in all of which the singer is rewarded by both the institutor and his own *sūris*. And obviously the *chief* here, like the *satpati* of 5.27 and 8.19 and the *ari* of 5.33 and 1.122 must be the institutor of the festival.

The picture of the gathering of generous princes or *bhojas*, where one comes 'invited' while another comes 'uninvited' is found in RV 10.107 as well.⁴³⁶ The invited one is welcome and, when a generous giver, he is one who "gains eminence".⁴³⁷

(6)

But perhaps more than any of the above, there is a special class of *ari* references which seems to us to indicate that the *ari* was the chief of competitive ritual ceremonies at which the *sūris* strove to gain riches, attracting the gods away from the rites of the *ari*.

Already we have discussed one type of statement in the RV Saṃhitā which urges the gods not to be attracted by other (and competing) sacrificers. "May not the other *yajamānas* halt you -- for there are many *vipras* here!" says the song at 2.18.3.⁴³⁸

But apart from all the *yajamānas* or *sūris* is the *ari*.

We saw how 8.1.4 refers to the competing conjurations of the *ari's* men and of the brahmanical priests and how in 1.122 the gods are invited to come away from the *ari's* to the ritual of the singer. Likewise 8.34.10 asks Indra to "come away from the *ari*, to drink of the Soma sap (with us)."⁴³⁹

With such references we may compare 4.48.1 which says, according to Geldner's rendering: "Have longing for the sacrificial gifts; (may) the riches, like the hymns, of the rival be unlonged for!"⁴⁴⁰ but which may perhaps give a better sense if rendered as follows:

Have desire for the sacrificial gifts. The conjurations, not the treasures, of the *ari* be undesired!⁴⁴⁰

435. *ud ānaḥ kakuho divam/ uṣṭrāñ catur yujo dadat / śravasā yādvam janam//* 8.6.48

436. *dakṣiṇāvān prathamo hūta eti* - 10.107.5a; *bhojā..ye ahūtāḥ prayanti* - 9d.

437. *agram eti* - 10.107.5b

438. See above n. 374. (2.18.3)

439. *ā yāhy aya ā pari..somasya pītaye* - 8.34.10. For 8.1.4 see n. 371 above ; for 1.122.14 see n.410.

440. *vihi hotā avitā/ vipo na rāyo aryah/* 4.48.1

Such stanzas then refer to the ritual of the *ari* as distinct from that of the *sūris*. And the gods are implored to ignore the *ari*'s ritual -- suggesting that the *sūris* compete with the *ari*, that both the *ari* and the *sūris* seek divine help and that it is the singer's wish that the *ari* be denied this aid. The cultural distinction which we discussed above comes to the surface when it is stated or implied that the *ari*'s ritual is unworthy, his devotion is deficient and/or his priests' services are substandard. But this distinction is not always made, which in itself is a significant thing.

As corroborative of the above assumptions we consider the references to the *ari*'s libations etc., which the gods are requested to bypass, in order to come to the ritual of the singer and his side. These references are RV 3.43.2, 4.29.1, 7.68.2, 8.66.12 and 8.33.14.

Come hither, past many peoples, (past) the prayers of the *ari*, to us on your two bay horses -- for these thoughts forged into lauds call you, eager for your alliance, O Indra! (3.43.2)⁴⁴¹

Come to us, O Indra, being praised, exhilarating yourself, past the many libations of the *ari*! (4.29.1)⁴⁴²

For you two are the exhilarating drinks set up. Come in time to partake of my sacrificial gift, across the (ritual) invocations of the *ari*! (7.68.2)⁴⁴³

In you are many longings (sought to be fulfilled). Your aid is invoked by many, O Indra! Come past the libations of the *ari*..., hear my call! (8.66.12)⁴⁴⁴

May (your) bay horses carry you...hither, past (the Soma-pressing?) of the *ari*, (and) those pressings of others, O Vṛtra-slayer! (8.33.14)⁴⁴⁵

The last stanza is particularly important. It helps us gain an idea of the persons involved in these events:

The *ari* with his rites
The *sūri* with his rites
Others with their rites

441. *ā yāhi pūrvīr ati carṣaṇīr āñ/ arya āśiṣa upa no haribhyām/ imā hi tvā matayaḥ stomataṣṭā/ indra havante sakhyam juṣāṇāḥ/* - 3.43.2

442. *ā naḥ stuta upa...../ indra yāhi...mandasānaḥ/ tiraś cid aryaḥ savanā purūṇi/* 4.29.1

443. *pra vām andhāṃsi madyāny asthur/ araṇ gantaṇ haviṣo vītaye me/ tiro aryo havanāni ...* - 7.68.2

444. *pūrvīś cidd hi tve.. āśaso havanta indrotayaḥ/ tiraś cid aryaḥ savanā..gahi/..śrudhi me havam* - 8.66.12

445. *vahantu tvā..ā harayaḥ tiraś cid aryaṃ savanāni vṛtrahann anyeṣām yā..* 8.33.14

In the light of these verses we may understand a saying such as the following: "Subdue the *ari*'s song with song, O *vipras*! Halt Indra, O singer, at our (libation of) Soma!" (10.42.1)⁴⁴⁶

It does not seem necessary in such a statement to take "*ari*'s song" over-literally and see in it a reflection of the *ari* in a priestly role. One might, perhaps, unwittingly misjudge the meaning of *ari* in such a statement and regard that here there is a notion of a rival priest, a *Konkurrent*. This seems to be pretty much out of the question when viewed against the background of all the above statements in which the *ari* is functionally set against the *sūri*, at times with overtones of a cultural distinction, but at times not.

* * *

IX. THE *ARI* AS A DEVOTEE OF THE BRAHMANICAL CULT

In one of the Ṛgvedic verses which we discussed above there was this request to Indra :

All the *vipaścits* of the *ari*/overlook, and swiftly come!//⁴⁴⁷ Under normal circumstances, a *vipaścit* would be an erudite Brahmanical priest. But as we had the occasion to stress again and again, it is with various kinds of *lapses* from the Brahmanical cult that the *ari* is frequently associated in the RV Samhitā.

Is there then another kind of *ari*, who is not represented in the above manner ?

The evidence indeed points in this direction, thus adding to the complexity of our problem.

The three points, related to matters of cult, on which the *ari* appears to be depicted as a deviant can be summed up as follows :

- (i) He is not an enthusiast of the Soma sacrifice (and possibly also of the ritual slaughter of cattle).
- (ii) He is not a steady adherent of Indra worship.
- (iii) He is not a loyal supporter of Brahman authority and does not sufficiently respect the sanctity of giving them lavish gifts. He occasionally seeks the services of men whose fitness to function in a priestly role for an Aryan chief is debatable.

⁴⁴⁶. See above n. 373 (10.42.1)

⁴⁴⁷. See n.372 above (8.65.9)

But if an *ari* employed a *vispaścit* he could hardly be so decried, at least not on the third point above.

Let us then examine such allusions as the above - what one might call the less normal kind of allusions to the *ari*.

Let us take RV 1.150.1. Here a singer speaks to Agni: "As one who offers much do I address you. The *ari*, O Agni, is in your refuge, as (in that) of a mighty warrior".⁴⁴⁸

The *ari*'s devotion to Agni that is emphasized here is in itself not surprising; what would have been more particularly interesting is a depiction of the *aris*, loyalty to Indra. However the continuation of this theme in the next stanza of the hymn adds a special significance to this statement. And we would render that stanza as follows :

Away (do I go) (from the place) of the rich man who gives not, who goes not forth even to invoke (the gods) -- the masterless, godless one! (1.150.2)⁴⁴⁹

So here the *ari* as a devotee of gods is a frequenter of sacrifices -which is why his priest is able to make frequent offerings to the gods. The singer is pointedly referring to this aspect of the *ari*'s conduct, by suggesting that were he otherwise, he would have not served him any more. It seems to us that the singer is trying to draw attention to the condition of many another *ari* in contrast to that of his own chief; for we found that in many other contexts the qualities of being niggardly and 'ungodly' were exactly those suggested of the *ari*. And "masterless" (anina-) of this context strongly reminds us of *anindra* which we found applied to many whom the *ṛṣis* found fault with.

Coming to a specific personality, we find the *rājan* named Svanaya Bhāvya who lived by the river Sindhu, is praised in RV 1.126. Stanza 1 says that, wishing for fame, he instituted thousands of *sava* ceremonies⁴⁵⁰ (no doubt ritual occasions with Soma offerings, as Sāyaṇa points out). We found above that the cattle which he is here said to have gifted to the *ṛṣi* are described as those that "belonged to the *asura*" and that "gave nourishment to the *ari*". It was our view that *asura* and *ari* here refer to the same person (VII - 6 above), and it is possible that both these words refer to the man called the *rājan* Svanaya Bhāvya in stanza 1 of the hymn.

And in that case the point that would specially interest us in this contest is that this *ari* is a rich and generous patron of the *ṛṣi* Kakṣivant, who is the author of the hymn. But of course, we cannot be altogether sure of this.

448. *puru tvā dāśvān voce/ 'rir agne tava svid ā/ todasyeva śaraṇe ā mahasya//* 1.150.1

449. *vy aninasya dhaninaḥ/ prahoṣe cid araruṣaḥ/ kadā cana prajigato adevayoh//* 1.150.2

450. *yaḥ..sahasram amimāta savān..śrava icchamānaḥ ..* 1.126.1cd

A clearer instance of a favourable depiction of an *ari*, is RV 4.38.2 which describes Trasadasyu's war horse Dadhikrā as a gift of Indra and Varuṇa to the Pūru tribe : "And you two gods gave them the *vāja* - winning Dadhikrā, bringer of many gifts, gladdener of all the *kṛṣṭis* (Aryan tribes ?) the straight moving hawk, breath - spraying, swift,-- and worthy of the *ari*'s praise as is a brave prince".⁴⁵¹

The *ari*'s commendation of a brave prince seems to us to be an affirmation of the view that he institutes competitive rites where strong heroes could distinguish themselves and win riches with which they could expand their power⁴⁵²; but it is not everywhere that the *ari* is depicted as acknowledging another's valour. This reference to so likeable an *ari* after all is to the conduct of a particular chief -- perhaps to Trasadasyu himself, as we can infer from the characterization of Trasadasyu (in his youth?) as an *ari*-scion at RV 8.19.36. And from the first stanza of 4.38 we learn that he was in the *ṛṣi*'s eye a beneficiary of Indra's and Varuṇa's grace.⁴⁵³

This view of (some of the later?) *ari* chiefs is echoed in Atharva Veda XX. 127.11 : "Indra has awakened the bard: 'Stand up! Go around singing. Glorify me the, powerful. Every *ari* will give you gifts!'"⁴⁵⁴

(2)

If in such instances as those discussed above, we hear of the *ari*'s loyalty to (or more accurately his happy relations with) the Brahmanical system, there are also cases which suggest that this was not quite the natural thing to expect of the *ari*; in other words, that his loyalty deserved to be viewed as something exceptional, perhaps even to be viewed with suspicion.

Let us ponder, for example, on the tone of such a statement as 8.1.22 which is exceptional insofar as it depicts the *ari* as offering praises to Indra ; "Celebrated by all, praised by the *ari* (as well), to the Soma presser and the singer he gives (gifts)."⁴⁵⁵

After saying *all*, what could be the point in singling out the *ari*? It is at least an allowable guess that this may indicate that it is an exceptional thing for an *ari* to offer a *stoma* to the god Indra.

451. *uta vājinam puruniṣṣidvānam | dadhikrām u dadathur visvakṛṣṭim | ṛjipyam śyenam pruṣitapsuṃ āśum | carṣṭyam aryo nṛpatim na sūram ||* 4.38.2

452. Cf. RV 1.186.3, 8.1.22 above nn.295, 296.

453. 4.38.1 refers to *dātrā..pūrvā* which "Trasadasyu showered on the Pūrus" (*yā pūrubhyas trasadasyur nitoṣe*) as stemming from Indra and Varuṇa (*vām ..santi*)

454. *indrah kārum abūbudhad | ut tiṣṭha vi carā janam | mamed ugrasya carṣṭdhi/sarva it te pṛṇād ariḥ ||* AV 20.127.11

455. See above n. 296 . (8.1.22)

But we feel that it is more than just an allowable guess, when we take into consideration an instance such as RV 1.9.10:

To Indra, the mighty dweller at each (separate) Soma-pressing, ever the *ari* sings a great enthusing-song!

Here, as to the word *even*, Sāyana, Geldner and Thieme are all of the same mind. (Cf. Sāyana: *ic-chabdo' pi-śabdārthah*).⁴⁵⁶

Here it does seem that, though the *ari* is no real alien, though indeed he does participate in the worship of Indra at a Soma festival, there still is some lingering suspicion.

And indeed that suspicion is explicitly voiced elsewhere. As, for example at 4.2.12 (which we referred to above): "The guileless seers (: the Angiras) directed the Seer (:Agni), setting him down in the dwellings of Āyu' From there these visible (intentions) (of Āyu) you may see by (these active hands and) feet; and by the *ari*'s ways (i.e., conduct), (his) secret (intentions)."⁴⁵⁷

Similar sentiments no doubt were behind the thought that one finds expressed at 6.51.2:

He who knows the three *vidathas* of these (gods), and (knows also) the birth of gods, he, the *vipra*, (witnesses whatever they do) on this side and on every side. Seeing the straight among mortals and the crooked, the Sun-god observes the ways of the *ari* (too).⁴⁵⁸

Or at 1.71.3, which seems to characterize the *ari*'s prayers to the gods as not genuine but dictated by worldly greed: "They (: the Angiras) established the *ṛta* (:sacrifice) and set its understanding in motion. Thereafter (came) the gain-seeking (calls) of the *ari*, which (in order to be effective?) needs to be carried across (i.e. they are not strong in themselves). The 'unthirsting' (invocations) of the dexterous (singer) reach the race of gods, strengthening (them) with sweet nutriment."⁴⁵⁹

But perhaps the clearest example of this kind of attitude on the part of the *ṛṣis* is to be found at 10.39.5:

Before the tribe your ancient heroic deeds will I narrate,..... that faith this *ari* may have, O Nāsatyas!⁴⁶⁰

456. *sute sute nyokase/ bṛhad bṛhata ed ariḥ/ indrāya śūṣam arcati//* 1.9.10.Cr. F.,p.12
"Ihm...singt auch der Fremde ein hohes Einladungslied (?)".

457. See n. 131 above (4.2.12)

458. *veda yas trīṇi vidathāny eṣāṃ/ devānāṃ janma sanutar ā ca viprah/ ṛju martyeṣu vṛjinā ca paśyan/ abhi caṣṭe sūra arya evān//* 6.51.2

459. *dadhann ṛtaṃ dhanayann asya dhītim/ ād id aryo didhiṣvo vibhṛtrāḥ/ atṛṣyantīr apaso yanty acchā/ devāṅ janma prayasā vardhayantah //* 1.71.3

460. *purānā vāṃ vīryā pra bruve jane/.....ayaṃ nāsatyā śrad arir yathā dadhat//* 10.39.5ad

The singer has, no doubt, in view an *ari* before whom he performs a sacrifice; but the personal and subtly ironical statement he makes about the *ari* suggests his conviction that the latter's faith is not yet strong enough. Its subtlety renders this verse doubly valuable for the understanding of the *ari* riddle.

In their entirety then these allusions seem to indicate that in course of time the *ari* chiefs, or perhaps sections of them, found it possible or worthwhile to achieve (or perhaps re-gain) a relationship of harmony with the *ṛṣi*-elite. The later Purus seem to be the best example for this development. But in other instances the earlier sharp division in attitude where cult was concerned seems to have been hard for the *ṛṣis* to forget. They continued to regard the *ari* with suspicion even where he appears as a sacrificer among sacrificers.

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X. THREE IMPORTANT CONTEXTS

(1 : RV 1.169.6 and 10.28.1)

Thieme's interpretation of *ari* as stranger and as guest appears extremely apt in two important stanzas among the many R̥gvedic references that contain this word. These are RV 1.169.6 and 10.28.1. Let us examine these contexts.

In *Mitra and Aryaman* (p. 75) Thieme discusses the first of these two contexts. The verse contains a request to Indra to come to (the aid of) *sūris* at a time at which the antelopes of the Maruts are said to be standing "like the forces of the stranger at a ford (which he does not dare to cross, being unfamiliar with the country)". This is how we would have to understand the stanza if we follow Prof. Thieme's interpretation.

1.169.6 is located in a hymn the background of which is a martial situation such as a raid, a foray or a contest. In the first part of it, which precedes stanza 6, Indra as the god of heroic triumph is praised and described with the Maruts as his hosts. The singer hopes to gain wealth through his aid (4)⁴⁶¹ and their grace (5).⁴⁶²

At this point the singer actually expects the physical presence of the Maruts, so that they may help the *sūris*. In the second part of the hymn, which follows stanza 6, we are told that the footsteps of the Maruts' antelopes are actually heard — of the Maruts who swoop down on the man who prepares to give fight⁴⁶³ (i. e. the man who stands on the *sūris*' way to victory).

461. *tvam ..na indra rayim dāh* - 1.169.4a

462. *te ṣu no maruto mṛṣayantu* - 1.169.5c

463. *marutām śṛṇva āyatām upabdiḥ/ ye martyam pṛtanāyantam...patayanta..* -1.169.7 bcd

This location helps us to understand the meaning of the words in stanza 6, which in its entirety, we would translate as follows :

Come Indra, to (our) heroes who shower gifts. At the terrestrial session (i.e. the sacrifice which precedes the contest) direct the strong ones (:the Maruts) —then when their wide-bottomed antelopes have poised themselves (ready to swoop on adversaries), like the manly forces of the *ari* at the crossing-place.”⁴⁶⁴

What the “crossing place” here signifies we would not wish to comment on except to say that it may mean a ford across which one may reach a settlement, or, any similar point across which one may reach the booty that was desired to be won. If this was to be won from the *ari*, we see his men depicted here as staying at the crossing point, ready to swoop on them who dared to challenge their strength. To meet them without fear one wishes the Maruts to come to one’s aid—the Maruts who too stand poised to appear, having been earlier invoked at the sacrifice. The sequel to stz. 6, it seems to us, justifies this rendering. On deeper reflection it would appear preferable to an interpretation that suggests that the antelopes of the Maruts are standing as if afraid to cross a ford, like one unaccustomed to the land.

10.28.1 is the opening verse of a *saṃvāda* or dialogue hymn. Thieme translates the verse as follows:

(The wife): “Every other guest has come, my own father-in-law, however, has not come: he would have eaten (roasted) grains, and he would have drunk Soma ; well-fed, he would have returned home.”⁴⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the narrative of dramatic background of RV 10.28 is obscure and of course this is vital to the understanding of the hymn. According to Geldner’s interpretation, which is constructed partly with the aid of statements found in various early Indian sources, the speakers in this hymn are (i) Indra’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Vasukra, (ii) the poet, (iii) Indra himself and (iv) Vasukra. The last named is a son of Indra who is his exact physical likeness and who makes use of this to pose as his father. In this hymn he is also depicted (according to Geldner) as the host and institutor of the sacrifice at which Indra appears incognito and reveals his identity only when Vasukra’s wife laments that he has not turned up for this sacrificial feast. Geldner treats the word *ari* as referring to Vasukra in the role of host-institutor.

464. *prati prayāhīndra mīḥhuṣo nṛṇ/ mahāḥ pārthive sadane yatasva/ adha yad eṣām pṛthubudhnāsa etās/ tīrthe na ayaḥ paum̐syāni tasthuḥ//* 1.169.6

465. M.A. pp.73-74.

We do not feel entirely satisfied with this identification. It seems to us that Geldner's version of the dramatic background can be accepted because it visualizes somewhat correctly the persons involved in the event in which this hymn is grounded. We would however regard these persons to be more exactly the following:

- (i) the host-institutor ;
- (ii) a counterfeit Indra ;
- (iii & iv) Indra and his daughter-in-law;
- (v) the poet-priest.

It does not seem to us that the institutor takes part in the dialogue, though it must be admitted that it is not possible to be quite definite about this point.

In any case, the opening verse proclaims, in the words of the daughter-in-law, that all the legitimate participants of the ceremony have come, with the exception of the father-in-law. In the ensuing dialogue, Indra reveals himself and declares his firm alliance with the man who offers him Soma. He hints that some one is posing as Indra. Apparently the dialogue goes on to a confrontation of a sort between the true Indra and the counterfeit one. The hymn ends with the poet-priest's declaration that those who are not loyal to the cult and do not offer lavish gifts to the priesthood will suffer a terrible fate.⁴⁶⁶ It does seem to us that some of the essential elements of a hymn referring to the *ari* are found here again-- namely (a) some sort of mishandling or disrespect to the personality of Indra and (b) misobservance of the obligations to Brahman priests. Hence it seems to us that, whatever be the exact details of the dramatic background, the opening stanza may be translated on the assumption that *ari* here means as elsewhere the owner of wealth, the patriarch or chief who institutes a tribal ritual-festival. It may possibly be that in this little dramatic skit an Indra-priest is seeking to impress that the *ari*'s Indra is not the real Indra at all, that the latter favours the Soma-offerers and not those who disavow the practices of the Brahmanical sacrifice.

But even if these 'details' regarding the background be wholly off the mark, the stanza seems to us to be best translated as follows :

Every one else (has come). The *ari* has come. (But) my father-in-law (only) has not come. (If he came) he would have eaten (roasted) grains and would have drunk Soma and gone back home well-fed.⁴⁶⁷

466. Cf. "A crocodile will drag away the leg from them that resist (the rewarding of) Brahmans with victuals": *tebhyo godhā ayatham karṣad etad/ ye brahmaṇaḥ pratipīyanty annaiḥ*//10.28.11

467. *viśvo hy anyo arir ājagāma/ mamed aha śvaśuro nājagāma/ jakṣīyād dhānā uta somam papīyāt/ svāśitaḥ punar astam jagāyāt*// 10.28.1

If *viśvo hy anyo ariḥ* in this stanza were taken as one unit and translated as “every other *ari*”, it would mean that there were many *aris* present at this ritual ceremony. It is difficult to find any parallel for such a depiction. *Ari* is noticeably a word used in the singular number, because almost invariably the RV refers only to one *ari* at a given locus. (A plural sense may possibly be detected at 8.51.9 ab, if the lines are translated as :“every Ārya who is a treasure-guarding *ari*” and AV XX. 127. 11 :“every *ari* will give you gifts” In both instances *ari* is singular in form, but certainly there is an implied plural sense. But in neither is there the suggestion that more than one *ari* is present in a given locus. In later Vedic literature, however, the suggestion of many *aris* at one place may be found, as for example at Śatapatha Br. 3.2. 1.23-24: *he'lavo* for *he'rayaḥ*. But this usage reflects the change of tribal life with which the old meaning of *ari* became obscured and was replaced by the generalized sense of *foe*.)

“Every one (has come) and the *ari* has come”. The *ari* is singled out here for special mention because he is a very special ‘functionary’ in this kind of ritual setting. We should think that in this dramatic skit eloquent gestures on the narrator’s part would have made up for the missing words “has come”.

(2.RV 10.27.8)

The third context we should like briefly to comment on is RV 10.27.8. The hymn 10.27 seems to be one of the most important hymns for the understanding of the meaning of *ari*, but again most unfortunately the background of the hymn is hard to visualize.

With all due respect, we must confess that Thieme’s translation here is scarcely enlightening. He renders the stanza as follows:

“The cows let loose ate the stranger’s barley... The calls of the stranger came from all sides. How long will the lord of the property find pleasure in them (= will he tolerate them)?”⁴⁶⁸

We would very tentatively suggest a different translation:

The *ari*’s cows, let loose, have eaten the barley. I saw them, moving about with the herdsman. The *ari*’s calls (or, invocations) came from all sides. How long will the owner of the property (-the cows) find pleasure in them (=be able to save them from being captured or killed)?⁴⁶⁹

468. M.A., p.75.

469. *gāvo yavaṃ prayutā aryo akṣan| tā apaśyaṃ sahaḡopās carantīḥ| havā id aryo abhitaḥ samāyan| kiyad āsu svapatiś chandayāte||* 10.27.8.

This would agree with the usual association of the *ari* with ownership of cattle and wealth. But the point which bothers us here is, who then is the owner of the barley? And from whom is there a threat to the cows?

It is not so hard to find the answer to the second question. Further on in the hymn, the poet refers to a strange fact : "I saw from afar, the *grāma* :(horde) that was borne without wheels, by its inherent strength"⁴⁷⁰ Obviously the reference is to the Maruts who no doubt herald the appearance of Indra on the scene-- which means that Indra was coming to lend his martial support to his worshippers out on a foray. It is for their sake the hymn is sung. (Interestingly, the Bharata hordes in RV 3.33, Indra-inspired, were also called a *grāma*, and what is more, a *grāma* that was out to plunder cattle: *gavyan grāmah.*)

So it would seem that the *ari*'s cows are threatened by foraying fighters that sought Indra's aid, and the Maruts! The cows of the *ari* feeding on the barley then may not be taken as an implied explanation of the threat to the cows. Rather the lines portray the quiet peace of the scene at the *ari*'s place just before the attacking hordes appear. We have no reason to assume that the cows were doing some kind of damage to the owner of the property. After all, the reference may be to cows feeding on barley stalks? And *ari* (line *a*) then, being=*svapati* (line *d*), would be carrying much the same significance as *dhanasvāmin*, the sense that Mahīdhara gives to its derivative *arya* in the Yajurveda Samhitā.⁴⁷¹

One would ask, is the *ari* here portrayed both as a cattle-raiser and as an agriculturist? If that is indeed the case, it would explain many of the peculiarities associated with the *ari* tangle.

One is emboldened to suggest that this (: the *ari* in some contexts being depicted as someone associated with agricultural practices) is not altogether unlikely. At least four other instances there are that lend some slight support to such a view.

The first two are found in the RV itself.

We find, in thatra ther unusual and unorthodox hymn 10.34, an interesting saying attributed to the *arya* Savitr(-- it would appear that the *aryas* liked to refer to the gods with this epithet, which probably fitted any princely being as much /as any person that belonged to a prince). The saying is the following:

"Play not with dice but till the field. Take pleasure in property and hold (it as a thing of) much value."⁴⁷²

470. *apaśyaṃ grāmaṃ vahamānam ārād| acakrayā svadhayā vartamānam|* 10.27.19ab

471. On V.S. 33.82.

472. *akṣair mā dīvyah kṛṣim it kṛṣasva| vitta ramaṣva bahu manyamānah|* 10.34.13

Value a life of frugality and work in the fields, rather than nomadic wandering, forays and lavish contests and feasts : for the RV indeed a very unusual message.

It must however be admitted that we cannot be sure about how much importance is to be attached to the use of *arya* in this context.

The other from the RV is 10.42, in which the *ṛṣi*'s party of *rājans* (*rājabhiḥ ...asmākena vṛjanena :10cd*) hopes to win treasures (*dhanāni: 10 a*) of cattle and barley (*yavamad gomad : 7c gobhih...yavena : 9cd*) in a raid or contest in which the opponent, or the offerer of stakes is indicated as the *ari* (cf. 1 c: "with song subdue the *ari*'s song! "). The *ari* then should have been the possessor not only of cattle but also of grains.

The third instance we referred to comes from the Atharva Veda, where the *mantra* 8.10.24 has for a long time been rightly regarded as indicating the adoption of agriculture by *Prthi Venya*,⁴⁷³ whom, as we have discussed above, the RV represents as an *ari*.

The fourth instance is from the Yajur Veda. Here in reference to the scene where the queen cohabits with the horse in the *aśvamedha* ceremony, the word *arya* occurs in the dialogue between the *kṣattṛ* and the *pālāgali*. These verses are to the following effect :

1. When the deer eats the corn (the owner of the field) does not pay heed to (the fact that) the animal has grown fat (by feeding on his corn) (: this is no cause for satisfaction to him). When the *śūdra* woman is the *arya*'s mistress, he (the *śūdra*) does not wish (by means of that) to obtain wealth (for him) to thrive on.
2. When the deer eats the corn, (the owner of the field) does not regard the fattened (animal) as (something of) great (value). When the *śūdra* becomes a paramour to the *arya* lady, (the *arya*) does not approve of the 'nourishment' (: the fertilization ?).

(Vājasaneyi Samhitā, 23.30-31).⁴⁷⁴

473. "Prthī...a semi-mythical personage who is mentioned...as the the inventor of agriculture": Vedic Index, under *Prthī*. Cf. AV 8.10.24:...*tām (= pṛthivīm) pṛthī vainyodhok, tām kṛṣiṃ ca śasyaṃ cādhoḥ; te kṛṣiṃ ca śasyaṃ ca manuṣyā upa jīvanti...*

474. *yadd hariṇo yavam atti/ na puṣṭam paśu manyate/ śūdrā yad aryajārā/ na poṣāya dhanāyati// yadd hariṇo yavam atti/ na puṣṭam bahu manyati/ śūdro yad aryāyai jāro/ na poṣam anu manyate// V.S. 23.30-31*

What can we make of such references?

Two facts at least seem to be beyond dispute : one, that *aryas* or wealth-owning Aryan tribesmen possessed agricultural land ; two, that they and their families were in close contact with men and women of the *śūdra* class - who were of non-Aryan extraction and most probably the same as the Dasyus of the Ṛgveda period.

This important context helps us then to surmise that *ari* families of the Vedic age were resorting to agricultural practices, and also in this process they were entering into such close association with non-Aryan agriculturists that not only males of *arya* stock but also females could enter into extra - marital relations with these persons of *śūdra* extraction : which probably explains their tolerance and even observance of Dasyu cult practices hinted at in some of the RV references which we discussed above.

* * *

XI. THE ARI'S SOCIAL POSITION

(1)

We have been assuming throughout that *ari* stands for a chief, a kind of tribal patriarch. A word must be said about this assumption before we close our discussion.

In the first place we must emphasize that the *ari* of the RV cannot be just an ordinary man. He is distinctly a "holder of wealth" and also of power, as we have already seen. (See VII-3, above)

Then we have the significant evidence of the use of *ari*, *arya*, *su-ari*, *a-kavāri* to refer to such gods as Mitra-Varuṇa (:they are the *aris*, the *asuras* of the gods -7.65.2), Varuṇa (7.86.7), Viṣṇu (7.100.5), Agni (4.1.7), Apām Napāt (2.35.2), Uṣṣ (: *aryā* - 1.123.1 5.75.7), Savitar (10.34.13) and even Indra (:qualified as 'the noble" *ari* 1.61.9; "the not- ignoble" *ari*: 3.47.5, 6.19.11)- impossible if *ari* were lacking in connotations of power.⁴⁷⁵

475. *tā hi devānām asurā tāv aryā* - 7.65.2a; *acetayad acito devo aryah* - 7.86.7c; *pra tat te..nāma aryah...śamsāmi* - 7.100.5ab; *śuciḥ śukro aryo rorucānah*- 4.1.7d; *viśvāny aryo bhuvanā jajāna* 2.35.2d; *kṛṣṇād ud āsthād aryā* - 1.123.1c; *tiraś cid aryayā pari vartir yātam* - 5.75.7cd; *tan me vicaṣṭe savitā 'yam aryah* - 10.34.13d; *svarāḥ indrah. svarih* - 1.61.9cd; *akavāri*: see n.349 above;

In relation to *ari* as a person of position and authority, it is interesting to note the use of *aya* (a word ultimately derived from *ari*, through *ārya*) as a title or epithet of royalty among early Āryans in Sri Lanka : "In many of the inscriptions...the sons of kings are referred to with the title *aya* (Skt. *ārya*, Pali *ayya*) attached to the name either preceding or following it. Some of these princes with the title *aya* later ascended the throne. The title *aya* may be compared with *ayaputa* of the Asoka edicts. " Parnavitana...p.lxvi.

Noting the *ṛṣi*'s fury at seeing the *ari* such as they were, we should think that it must have been their tacit assumption that the condition of the *aris* they saw was a travesty of an ideal. The ideal of course was that such a chief as the *ari* with the wealth and power at his command should be a splendid example for all to follow. And it would seem that it was these suppressed connotations of respect and fear and authority that enabled the application of the word to describe the gods.

In the usage of *ari* in the RV we can also detect connotations of elderliness (which we assume would be appropriate for a patriarch-like chief), of splendour reduced by age (-which would show up the contrasting vigour of youth of the *sūris* whom the *ṛṣis* often preferred to the treasure-guarding *aris*).

Thus says 2.8.2 of Agni :

Unageing he brings decay (: old age)to the *ari*, to his devotee gives an excellent lead;⁴⁷⁶

and that difficult and complicated verse 5.54.12 declares:

You Maruts shake down from the sky ---whose brilliance the *ari* has captured not--- that radiant berry (: rain ? the thunderbolt ?)⁴⁷⁷

and 6.13.5 says :

.....You in your might increase the herd's life-strength, for the languishing *ari* to benefit, and the wolf! ⁴⁷⁸

In these R̥gvedic instances the connotation of splendour vitiated by age may seem so hidden as to be almost undetectable. As against this we would urge that in each of these cases it is that very hidden connotation that really gives pointedness to the statement the poet makes.

(The *sūri* on the other hand is *explicitly* depicted as a man who is in the prime of his youth; the singer even dares to wish that the *sūris* continue to remain youthful, almost in defiance of nature's laws --- as one may see from RV 1.125.7^{478b}).

476. See above n.311 (2.8.2)

477. *taṃ nākam aryo agṛbhītaśocisaṃ/ ruśat pippalaṃ maruto vi dhūnutha* 5.54.12ab.

478. See p.7 above and n.369 (6.13.5)

478b "May not the *sūris*, who are loyal to the *vrata*, be weakened by age": *mā jāriṣuḥ sūrayaḥ svratāsaḥ* 1.125.7b (cf Geldner: "nicht sollen die pflichtgetreuen Patrone alterschwach werden".)

(2)

We have upto this point relied almost exclusively on *R̥gvedic* evidence to support the views that were advanced. We feel that sufficient evidence was adduced in this process to set up our hypothesis on fairly firm ground. As a matter of fact, this way of setting about the task (i.e. limiting the basic research to that text where only the word frequently occurs) seems to us to be a better course of action than gathering a vaster array of evidence from far-flung and often heterogeneous sources over the whole range of Indo-Iranian and Indo-European dispersal.

But now that the main structure of our hypothesis can be set up to stand by virtue of its own strength, let us also draw a little from sources outside the sphere of the RV *Samhitā*.

As to the connotation of elderliness, the whole semantic history of the derivatives of *ari* such as *arya* and *ayya*, is astonishingly illuminating. Prof Thieme himself has pointed out the use of *ārya* for elder brother in Bhavabhūti, in the *Gitā* and possibly also in the *praśasti* inscription of Samudragupta at Allahabad.⁴⁷⁹ (It is interesting to note that the Sinhalese word for elder brother is *ayyā*).

ārya and its feminine form *āryā* are also widely used in Indian kinship terminology for husband's wife's father, husband's father, wife's father, husband's mother and son's wife's mother etc. etc as Irawathie Karwe has clearly shown⁴⁸⁰.

Dravidian derivatives of the word also confirm this basic connotation of elderliness. Thus,

Tamil	<i>accan</i>	:	father
Malayalam	<i>accan</i>	:	father
Ko	<i>ajayn</i>	:	very old man
Kannada	<i>ajja</i>	:	grandfather
Tamil	<i>ayyan, aiyan</i>	:	father etc. ⁴⁸¹

In Pali *ayya* and *ayyakā* are used for grandfather and grandmother respectively,⁴⁸² and the word *ariya* in general is widely attested as connoting nobility, aristocracy and refinement in the highest sense.⁴⁸³

479. F. p. 100; KZ 79 (1965), p.284.

480. Karwe, pp 36-37,88,103,145, 197, 241, 248, 236, 284 (*aja, ayya, āi, aji, aja, ājā, ājī, ajja, ajjā, ayyā, ajji, ajje, ajjiā, ayyake*). Note her observations on pp. 108,166,167, 205, *ai, aiyan* ..used for any elderly relation or an unrelated but respected person... derived from the Skt *ārya*".

481. DED, Entries 46,163.

482. Karwe, pp.88f (items 2,4,9,11) and PTSD s.vv. & Turner, s.v. *ārya*

483. Cf. e.g., such usages as *ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika magga, ariyapuggala, ariyo tuṅhābhāvo ariyapariyesana* etc., etc.

In classical Sanskrit, *ārya* predominantly carries the associations of nobility and high birth, virtue, delicacy, munificence, righteousness, truthfulness, gratitude, reliability and absolute dutifulness.⁴⁸⁴

Thus, derivatives of *ari* seemed to have had connotations of age and respectability, geographically as well as chronologically throughout the Indian scene.

(3)

But what could have been the actual sphere of authority of the *ari*? It is obvious from the word's connotations of power and wealth and its application to refer to the gods, that the *ari*'s sphere of authority was something greater than the household. He could not have been a *gṛhapati* pure and simple. And since *viśpati* is attested in the RV as a distinct term for the chief of the *viś* it does not seem to be likely that the *ari*'s sphere of authority was the unit known as the *viś*.

What then remains ?

The RV does not enumerate the different units of the Vedic social set-up anywhere in a clear-cut way. But the evidence from the Avesta seems to be suggestive and may even prove to be useful.

The Avestic evidence is summed up by Benveniste. To quote that evidence (as presented by Thieme, with terminological modifications) :

In the *mnāna*, the house, there lives the *xvaētu*, the family ;
in the *viś*, the settlement, *vərəzana*, the clan/community ;
in the *zantu*, the territory of the tribe, there lives the *airyaman*, the hospitality : those with whom one is connected by hospitality ;
in the *dahyu*, the country, the widest area, there live the *sāstāro*, the rulers.⁴⁸⁵

First, a word on the above statement :

<i>mrāna</i> (house)	:	<i>xvaētu</i> (family)
<i>viś</i> (settlement)	:	<i>vərəzana</i> (clan)
<i>zantu</i> (territory of tribe)	:	<i>airyaman</i> (those connected by hospitality)
<i>dahyu</i> (country)	:	<i>sāstāro</i> (rulers)

484. Cf. : *kulaṃ śīlaṃ dayā dānaṃ | dharmāḥ satyaṃ kṛtajñatā/adroha iti yeṣv etat/ tān āryān sampracakṣate/!*, quoted in Jagaddhara's Commentary on Mālatīmādhava, Kale.

485. M.A. pp79-80 referring to Benveniste, J.A. 221(1932), pp.124-9

It does seem to us that the third step in this scheme is a little awry. We would like to ask: Is it not more sensible to think of that step as follows :

In the *zantu* (territory of tribe) lives *airyaman* (the tribe, i.e., those connected by the tribal relationship).

In any case, this scheme visualizes a stage of territorially settled communities - which does not exactly fit with the picture of R̥gvedic India. But yet the corresponding elements are all there :

1. *gr̥ha*
2. *viś/vr̥jana*
3. *jantu/aryaman*
4. *dasyu*

Let us reflect a little bit about the third step. A clear sense of the word *jantu* in the RV is 'offspring' as in the following instances :

- 5.19.3 : *śvaitreyasya jantavaḥ* : the offspring of Śvaitreya.
9.67.13 : *vāco jantuḥ kavīnām* : the offspring of the poets' word
10.48.1 : *mām havante pitaram na jantavaḥ*: they call on my aid as offspring call their father.

Cognate with *jana* and *jāti*, the word *jantu* certainly suggests "the community of those related by kinship". That *jana* carried such a sense is of course obvious from such usages as *pañca janāḥ* (the five *jana*-s). We may legitimately conjecture that the related word *jantu* also carried this sense.

The bracketing of *zantu* with *airyaman* in the Iranian scheme reminds us of the *ari-jana/jantu* juxtaposition in several RV passages, i.e., 1.81.9, 5.33.2 8.14 ((*ari/jana*) and 7.21.5 (*ari/jantu*)⁴⁸⁶

Besides, if we take the word *aryaman* as a derivative ultimately from *ari*, as we have to, then *aryaman* would have the following senses :

- (a) community connected to oneself through the *ari*
- (a) the quality or character proper for an *ari*.

(And of course *aryaman* the god would be the deity representing the qualities proper for the chief - which ideally must include hospitality, the basic sense in Thieme's scheme of ideas.)

Let us reflect further on the scheme
gr̥ha - viś - jantu - dasyu.

In the R̥gvedic situation, this might well signify

1. the members of the family unit
 2. " " " " clan or settlement
 3. " " " " *jana* or tribe - as offspring of a common kind
- and 4. the outsiders.

486. 1.81.9,5.33.2, 8.1.4,7.21.5: See above nn. 310,91,371 and 332 respectively.

Taking into account the relationship drawn by the above Iranian scheme between the *zantu* and the *airyaman*, it seems to us that a similar R̥gvedic scheme would represent the 'units' and their 'authorities' in the following way:

1. *gr̥ha* : *gr̥hapati*
 2. *viś* : *viśpati*
 3. *jantuljana* : *ari*
- and 4. the *dasyu*, the outsiders or the non-Aryans, i.e., those who do not belong to any of the Aryan *jana*-s.

We may even go a bit further. Frequently, the RV *jana* seems to be also called *kr̥ṣṭi*, as evident, e.g., from the widespread interchangeability of *pañca janāḥ* with *pañca kr̥ṣṭayaḥ*. And remarkably enough, the relationship of *kr̥ṣṭi* with *ari* is also distinctly attested at 1.4.6 which we referred to above. (See nn. 16 and 114.)

Still another fact there is which makes us think that the *ari* must have been the chief of a *jana* or a tribal unit in the RV period.

We have seen above how closely the *ari* is associated with the notion of the ownership of wealth (Ch. VII.3) of which the main element to the Vedic Aryan was constituted by cattle. It is interesting to note how this information helps us gauge the significance of statements such as the following three verses of RV 8.21 (which speak of the accomplishments desired by the *sūri*'s party):

With you, our ally, would we O steed,
stand up in speech against the "puffing" one
in the *saṃstha* of the cattle-rich tribe.
No rich man will you ever find
fit to ally with; they with *surā* sharp,
scoff at you - but when you
the cry of war do raise, and
to confrontation (the fighters) bring,
then like a father are you invoked!
From thine gift, O giver of cows
may we not stray away.....
the *ari*'s (treasures), even the firmly-held,
take in your sweep and hither bring,
for yours are gifts not to be negated.⁴⁸⁷

487. *tvayā ha svid yujā vayan| prati śvasantam vṛsabha bruvīmahi| saṃsthe janasaṃ
gomataḥ|| 8.21.11; (For stz. 14, see n.138 above) mā te godatra nirarāma rādhasa,
indra mā te gr̥hāmahi| dṛḥā cid aryaḥ pra mṛśābhya ā bhara| na te dāmāna ājabhe||
8.21.16*

Here too it seems to us, the *ari* is portrayed as the chief of a cattle-rich tribe, again at odds with the *ṛṣi* - and hence depicted as haughty, wealthy, not given to the Soma cult and to the proper adoration of Indra. He seeks to withhold the gifts to priests, contrary to the practice of Indra-worshippers. When we read these verses in their relation to one another and in the light of what is so often said about the *ari*'s attitudes, it becomes clear that the 'puffing' or haughty man of the rich tribe in stanza 11 is the same one who is styled *ari* in stanza 16.

If we now for a moment assume the *ari* is a tribal chief, we instantly gain an insight into the true significance of the usage of *gopā* ("guardian of cattle") for 'chief' in the RV Samhitā. Let us take a line as the following from RV 3.43.5:

Or will he make me the *gopā* of the *jana*?⁴⁸⁸

Or the following from 5.11.1 :

As the *jana*'s *gopā* has he been born (referring to Agni).⁴⁸⁹

Or the following from 9.35.5

Soma, the *jana*'s "lord of cattle" (*gopati*-).⁴⁹⁰

in each of which *gopā* (or the equivalent *gopati*-) stands for *leader/chief*. And in these, it seems to us, we have the image, howsoever faint, of the tribal chief as the holder of cattle. Another echo of such a usage we could find in RV 10.27.8, where, we found above (pp. 31 ff.), *ari* appears equated to *sva-pati*, lord of property (- and here we must again remember that to the RV Aryans property almost always meant cattle)*.

The position thus seems to be that the *ari* was the elderly tribal chief or patriarch and the tribe's cattle, its traditional wealth, were in his charge. Distinct from him were the youthful militant leaders, the *sūri*-s, and in the RV period we see these men emerging as a new force to reckon with, fostering Aryan expansion, taking the lead in vanquishing Dasyu power. It was from among these *sūri*-s that the *rājan*-s were chosen, and to all appearances, the *rājan* was a supra-tribal institution.

It seems to us that this position explains that curious fact to which Schlerath refers in his monograph on kingship in the RV and Atharva Veda period, namely that these Samhitās do not seem to use the term *gopā* as an epithet for the king, a fact over which Schlerath quite rightly expresses

488. *kuvin mā gopām karase janasya*/ 3.43.5a

489. *janasya gopā ajanista jāgrviḥ*/ 5.11.1a

490. *somaṃ janasya gopatim*/ 9.35.5c.

*There is also a reference to *gopati* in the famed dialogue between Saramā and the Paṇis. Here, the spokesman for the Paṇis says, tongue in cheek, "Let Indra come to us; then he will become the *gopati* of our cattle". Saramā replies, in effect: "You cannot trick him; instead he will trick you."⁴⁹³ For her to say so, obviously it should have been possible to construe the Paṇi's words as expressive of a tempting offer.

surprise,⁴⁹¹ for nothing should be more natural than the use of *gopā* for king among a pastoral-nomadic people as were the Vedic Aryans. This is certainly very significant, yet there has been no explanation for it upto now. The actual facts seem to be that the traditional tribal chiefs were the *ari*-s, from whom power gradually passed on to the youthful *sūri*-s who led the Aryans as *rājan*-s in various military encounters. Our position is quite in agreement with the basic thesis of Schlerath that in the RV and AV the *rājan* is depicted as an intermittent or discontinuous bearer of glory and power.⁴⁹²

We would argue that tribal chief whose specific function was to guard the wealth of the tribe was the *ari*, rather than the *rājan* (a political entity that came into its own in spite of tribal resistance?). For the early Aryans, it was obviously not necessary to specify the *ari* as a *gopā* : the very word probably carried this connotation. What is important to realize is that the *ari*'s wealth was also a symbol of authority in the social set-up of the early tribes.* The supra-tribal office of the *rājan* arose not specifically to guard the wealth of the group, but to wield power of a more complex kind. Thus when the *ari* was leader, it was not necessary to call him a *gopā*, and when the *rājan* was the leader, it was insufficient to call him a *gopā*. It is even conceivable that the very association with the *ari* made the title *gopā* too much a term of tribal administration - hence not quite appropriate to be used for the supra-tribal *rājan*.

It is instructive, while speaking of the likelihood of the *ari* having been the tribal *gopā*, to reflect on the various epithets of Agni, who represents all the authorities known to the Vedic Aryans. In his humblest manifestation, he is the *gṛhapati*, the chief of the household. He is also the *viśpati*, the chief of the settlement. And he bears the title *gopā* too: chief of the herds or guardian of the cattle. (Present-day connotations should not mislead us: it must have been a grand function in those times to be the tribe's keeper of cattle.)⁴⁹⁴

And, with the rise of kingship, Agni also came to be described as a *rājan*.

491. Schlerath, pp.104-105.

492. Schlerath, pp. 111-112./

* Here we may reflect on statements about the manliness, the splendour and the wrath of the *ari*. That the *ari* was the object of considerable terror is proved by the references to his *arāti* that brought agony to the *sūris* and *ṛsis*. Especially instructive in this context is 8.48.8: "Will surges forth, and also wrath, O Indu! Deliver us not to (that will and wrath) of the *ari*, as he wishes." Similar is 7.31.5: "Deliver us not to the *ari*'s insult and malicious speech!" *alarti dakṣa uta manyur indo/ mā no aryo anukāmaṃ parā dāh/!* 8.48.8 (Geldner's translation of this stz. is highly misleading, to say the least.); 7.31.5: see n.343 above See also nn. 464, 367,327, 290, 370,345,344 citing 1.169.6,10.76.2,4.4.6,4.16.19,7.60.11,6.48.16,6.59.8 and 7.83.5 in which reference is made to the *ari*'s *paumsya*, *djumna*, *nṛmṇa*, *manyu* and *arāti*.

493. *athā gavāṃ gopatir no bhavāti/* 10.108.3d. Saramā's reply: *nāham taṃ veda dabhyam dabhat saḥ/* 10.108.9a.

494. Cf. also 7.18.4c which says of Indra: "Every one told me that you alone are the guardian of cows" : *tvām in me gopatim viśva āha.*

If the *ari* was the *gopā*, and if *ari* also gave rise to the words *arya/ārya*, we must at least regard that at the stage that these words were formed, the *gopā* who was the *ari* was *the* characteristic tribal chief after whom the whole membership of the tribe came to be called the *ārya*-s, which must ultimately be regarded as meaning “those connected by the relationship to the *ari*”.

In the light of what was said above, we would very tentatively suggest that

- (1) *gṛhapati*
- (2) *viśpati*
- and (3) *ari*

are reflected in the RV as an ascending order of early tribal authorities. We would think of the *ari* as the patriarchal chief (or at least as a patriarchal chief) in a *jana* (= *jantu/kṛṣṭi*?). And, the community bound by his authority would be (in a usage already obsolete in the Veda) the *aryaman* : those connected by the *ari*-relationship.

(It is not our intention in this study to go into the details of the semantics of Rgvedic *aryaman*. We believe the above basic position is of sufficient help to accept Thieme’s version of the meaning of *aryaman*, with the changes that have to be made in the light of the difference it signifies.)

But, as we have pointed out, even within the RV period, we see this tribal order collapsing. For it is clear that *rājans* (= *sūris*) who are consecrated through the brahmanical ritual of investiture with *kṣatra*, are steadily replacing the *ari*-s. As is obvious, this represents a new social order rising above the tribal one, and, probably under the conscious tutorship of the *ṛṣi*-elite. A clear instance of the new set-up is the rise of the Pūru Trasadasyu, who is said to have “overspread the five tribes with his might,” as 4.38.10 declares.⁴⁹⁵ The collapse of the old order and the forces that precipitated that collapse, are, in our opinion, very largely responsible for the amazing obscuration of the sense and significance of Rgvedic *ari*.

In conclusion it must also be stated that perhaps neither the *ṛṣi*-elite nor the RV Samhītā should be regarded as typical products of the tribal order. It was the *ṛṣi*-elite that supported the emergence of the *sūri*-s to power. The RV is their manual, the brahmanic handbook supporting the emerging *kṣatric* power. The entire message seems to be hinted at in RV X. 124: “Agni abandons Father Asura and goes over to Indra. Rulership changes hands. The waters contemptuously stand apart from the fallen power, as do the people when they choose a *rājan*”.⁴⁹⁶ Thus the *ṛṣi*-s were probably not unaware of what was going on, and the significance of that they actively encouraged.

495. See n.86 above

496. See 10.124.8 in n. 160 and its translation above.

XII. SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESIS

It now remains for us to attempt to visualize the course of events that led to the strange assemblage of connotations round the word *ari* in the RV.

Our view throughout was that the word indicated a very old tribal institution : the patriarchal chief as the custodian/owner of the tribe's wealth. Both his authority, and his primary distinction from the youthful *sūri*-s, seem to have sprung from this position of the *ari*.

It appears that one of the main functions of the *ari* was to institute the tribe's ritual festivals and to offer the stakes for heroic youths (*sūri*-s) to win by valiant effort. In the context of such festivals the *ari* seems to have been functionally the equivalent of an adversary or opponent, since it appears that the offered stakes had to be won by sheer force, probably frustrating the resistance that the institutor placed against their removal. Our evidence suggests a complex of ritual practices associated with these events whose main participants appear to have been the *ari* and his ritual supporters on the one hand and the *sūri*-s and their ritual supporters on the other. The sociological function of such events may be surmised to have been the creation and sustenance of a militarily capable stratum of youth within the Aryan tribes.

We need not assume that *ari* in the context of these events has necessarily a *hostile* signification.

But there are other aspects - political and religious-cultural. We have stressed above the fact that the picture is complicated by (i) the almost consistent anti-*ari* attitude visible in the pro - Bharata/Srñjaya hymns, (ii) the cultural distinction drawn between the *ari* and the *sūri*-s - a distinction that associates the former with an attitude of laxity toward Indra worship, the Soma sacrifice and the patronage of Brahmanical *ṛṣi*-s and (iii) the occasional positive praise of the *ari* and the depiction of him as adhering to Vedic ritual practices.

Hence, as we have stressed again and again, the above simple explanation cannot be all that is needed to understand the meaning of *ari* in the RV.

So we had to carefully take into account the significance of the exuberant growth of Indraism in Vedic India on the one hand and the indications of the *ari*'s association with *Dasyus* and possibly thereby with agricultural rites and practices on the other.

One ventures to think that we have here some evidence of an Aryan leadership adopting an attitude of progressive realism and trying to settle down to a dialogue with earlier dwellers of the land, thus opening the door to a process of varied cultural changes embracing both the religious sphere and the economic.

The Indra Cult as Ideology : a Clue to Power Struggle in an Ancient Society

It appears that some such development deeply distressed the brahmanical ṛṣi-elite, and, under their influence, the sūri-s, who, in the militancy and exuberance of youth could more easily be persuaded toward a policy of destroying the Dasyus than toward one that called for a process of learning a new way of life from these people whom the ṛṣi-s had taught them to despise. It is but natural that such a policy would be most effective if it possessed what we would call an ideological, but what in our documents appears as a religious, backing. That ideological/religious backing is what we have called Indraism.

As far as we can see, the Bharata-Srñjayas were foremost among this militant anti-Dasyu element, or such militant sentiment originated amongst them. To put it another way, the Bharatas seem to have been a group led by ṛṣi-s and sūri-s with a staunchly Aryan consciousness and a matching 'Indralike' spirit, due to some peculiarities of their geographical location or historical circumstance.

Indraism, whose banner the Bharatas held aloft, should then be regarded as either a new adaptation of theology to suit a militant ethnic consciousness, or an aspect of Vedism which the more militant of the Aryans preferred to identify themselves with and raise above the other aspects of Vedic worship.

The practices of Indraism demanded of the sūri-s a ceaseless slaying of *vṛtra*-s as the price of their alliance with the divine *vṛtrahan*. It demanded of them also a lavish munificence to Brahman priests, in the likeness of the conduct of the celestial *maghavan* himself. In the ritual field it laid great stress on the Soma draught and the offerings of cooked *meat* and roasted grains.

Neither the violence of Indraism, nor its extravagant munificence (which in practice was an euphemism for waste), nor its ritual practices seem to have been attractive to the older *ari* leadership, to whom Indra at best was merely the god of war. This tribal leadership appears to us to have been heading toward a settled agricultural life - which apparently they could procure only via collaboration with the Dasyus. Thus it appears that the ṛṣi-s and the *ari* chiefs were at loggerheads over the supremely important question of how to deal with the Dasyus.

So the Aryan expansionism which the ṛṣi-s desired could be fostered not by fighting the Dasyus alone; it also *demanded a hostility toward entrenched Aryan authority*. In other words, circumstances forced the ṛṣi-s (or at least those ṛṣi-s whose views prevailed and are recorded in the documents extant) to encourage a revolutionary role for the sūri-s: to struggle against the elderly *ari* leadership for its reluctance to place the tribal wealth at their disposal to destroy Dasyu strength.

We believe that at this stage the ṛṣi-s openly took a stand against asurism. A notion such as the one of Agni abandoning "Father Asura" and going over to the side of the *deva* Indra (RV 10.124) should have emboldened the *sūri-s* to depart from the ways of the elderly *ari* leadership.

The anti-*asura* stand must reflect a decisive turning point in Vedic thinking, but one for which there must have been a slow gathering of momentum over a considerable time. For the *asura* concept must have been to the Aryans an alien concept of divinity which the high priests of early Vedism probably always regarded with suspicion. Thus for example it appeared to them to be associated with a differing "technology" :- whence wheel-turned pottery was indicated as an *āsura* artefact in contrast to handmade pottery, which was *daivika*; and the former was banned in orthodox ritual acts.⁴⁹⁷ Inherent in such notions lies an arrogant rejection of a culture which in a more sober mood might have been recognized to be superior to Aryan achievement, at least in a few given fields.

So it would seem that the *asura* concept was regarded as paving the way to economic and cultural practices that threatened the position of what was regarded as the genuine *deva* cult, its true practitioners and their accepted way of life. We believe that among such practices were agriculture and the settled, frugal life associated therewith. When it became clear that to tolerate the *asura* concept was to bless such cultural compromise, the ṛṣi-s made an attempt to call a definite halt to its spread.

Thus the anti-*ari* stand was radical in so far as Aryan expansionism was concerned, but retrogressive from the broader point of view of the assimilation of advanced techniques of production and of cultural changes associated therewith.

It appears that the climax of these developments was the *dāśarājña* war in which the ṛṣi-supported Bharatas confronted a "confederacy" of Dasyus and some Aryan groups, probably as the final result of a fairly long drawn out series of mutually hostile acts.

497. Cf. the observations of S.R.Das in his art. "The Mahābhārata and Indian Archaeology" in Sirkar, Bharata War and Puranic Genealogies, pp.51-85 : pp.73 ff.: Discussion of pottery of Rgvedic age - Aryans predominantly not users of wheel-turned pottery. In ritual, wooden or leather vessels were mostly used (p.75) "If pottery was ever used, it was certainly handmade. Even today handmade pottery only is used in orthodox Brahmanical ritualism.... We learn from the later texts that wheelmade pottery is to be associated with the Asuras, and as such cannot be used in the Vedic sacrifices ...". In a footnote, Das refers to a quotation in R. Mitra: Indo Aryans I, p.274: *āsuraṇa tu pātrena/yatra dadyāt tilodakam/ pitaras tatra nāśnanti/dāśa varṣāṇi pañca vā// kulālacakraḥṭitam/ āsuram mṛṇmayam smṛtam/ tad eva hastaghaṭitam/ sthālyādi daivikam bhavet//*

The Bharatas won the battle, but the others apparently won the war. For, strange as it may seem, at the end of this event, the glory of being acclaimed in the hymns belongs not to Bharata princes, but to those called the Pūrus and Kurus. And culturally, the ṛṣis appear to have survived not by the strength of obstinate orthodoxy, but by virtue of accommodation and vision.

Our interpretation of the relevant references makes us think that after depletion of Aryan strength in the internecine fighting of the *dāśarājña*, the Dasyus for once cherished the hope of dealing a death blow to the entire Aryan race in their land, and rose even against their erstwhile Aryan supporters in the war. At this supremely critical moment, the ṛṣi-s seem to have discarded their deep-seated antipathy to the *ari*-led groups. They rose to the occasion and forged Aryan unity in the face of this new Dasyu offensive on the basis of Indraism tempered by accommodation with Varuṇa worship, presenting the Pūru Trasadasyu ("Terror to the Dasyus") as the son of Indra (the *deva par excellence*) and Varuṇa (the asuric deity, if ever there was one), consecrating him as a supra-tribal *rājan* holding sway over "the five *kṛṣṭis*" or *janas*. By this consecratory act, the ṛṣis seem to have sanctioned a descendant of a tribe that was hostile to the Bharatas in a new ritual arrangement that heralded a break with the tribal chieftaincy pattern of the early Aryans. It reminds us of the theory of divine concession of power to Indra in the face of the threat from Vṛtra.

The *janas* were saved from defeat and they survived as Aryans, but by now they had already learned something of the superior non-Aryan economic and cultural practices.

Thus it appears that with the *dāśarājña*, tribal, political and cultural-religious practices among the Aryans underwent a sweeping change. From now on, the recognized way to authority was not tribal elderliness but investiture with *kṣatra* by brahmanical rites. In this way there probably came about the supersession of the *ari* by the *kṣatriyas*. To begin with, the qualification necessary for a *sūri* (= *rājan*) for investiture with *kṣatra* would have been proven capability in the military field in addition to birth in a family of wealth and power.⁴⁹⁸

The supersession of the *ari* by the *rājan* would not have been sudden. It is likely that at first the *rājan* was granted the authority to command the tribesmen during periods of military exigency, with the traditional tribal leadership resuming control in times of peace. The researches of Schlerath and also the evidence of the theory of concession of *kṣatra* seem to us to point in this direction.

498. One of the words used in the RV for the *sūri* is *sujāta* : nobly-born. Cf. e.g. 7.1.4 (describing the sacrificial altar) : *yatrā naraḥ samāsate sujātāḥ* and 7.1.15 : *sujā tāsaḥ pari caranti vīrāḥ*

In any case the *ari* would have remained, even after the advent of the *kṣatriyas*, as cattle-owning agricultural chiefs, for a considerable time. And of course some of them would have risen to power as *kṣatriyas* by virtue of their own might and strength. But by and large they would have constituted the leadership of a new, wealth-owning productive class, the *aryas*. Eventually, chiefly due to the residue of Brahmanical prejudices associated with the concept of *ari*, the title itself seems to have been replaced by that of *śreṣṭhin*,⁴⁹⁹ and the productive class known as the *vaiśyas*.

It is our belief that the various constituents of the hypothesis outlined above explain the *ari* tangle to a very great extent. They provide a satisfactory explanation of the various connotations and associations of the word such as the following:

- (1) the *ari* as the holder of wealth and sources of nourishment.
 - (2) the *ari* as the power from whom wealth is to be forcibly won by the *sūris*,
 - (3) the *ari* as the opponent of Bharatas and Sṛñjayas,
 - (4) the *ari* being associated with trends inimical to Indra and Soma cults, to Brahmanical culture and power; and his being associated with Asurism, and Dasyu and *yātu* cults,
- and (5) the *ari* as an occasional happy partner in practices favoured by the *ṛṣis*.

They also explain the reasons for

- (6) the disappearance of the primary and designative meaning of *ari*
- and (7) the Ārya - Dāsa collusion against the Bharatas in the War of Ten Kings (which hitherto remained a baffling phenomenon).
Our hypothesis does not also complicate
- (8) the problem of the derivation of the ethnic term *ārya* from the word *ari* (indubitable from such references as *ārīr viṣaḥ* - Aryan clans : R4 1.77.3, 1.96.3).

(On the other hand our hypothesis provides a cogent basis for that derivation).

And last, but not least,

- (9) Our hypothesis is generally in accord with the indigenous explanations of the meaning of *ari/arya*, offered by Yāska, Pāṇini and Mahīdhara.

Incidentally, our hypothesis also does not contradict the more valid aspects of Prof. Thieme's researches, notably those associated with the secondary meanings of *arya* and *aryaman*.

499. But even during the period of the Brāhmaṇa texts *śreyas* / *śreṣṭhin* did not exclusively mean "a rich Vaiśya" : see Rau, pp.32ff., 73ff. They were also applied to rich Brahmans and kings.

500. See nn.2, 6 and 15 above. Mahīdhara's gloss is : *arye* : *dhanasvāmini*, *vaiśye vā*.

CONCLUSION

We surmise then the development of the senses of *ari*, *arya*, *ārya*, *ārī* and *aryaman* to have been as follows :

A. *ari* : tribe's chief as holder of its wealth and institutor of contests, from whom wealth could be won by valiant effort.

arya : chieflike, noble, wealthy.

ārī/ārya: belonging to an *ari*, related to an *ari*, noble; (member) of the race whose tribal chiefs were *aris*.

aryaman: god who epitomizes the ideal qualities of an *ari*.

B. *ari* : holder of wealth who has grown averse to the Vedic concepts of its utilization and disposal, who has assimilated non-Vedic practices of increasing and hoarding wealth and thus has learned to accept (or tolerate) alien rites and beliefs.

arya : master, owner of wealth, vaiśya.

ari : unfriendly one, adversary, foe.

Thus the connotations of *ari* move from (i) "power to contend with" to (ii) "power to contend against".

APPENDIX I

The Āyus

Geldner, in notes to his translation of RV 1.31.5/11,1.104.4 suggests that Āyu was the word for a prominent Aryan stock as well as its ancestral patriarch, and that it often appears to be used with the same significance as the word Ārya. Commenting on 5.43.14 he says, however, that in this context the Āyus are Aryan priests, as also in 9.15.7 etc. etc.

In 1.31.11 Agni is the *prathama āyu*: the first *āyu*. This helps us understand the exact significance of Āyu. Agni is the first of priests, and the Āyus are priests. We can see that significance in most contexts of the RV where the word occurs. A few examples are:

1.60.3 :The Āyus, as *ṛtvijs*, have enkindled the fire.....

1.117.25: The Āyus have declared the ancient heroic deeds of the Aśvins.

1.130.6 :The Āyus have, "for sake of (gaining your) pleasure, fashioned this word for you".

1.131.6 :The Āyus have distinguished Indra with eulogies (*stoma*).

2.20.4 :The new Āyu who engages in *brahma* activity (i.e. specifically *religious* work). (New, as opposed to Agni, who is the first Āyu).

9.15.7,57.3,63.17,64.23 : Āyus purify (strain) Soma.

It is important to note that in several instances, the authors of hymns refer to themselves as Āyus (Cf. e.g., 1.130.6: *imāṃ vācam āyavo atakṣan*; 2.31.7: *etā vacāṃsi atakṣann āyavaḥ*; 8.3.16: *stomebhir mahayanta āyavaḥ...priyamedhāsaḥ*).

Where the *kavyatā* of Āyu is referred to, as in 1.96.2, Āyu obviously is regarded as *kavi* which again invites comparison with the priestly epithet of Agni, as in 4.2.12: *kaviṃ śaśāsuḥ kavayo adabdhāḥ*: "the wise ones (the *kavis*) instructed the *kavi*, being undeceived" or 1.1.5 : *agnir hotā kavikratuḥ*.

APPENDIX II

Dāsas and Dasyus

An examination of the total R̥gvedic evidence on the Dāsas and Dasyus shows that-

- (i) the word *dāsa* can convey an ethnic sense (cf., e.g., such usages as *dāsam varṇam*, *dāsīr viśaḥ* : 2.11.4, 2.12.4, 4.28.4, 6.25.2 etc.),
- (ii) a *dāsa* could also be called a *dasyu* at the same time (cf. e.g., Śuṣṇa at 7.19.2 and 8.6.14, Śambara at 4.30.14 and 1.59.6, Pipru at 8.32.2 and 1.51.5),
- (iii) *dasyu* conveys associations of cult-hostility (cf. the use of such adjectives as *avrata*, *aśraddha*, *akratu*, *ayajyu*, *adevayu*, *akarma*, *amantu*, *anyavrata* to qualify Dasyus as in 1.175.3,4.16.9, 7.6.3, 8.70.11, 10.22.8 etc.)
- (iv) the attested instances link *dāsa* with concepts of power, authority etc. (cf. *dāsapatnīḥ puraḥ/āpaḥ*, *dāsasya ojaḥ*, *dāsasya.. vadham* -- 3.12.6, 1.32.11, 8.40.6, 10.102.3 etc.)

If one were to judge from the Ṛgvedic evidence alone, one must say that *dasyu* is the term that is used to denote non-Aryans in general, perhaps any one distinguishable from the Aryans on account of religious differences; in distinction to that *dāsa* is a word that seems to denote a specific ethnic group that held authority in the area to which the Indo-Aryans migrated.

“The great difference between the Dasyus and the Aryans was their religion ... As compared with the Dāsas, they are less distinctively a people...” (Macdonell and Keith: Vedic Index, under Dasyu).

Part I, Footnotes. Please note the following corrections.

(11) 2.23. 12-15. (16) 1.184. 1; 4.4.6; 6.13.5/6. (65) viii. 4.1/2. (91) Sāyana: Werde. (110) *ubbhaye*. (146) 9.99.3. (166) *tvā purūravo*. (168) *śuṣṇam*. (230) 2.26.1 for 1.103.6. (237) *tubhyam; viśvā*. (238) *vṛtrāya*; 8.12.22/25. (250) *dhāmahe*. (256) *sūryasya*. (270) 3.55.7/8. (285) *tīṛtsān*. (288) 1.122.14; -*osrās*. (310) 1.81.9. (315) *kī revantam; nadanum*. (316) reference. (331) 7.19.11; *sa* for *as*. (334) *end* for *and*.

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This monograph was prepared in 1972-73 and is presented here in substantially the same form. The author wishes to express his deep appreciation to the Center for the Study of World Religions of Harvard University, U. S. A., its then Director, Prof. Wilfred Cantwell Smith and present Director, Prof. John B. Carman for the warm hospitality and innumerable facilities offered to him, including the grant of a Visiting Scholarship at the Center, which enabled him to pursue his research and prepare the present monograph.