Áhir budhníyaḥ and *bhūmidundubhiḥ*:
The serpent of the deep and the earth-drum.
A hypothesis of etymological and/or
cultural connections

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Abstract: Paola Maria Rossi. *Áhir budhníyaḥ and bhūmidundubhiḥ: The serpent of the deep and the earth-drum. A hypothesis of etymological and/or cultural connections*. The Poznań Society for the Advancement of Arts and Sciences, PL ISSN 0079-4740, pp. 107-131

This article highlights how the process of semantic extension applied to the OIA onomatopoeic noun *dundubhí*, usually meant as "drum", is the token of significant cultural changes: especially within ritual performances, such as the *mahāvrata* rite, gradually canonised in the Brahmanical ritualism, it turns out to be a device to promote a new model of sovereignty, related to the establishment of the so-called Kuru-Pañcāla realm.

Such a cultural transformation, carried out in the Middle and Late Vedic period in northern India, entailed that ancient Indo-European tribal cultural traits were intermingled with cultural substrate/adstrate elements: the term *dundubhí* is "etymologically" connected to the Proto-Muṇḍa **ḍub-/*dum-* "to be swollen, roundish", the PAA **duby-/*dub-* "tail, buttock, animal limbs", and Middle Iranian isoglosses meaning "tail, extremities, fat-tailed animals". Moreover, as *bhūmidundubhi* "earth-drum" beaten on the border of the ritual area in the *mahāvrata* rite, representing earthly sonority and the "mighty bellowing" of cattle, it is associated with the IIr myth of *valá/vará*, the "enclosure", in which the treasure/cattle "endowed with rock as foundation" (*ádri-budhna*, ṚV 10.108.7ab), is hidden. The related lexicon and imagery recall mythical archetypes, such as the Serpent of the Bottom (OIA *áhir budhníyaḥ,* Gr *Pythô ophis*) or primordial Monster of the Deep (Gr *Typhôn/Typhôeus*), and BMAC interferences are also embedded. However, although linguistic evidence confirms the etymological relationship between the OIA *budh-ná* and the Greek *pythmēn*, the case of the Greek *Typhôn/Typhôeus* seems more uncertain: the IE reconstruction **dʰubʰ-/*dʰub-* "depths" is considered a secondary outcome, and cannot be convincingly applied to the term *dundubhí*, because of its onomatopoeic nature. Nonetheless, as an outcome of linguistic and cultural interferences, "Sanskritised" within the ritualism, which supported the paradigm of the Kuru-Pañcāla sovereignty, the term *dundubhí* conveys the double "redundant" value of deep/high sonority and swollen/roundish abundant prosperity, to which the figure of Bṛhaspati is correspondent: in ṚV 10.64.4 he is defined as the *kaví tuvīrávān* "poet endowed with powerful bellowing", which announces prosperity, spreading it loftily, throughout the cosmos.

Keywords: onomatopoeia – semantisation – Sanskritisation – sovereignty – sonority – ritualism – *vala*-myth

1. Introduction

This article[1] aims to identify the possible semantic interpretations of an OIA ono-matopoeic noun such as *dundubhí*, usually meant as "drum". As is well known, ono-matopoeic nouns constitute a lexical category based on the iconicity resulting from the mimetic activity of speakers, and are frequently formed by the reduplication of syllables, through which mere sounds are re-doubled and reproduced vocally.[2] Thus, the high sym-bolical power conferred on them by the speakers themselves can significantly condition their conventional meaning.[3] In fact, the semantisation of non-verbal sound is mostly conceived of as a magic means to act "sympathetically" on reality, especially when it is perceived as "Otherness": it is to actually be controlled and domesticated through its "mimetic denomination". Names of animals – especially birds – or natural phenomena are frequently expressed by onomatopoeic words,[4] and by means of sound-mimicking nouns they are turned into propitious beings, linguistically integrated into the humanised sphere. The process of "humanisation" implies a form of grammaticalisation of such magic "sound sequences". It chiefly relies on linguistic analogical processes and cultur-al symbolical correspondences, which overcharge these sequences with diverse and man-ifold semantic values, so that etymological reconstruction can be arduous or well-nigh impossible.

However, such semantic extensions can be the tokens of significant cultural changes: the conventional attribution of new meanings to sounding sequences must comply with the specific requirement of conveying new cultural values.[5] In this case, the reference to a concrete object by a "mimetic" sounding sequence, its grammaticalisation as the noun *dundubhí,* and its semantisation as "drum" or musical instrument, though extensible to cosmos itself within ritual performances – gradually canonised in the Brahmanical ritu-alism – turn out to be devices to promote a new model of sovereignty: semantic exten-sion corresponds to a sort of "extension of political dominance". This cultural transfor-mation occurred over the span of centuries, during the so-called Middle and Late Vedic periods (1100-500 BCE ca.), in northern India, in relation to the establishment of the so-called Kuru-Pañcāla realm: it was a form of "dynastic chiefdom", based on ancient tribal dynamics, presumably reminiscent of semi-nomadic Indo-European culture, but con-trolled by a centralised power, represented by the dominant Kuru tribe earlier and the

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[2] As to the Sanskrit onomatopoeic terms, cf. Hoffmann (1975); as to Indo-Aryan and Dravidian onomatopoeias, cf. Emeneau (1969).

[3] As to the so-called direct onomatopoeia and associative onomatopoeia, cf. e.g. Bredin (1996) and Sharp-Warren (1994).

[4] Cf. Wackernagel (1957: 8-9).

[5] As to onomatopoeia as linguistic phenomena between onomasiology and semasiology, cf. e.g. Blank (2003).

Kuru-Pañcāla confederation later. In this context, kingship assumed a cosmic and transcendent value, adapting ancient Indo-European tribal customs to a more "ecumenical" and culturally complex society.[6]

The attestation of the OIA term *dundubhí* is to be inserted in such a Vedic framework:[7] its onomatopoeic nature, stressed by the duplication of the first syllable with a nasal infix, was combined with a process of semantisation, which implied the overlapping of the substrate/adstrate lexicon (Proto-Muṇḍa *ḍub/*dum- "to be swollen, roundish", and PAA *ḍuby-/*ḍub "tail, buttock, animal limbs") and Iranian dialect outcomes (< *dumb[(h)] "tail, extremities, fat-tailed animals"). Moreover, it is associated with the IIr myth of *valá/vará,* a duplicate of the *vṛtra*-myth, according to which cattle/dawns, enclosed in a cave as a treasure "endowed with rock as foundation" (*ádri-budhna*, ṚV 10.108.7ab), are released thanks to "sounding" weapons. The related lexicon and imagery recall mythical archetypes, such as the Serpent of the Bottom (OIA *áhir budhníyaḥ*, Gr *Pythô ophis*) or primordial Monster of the Deep (Gr *Typhôn/Typhôeus*). However, in the Vedic culture, *dundubhí*, as a concrete object – "drum" or musical instrument – is the characterising element of the *mahāvrata* rite, the festival of the winter solstice, associated with the leadership of the Kurus:[8] it is able to extend sonority from the depths of the earth to the heights of heaven, so representing the new cosmic sovereignty, able to guarantee cosmic wealth and prosperity. Therefore, this term seems to embody the cultural transformation process carried out in the Middle and Late Vedic period in northern India: ancient Indo-European tribal cultural traits are intermingled with cultural substrate/adstrate elements (Proto-Muṇḍa, Near Eastern, BMAC – Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex), and, re-elaborated, are "ritualised", contributing to legitimising the new model of sovereignty.

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[6] Cf. Proferes (2007).

[7] A survey of its occurrences showed that it belongs to the so-called post-Ṛgvedic textual layer of the Vedic *corpus* (Witzel 1995: 2-6). There are only four Ṛgvedic quotations: three of these are found in the last three stanzas (29-31) of hymn 6.47 and they are also mentioned in PS 15.11.9-10; 15.12.1, which can be considered as textual variants of ŚS 6.126.1-3, TS 4.6.6.6-7, MS III 16, 3, and VSM 29.55-57; the fourth occurrence is in ṚV 1.28.5. In addition, as far as the Yajurvedic texts are concerned, it is quoted in TS 4.5.7.1 ≈ KS 17.14 ≈ MS II 9,7, and ≈ VSM 16.35 in the *Śatarudriya* section; in TS 6.1.4.1 ≈ KS 23.4-5 ≈ MS III 6, 8-10 ≈ ŚBM 5. 1. 5. 6-11; 13 on occasion of the *vājapeya* ritual; in KS 36.15, and TB 2.7.7.1 for the *rājasūya* ritual, corresponding to the stanzas of ŚS 6.38 and PS 2.18. Moreover, it occurs in a formulaic phrase of TB 3.4.1.13, and is also mentioned with variants in VSM 30.19 for the *puruṣamedha*, and in KS 34.5, TS 6.1.4.1 and 7.5.9.2-3, TB 1.3.6.2-3 and 1.3.6.9, AĀ 5.1.5 as well as in the Sāmavedic repertoire of PB 5.5.18-21 and JB 2.404, in the sections concerning the *mahāvrata* rite. Finally, two hymns (ŚS 5.20 ≈ PS 9.27, and 5.21) are completely dedicated to it in the Atharvavedic Śaunaka recension and, in addition, it is mentioned in several single stanzas such as ŚS 5.31.7, ŚS 12.1.41, as well as in ŚS 20.135.1, ŚS 20.132.9 = ṚVKh 5.15.17, PS 20.5.8 = ṚVKh 2.2.5. The Ṛgvedic text is mentioned after Van Nooten & Holland's edition (1994); for its translation Jamison & Brereton edition has been quoted. As far as the other texts are concerned, the translation is mine unless otherwise stated, and their edition is specified whenever they are quoted.

[8] Cf. Witzel (1995: 17-18).

2. *Dundubhí* between onomasiological and semasiological remarks

In all its Vedic occurrences the term *dundubhí* is to be interpreted as "war-drum", the musical instrument "soundly" representing heroic deeds.[9] In his study of Proto-Muṇḍa words in Sanskrit (1948: 84-87), Kuiper already interpreted the term *dundubhí* as an onomatopoeic noun. Along with other Sanskrit terms meaning "drum" (i.e. *diṇḍima*, *āḍambara*), and the Pāli *dudrabhi,* he relates *dundubhí* to the Muṇḍa root *ḍa-ba-*, "to be swollen, to be roundish", which is widespread in the modern Muṇḍa languages, and also generally referred to the semantic field of music and dancing. The term *dundubhí* is thus seen as an example of a loanword from the Proto-Muṇḍa linguistic context, with which the Aryan culture came into contact: it can be considered a token of a cultural hybridisation, called "Aryanization" by Kuiper (1991).

Likewise Witzel (1999: 34-36) maintains that the term *dundubhí* belongs to substrate languages, the so-called Indus or Para-Muṇḍa substrate, which spread from Panjab to the Ganges valley: it must be consequently involved in the process of "Sanskritisation", that is a process of linguistic standardising, with the formation of a sort of *lingua franca* – relying on IA dialects, Para-Muṇḍa substrate and Dravidian elements – which occurred between the Middle and the Later Vedic period, due to the cultural reform promoted by the Kuru-Pañcāla sovereignty. In fact, despite its Proto-Muṇḍa or Para-Muṇḍa origin, the term *dundubhí*, as mentioned in the Vedic texts, is used without retroflexes, and treated as a derivative of a supposed root *dubh-/*dum-:[10] grammatically speaking, the term *dundubhí* is prevalently employed correctly as a masculine -*i* stem noun, but not etymologically connected to the OIA languages, as far as Kuiper's analysis is concerned. It seems to be a sort of "artificial" linguistic outcome, due to textual "revision", implied in the process of Brahmanisation developed by the Kuru-Pañcālas.[11]

In fact, as an onomatopoeic noun, *dundubhí* cannot derive from a linguistic root as such, since it is the redoubling of the sound itself; however, as the linguistic outcome of a textual canonisation, combined with a complex interaction between ritualism and political legitimation, it is involved in a process of grammatical regularisation and semantic extension conforming with the cultural changes.

It is reasonable to think that it was morphologised as a stem *dundu-*, with a suffix *-*bʰi*, marking, together with the doublet *-*bʰo*, onomatopoeic nouns, such as musical instruments (e.g. Lat *tuba*, OHG *trumpa*).[12] Nonetheless, *dundubhí* is actually the only item with the suffix *-*bʰi* mentioned among the manifold -*i* stems included in the list of onomatopoeic terms quoted by Wackernagel (1957: 7-9) and Hoffmann (1975). On the

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[9] Cf. Rossi (2014).

[10] According to Kuiper (1991: 63; 33; 37) the foreign sonant is "naturalised" as an aspirate in Sanskrit loanwords and the interchange between / bh / and / m / is a very common phenomenon, as well as the interchange between alveolar and dental, despite the manifold possible interpretations.

[11] Cf. Witzel (1995).

[12] Cf. Pisani (1950-1952).

other hand, *dundubhí* is not a perfect example of the reduplication of sounds, such as Skt *diṇḍima* "drum".

Furthermore, in Sanskrit epic literature we find the term *ḍuṇḍubha*, denoting "a certain kind of non-venomous water-snake" (salamander, lizard), with variants (*duṇḍubhi, dundubhi, ḍiṇḍibha*).[13] Interpreted as zoonyms formed with the common suffix *-bʰo*, applied to the same stem *ḍuṇḍu-/dundu-*,[14] the onomatopoeic value is not so evident in this case, unless a lizard might produce a dull sound equivalent to a "dundu". Finally, according to Hoffmann, a later denominative form *dundumāyita* is attested, though not the noun *dunduma-*.

Thus, the multiple stems *dundubh-/dundum-* and *ḍiṇḍibh-/ḍiṇḍim-* can be considered as allotropes, and the allophones / *bh* / and / *m* /, as well as / *ḍ* / and / *d* /, seem to confirm Kuiper's interpretation. Nevertheless, the relationship between the term *dundubhí* and the Proto-Muṇḍa root *-ḍub-* maintained by Kuiper may not only be due to the sounding effect as such, but also to other characteristics of the object *drum* and the animal *water-snake*, analogically suggested by other derivatives of the same root. For instance, Kuiper points out that the lexicon related to fertility (1948: 23-27) – the female pregnant condition, opulence, etc. – is connected to the Proto-Muṇḍa root *-ḍub-*. One of the best-known examples is the term *udumbára/uḍumbára*, the *Ficus glomerata* or water-melon, constructed with the Proto-Muṇḍa prefix *u-*. Its roundish red fruits, filled with seeds and juice, are considered a symbol of fertility in the whole Indian tradition, starting from the Brahmanical texts themselves.[15] It is possible that the roundish and hollow shape of the musical instruments recalls the roundish shape and the cavity of the fruit-vessels, or that even the thud and dull sound heard by beating the ripe fruits can be an "echo" of the sound of beaten instruments; but, in any case, the "sounding effects" of the *udumbára/uḍumbára* are not explicitly referred to in the ritual texts.[16] On the other hand, the semantic field of fecundity, connected to the Proto-Muṇḍa root and well-embodied in the *udumbára* fruits, could be "metonymically" more appropriate for a water-snake.

Moreover, in Mayrhofer (1992: I. 217) another possible etymology is quoted: it could be a MIA outcome of *-ṛdū-bára-* "feuchte Kraft habend", that is endowed with "moistening" strength, focused on its "juicy/sapping" quality, where *bára* is interpreted as the Vedic dialect variant of *bala*. In actual fact, the variant *udumbalá*, with the shifting of the accent due to the dual form, occurs in ṚV 10.14.12,[17] whereas *udumbála* is mentioned

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[13] Cf. Kuiper (1948: 68-70).

[14] Cf. Wackernagel (1954: 746-47): e.g. *kukku-bha* "wild cock" is an onomatopoeic noun.

[15] Cf. Minkowski (1989); *udumbára* is identified as the tree of Prajāpati (e.g. KS 6.1), the source of nourishing strength (*ūrj*), and used in manifold ways in different rituals, especially for providing the ritual tools (e.g. vessels, kindling sticks, etc.).

[16] Although in the ancillary literature the "lute" *vīṇā* is said to be played with an *audumbara* stick (e.g. ĀpŚS 21.17.8), *dundubhi*, connected to *vanaspati*, is made of wood, but it is not specified whether it is *audumbara* or not.

[17] Also in ŚS 18. 2.13 ≈ PS 10.9.10 *udumbará* ≈ TĀ 6.3.2 *ulumbalá*.

in ŚS 8.6.17 = PS 16.80.8 (K *adaraṃsulam*), used in the singular form:[18] the former connotes the two dogs who are Yama's messengers,[19] the latter seems to refer to a category of demoniacal beings, dangerous for the embryo. It has been interpreted as "reddish", alluding to the copper-red colour of the *udumbára* fruits, but already Kuiper (1948: 25-26) had his doubts about this explication, preferring the meaning of "fat, obese", associated with the shape of the same fruits, and implied by the Proto-Muṇḍa cognate root *ḍub-*. However, Bailey (1979: 161) proposes connecting *udumbalá* to an IE root *dumb(h)-*, reconstructed on the basis of an Iranian and Nuristani isogloss concerning the semantic range from "penis" to "tail, fat-tailed animals", and "extremities" in general:[20] YAv *duma* ("penis"), MiP *dwm(b)Z*, Parth *δum(b)*, Sogd *δwm(ph)*, Khot *dumaa*, Bal *dumb(ak)*, P *dum*, Os *dumäg*, Kati *dəmŕei,* Tregami *dumuṭ*; maybe also YAv *dumna* "hand (?)" (*dumbna-*).

In this sense, the term *ḍuṇḍubha* can be a local variant with retroflexes, denoting a sort of animal that is shaped like a rounded tail, such as a water-snake. In addition, a root *duby-/*dub-* with the primary meaning of "tail, neck"/"tail, buttocks" is reconstructed in the Elamite-Afro-Asiatic comparisons presented by Blažek (1999): thus, the Iranian isogloss could also have been influenced by linguistic contacts in the Southern Iranian area, where the Elamite realm flourished in the 3rd-2nd millennium BC. Moreover, the so-called Para-Muṇḍa culture defined by Witzel implied not only contacts with Proto-Muṇḍa languages and the Near Eastern civilisation, but also connections with the BMAC culture, originally a South-Central Asian Bronze age culture (2400-1600 BCE).[21] It could therefore be assumed that the Proto-Muṇḍa roots *ḍub-/*dum-* and PAA *duby-/*dub-,* which convey analogous semantic values (round and swollen shapes/roundish animal limbs) at the substrate and adstrate layers, have been integrated into the OIA cultural system, probably through dialect variants derived from IE *dumb(h)-* "extremities, fat-tailed animals", also with sexual connotations, referred to animals thriving vigorously,[22] mostly attested in the Middle Iranian dialects.

In this perspective, the Vedic textual variants *udumbalá/udumbála/udumbará/ulumbalá* can allude to both the substrate values such as the roundish shape of the *udumbara*-fruits,[23] and the adstrate values such as roundish animal limbs, combined with the OIA value of

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[18] Cf. Witzel (1983).

[19] ṚV 10.14.12: *urūṇasā́v asutṛ́pā udumbalaú yamásya dūtaú carato jánām* ánu | *tā́v asmábhyaṃ dṛśáye sū́riyāya púnar dātām* ásum *adyéhá bhadrám* || 12 || "The two broad-nosed, reddish-brown messengers of Yama, stealers of lives, pursue the peoples. Let these two here today grant a fortunate life again to us, to see the sun".

[20] A probable loan *dumba-ka* is quoted in the *Bhāvaprakāśa*, a Sanskrit work dating to the 14th CE; also Germanic cognates are attested (e.g. OHG *zumpfo*, < *tump-a*). Cf. Bartholomae (1904), Pokorny (1959), and Blažek-Hegedüs (2012: 56).

[21] Cf. Witzel (2003: 25-48).

[22] It is worth noting that Afro-Asiatic *d and *b should correspond to IE *dh and *bh (e.g. Blažek 2012): in this case it could be assumed that PAA *dub- is the correspondent of IE *dʰubʰ-. The same PAA root with the variant *dib- could mean "rain" (Blažek 1999: 61).

[23] The textual variant *ulumbalá* (TĀ 6.3.2) is supposed by Whitney (1905: II. 835) to be an alternative form of *uḷumbalá*, and therefore equivalent to *uḍumbará*.

"strength, vigour", as suggested by the later Sāyaṇa"s Ṛgvedic gloss *urubala*, meant as *vistīrṇabala*, "extended strength". Nonetheless, a variant like *ulumbalá* can suggest a homophonic association with the onomatopoeic adjective *ulūlu* "howling, wailing", constructed by reduplication of the syllable **ul-* (Lat *ululare*, Gr ὀλολύζω "to howl, to wail"). Quoted in ChUp 3.19.3 combined with the term *ghoṣa*, it refers to the secret equivalence *brahman-āditya* "sun": *taṃ* [*ādityaṃ*] *jāyamānaṃ ghoṣā ulūlavo 'nūdatiṣṭhan* "as it [the sun] was born, howling shouts rose up". In actual fact, the motif of "seeing the sun" is also mentioned in the Ṛgvedic stanza and, according to Kuiper (1960: 235), the new rising sun in the *mahāvrata* rite is celebrated with cries of joy and jubilant shouts. Lastly, the variant *ululí* "howling" is mentioned in ŚS 3.19.6c as the shouts (*ghóṣā ululáyaḥ*) of the warrior Maruts, Indra's companions in the raids for booty, the mythological representation of the *vrātya*s.[24] In this sense, the Brahmanical "revisors" of the Taittirīya school, notoriously belonging to the Pañcāla sphere, would have applied a dialectal hyper-characterisation (/ *l* / < both / *ḷ* / and / *r* /)[25] to the variant *ulumbala*, also analogically referring to an **ulu-m-bala-*, meaning "endowed with *howling* strength". Although *uru/ulu* can be considered as allophones of the same adjective *urú* "wide, broad" (< PIE **h₁urH-u*), it can refer to not only the shape of ritual objects, but also sonority: the sounds "far-extend, spread broadly".[26] A sort of complementarity between what is "far-extended" visibly and what is "far-extended" audibly is already implied in some Ṛgvedic occurrences of the adjective (e.g. ṚV 3.57.5; 5.1.12).

It is evident that all these interpretations are the result of a process of linguistic "regulation" of textual material, whose related original cultural context is elusive and/or must be re-semantised for new speakers and new cultural contexts. In this web of overlapping linguistic and cultural values, the grammaticalisation and semantisation of onomatopoeic nouns is to be inserted: Proto-Muṇḍa **ḍub-*/**ḍum-* "to be swollen, roundish", PAA **dub-* "tail, buttock, animal limbs", and Old and Middle Iranian dialect variants meaning "tail, extremities" have contributed to turning the mimetic redoubling of sounds into a concrete object: *dundubhí* as musical instrument. In this sense, semantic values of sonority and prosperity are metaphorically intermingled.

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[24] As to the relationship between dogs and *vrātya*s, cf. Falk (1986: 18-19).

[25] Cf. Witzel (1990: 35; 39-41).

[26] A similar phonetic phenomenon, but reversed, occurs in AB 2.7 (Keith 1920: 139; text after Martínez García's edition (2012) in http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/): here, the hapax *úrūka* equivalent to *úlūka* "howl" is mentioned, with the rhoticism of / *l* /: in this passage the "howling" bird denoted by the rhoticised name *urūka* corresponds to *ravitar* 'the roarer, bellower', from the root *ravⁱ-* "to roar, to bellow". Although the bird-noun *úlūka* "owl" could be etymologically interpreted as both an onomatopoeic name connected with the same onomatopoeic adjective *ulūlu* "howling" mentioned above, and also as a compound from **uru-Hka-*, "endowed with a large face" (Thieme 1974: 299), this passage attests that some phonetic outcomes (*uru/ulu*) can be influenced by the pseudo-etymological interpretations of the Brahmanical "revisors", who in this case consider the syllable *rū* of *urūka* comparable with the root *ravⁱ-/ ru-*.

3. The ritual *dundubhí* and the mythical "foundation"-*budhná*

The process of semantisation of the onomatopoeic term *dundubhí* is accomplished through ritualisation: mentioned in rituals eminently connected to the *kṣatriya* sphere, it plays a key role especially in the winter solstice rite or *mahāvrata*.[27] Interpreted as evidence of the so-called *vrātya* culture,[28] it entails both agonistic performances evoking warrior contests and also numerous sexual references, which play their part in turning it into a fertility ritual for magically securing prosperity (Jamison 1996: 96-98). On this occasion, musical instruments are played, namely the drum-*dundubhí*: they are common drums, beaten at the corners of the sacred area, which fill the middle space between earth and heaven with their "voices"; moreover, an earth-drum or *bhūmidundubhi* is beaten on the border of the ritual area, representing earthly sonority.

For example, in JB 2.404 and PB 5.5.18-20, it is specified:

athaitā vācaḥ pravadanti [...] *antarikṣe dundubhayo vitatā vadanty adhikumbhāḥ paryāyanti etā vācaḥ pravadanti sarvasyai vāco 'varuddhyai kṛtsnāyai vācaḥ kṛtsnāṃ*
vācam avaruṇadhāmahā iti tad yad bhūmidundubhir ārṣabheṇa carmaṇābhivihito vadati par-
amā vā ṛṣabho vāk paramasyā eva vāco 'varuddhyā antarikṣe dundubhayo vitatā vadanty
yaivāntarikṣe vāk tām eva tenāvarundhate (JB 2.404).[29]
"Then they raise these voices [...]: the drums, spread in the middle space, raise the voice. The (maids) with the water-pots go around. They raise these voices: for all the obtainment of the voice, for the complete (obtainment) of the voice, so (it is said): 'we will obtain the whole voice'. The bull is the highest voice, inasmuch as the earth-drum, covered all around by a bull's hide, raises the voice. Indeed, for the obtainment of the highest voice the drums, spread in the middle space, raise the voice: by means of this they obtain the voice which is in the middle space."

sarvāsu sraktiṣu dundubhayo vadanti yā vanaspatiṣu vāk tām eva taj jayanti | 18 |
bhūmidundubhir bhavati yā pṛthivyāṃ vāk tām eva taj jayanti | 19 |
sarvā vāco vadanti yeṣu lokeṣu vāk tām eva taj jayanti | 20 | (PB 5.5.18-20)[30]
"At all the corners (of the altar) the drums raise the voice; they thereby conquer that [voice] which is the voice in the trees. There is the earth-drum: they thereby conquer that [voice] which is the voice in the earth. All the voices rise; they thereby conquer that [voice] which is the voice in the worlds."

3.1. *dundubhí*: ritual and mythical sonority

Sonority is the main trait of the *mahāvrata* day: in these passages the plural *vācaḥ* refers to loud sounds, even non-articulated voices, similar to jubilant cries or animal

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[27] About the *mahāvrata* rite, cf. Hauer (1927: 246-96); Rolland (1972); Parpola (1999); Witzel (2005).

[28] Cf. Hauer (1927: 246ff.); more cautiously Heesterman (1962: 10).

[29] Text after Caland's edition (1919).

[30] Text after Kümmel-Kobayashi-Griffith's edition (2005) in http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/.

noises. However, here a sort of cosmic taxonomy of sonority is realised based on the root *vad-* "to raise one's voice, to speak, to talk", which preludes to the definition of *vāc* as "Sacred Speech" *par excellence*, belonging to the Brahmanical tradition. In the Ṛgvedic collection the root *vad-* characterises each propitious vocal expression, ranging from the cries of birds (ṚV 2.43) to the rhythmical noises of the soma-pressing stones (e.g. ṚV 5.37.2c), right up to ritually connoted speech (e.g. ṚV 1.40.5b *mántra*, ṚV 9.113.6b *chandasyā̀ vā́c*). Finally it especially denotes human speech, inasmuch as it can be "heard" and, therefore, the so-called IE **ḱleu̯os-* (Skt śrávas) "glory, fame" can be recognised on the occasion of the public distribution of the booty-*vidátha*.[31] This tribal connotation is highlighted by the Ṛgvedic refrain *bṛhád vadema vidáthe suvī́rāḥ* "may we speak loftily on occasion of the distribution of booty, [we who are] in possession of good warriors/heroes", repeated for instance at the end of almost all of the hymns of the second Ṛgvedic book. The "heroic status" is founded on the publicly "voiced" proclamation, that is on the "raising a *lofty/high* voice" (*bṛhád vad-*), a sort of equivalent "extension" of the amount of the booty and, therefore, of warrior strength itself.[32] The process of "Brahmanisation" is applied to this tribal warrior context[33] and is achieved through the musical instruments, which gather all the voices together and "raise" (*pra-vadanti*) a complete voice, which is amplified and spread up to heaven, as a cosmic voice.

Such a ritual sonority corresponds to the mythological motif of the "sounding" weapons employed by the hero to defeat enemies and capture wealthy booty: in fact, as a rite of re-foundation of the New Year, the *mahāvrata* must be combined with the mythological theme of the release of the sun – the dawns/cows – hidden in the caves/earth, depicted as one of the heroic deeds of the warrior god Indra. According to Witzel (2005), this is the well-known *vala*-myth, even though it is not directly mentioned in the ritualistic textual *repertoire*.[34] A duplicate of the *vṛtra*-myth, *valá* in the Ṛgvedic collection denotes both the rival demon itself and the place in which it encloses the cows/Dawns, a sort of fortified abode in the mountains – also associated with the *dāsa*s – a rocky place, often related to darkness and death. Indra smashes (*han-*) the demon, splitting (*bhid-*) and breaking (*ruj-*) the cave/rocks with his *vajra*.

It is well known that the OIA *vala*-myth can be traced back to the IIr culture, since the term *valá* corresponds etymologically to YAv *vara* "artificial cave", abode of Yima, < Av *var-* "to cover". Moreover, as a dialect variant of OIA **varā́-*, it is a derivative of the root *var-/vṛ-* "to cover, to stop", from which the other OIA mythical figure, *vṛ-tra*, "the obstacle, the resistance" is also derived.[35] The mythological theme of the netherworld, suggested by both the Avestan representation of Yima's abode, and Varuṇa's "stone house"

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[31] Cf. Thieme (1949: 35-49); Kuiper (1974: 129-132).

[32] As to Toporov's interpretation of this formula as a subliminal anagram inserted in the poetry of IE **ḱleu̯os-* society, cf. Watkins (1995: 114).

[33] As to the *vidátha* as component of the *mahāvrata*, cf. Witzel (1995: 11).

[34] As to the reconstruction of the *vala*-myth and its relationship with the New Year, cf. Schmidt (1968), especially 180 and 191.

[35] Cf. Lubotsky (2000).

(*harmiyá*),[36] seems to refer to a more widespread IE mythologem, albeit based on the heteroclite roots *$\underline{u}$er-* "to protect"/*$\underline{u}$el-* "to close, to enclose", associated with e.g. the Baltic *Vels*, *Vielona,* the Slavic *Velesû/Volosû*, and Greek *Triptolemos* (**Triptelumos*).[37] In addition, according to Witzel (2008; 2005), both the OIA *vṛtra*-myth and *vala*-myth derive from a re-elaboration of mythical archetypes associated with the daily and yearly course of the sun, namely the slaying of the dragon and the release of the cows on behalf of the Cowherd.[38] The former corresponds to the well-known PIE mythologeme HERO SLAY (*$g^{uh}en$-*) SERPENT (*$h_3ég^{uh}i$-m*),[39] while the latter is widespread not only in IE cultures, but also in Near and Far Eastern civilisations.[40] The IIr versions must have been elaborated under the influence of the BMAC, but the Near Eastern civilisations, especially the Elamite one, certainly also played their part.[41]

However, in the Ṛgvedic version of the myth, Indra, together with the Maruts, is supported by Bṛhaspati, the "Lord of formulation", and the Aṅgirases, the priest singers. Their weapons are acoustic "devices" such as songs, chants (e.g. ṚV 10.68.6b *arká*), articulated voice (e.g. ṚV 4.15.1c *vácas daíviya*, ṚV 6.18.5b *vadat*), and non-articulated noises, that is animal noises – roaring (*krand-*) or bellowing (*rav^i-/ru-*) – and natural noises – thundering (*stan-*). For example, ṚV 4.50.5 is recited as follows:

> *sá suṣṭúbhā sá ṛkvatā gaṇéna valáṃ ruroja phaligáṃ rávena |*
> *bṛhaspátir usríyā havyasū́daḥ kánikradad vā́vaśatīr úd ājat || 5 ||*
> "He [Indra/Bṛhaspati] with his flock possessing good rhythm, the flock possessing chants – he broke Vala, broke its bolt with his roar. Bṛhaspati drove up the ruddy (cows), who sweeten the oblation, who kept lowing as he was bellowing."

In particular, the main means of releasing the cows is *ráva* "bellowing, roaring", a derivative of the root *rav^i-* "to roar, to bellow" (< PIE *h_3reuh* e.g. YAv *uruuant*, Gr ὠρύομαι, Lat *rūmor*)[42] and generally used in the formulaic expression *vṛṣabhásya ráva-*, "the bellowing of the bull" (ṚV 7.79.4c; 1.94.10b).[43] This recalls the *mahāvrata* ritual correspondence between *ṛṣabha*, *vāc* and *dundubhi* mentioned in JB 2.404. Moreover, some verbal forms of the root *rav^i-* "to roar, to bellow" coincide with the *an-iṭ* root

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[36] Cf. e.g. Cantera (2012: 55-62), and Kuiper (1983: 68-69, 72-74), who maintains that Varuṇa is equivalent to Yama, and his abode is equivalent to *valá*.

[37] Cf. Ivanov & Toporov (1973); Janda (2000: 110-114, 288-292).

[38] Cf. also West (2007: 244-262).

[39] Cf. Watkins (1995).

[40] The mythologem of the primordial monster of the deep, especially pictured as a dragon/serpent, and its battle with the Storm God, is widespread and diversified in the ancient Anatolian region – not only in the Hittite context – and in the Near Eastern area. Cf. e.g. Miller (2014) and the related bibliography.

[41] As to the relationship between the Aryan pastoralist tribes and the BMAC cf. also Falk (1997); as to the interferences between the Elamite and OIA cultures, especially in relation to the myth of the slaying of the serpent, cf. e.g. Blažek (2002).

[42] Cf. Gotō (1987: 265-267).

[43] Cf. e.g. ṚV 10.67.06a-b: *índro valáṃ rakṣitā́raṃ dúghānāṃ karéṇeva ví cakartā ráveṇa* 'Indra cut apart Vala, the guard over the milkers, with a roar like a tool'.

rav- < PIE **reu̯(H)*- "to break", here quoted in the variant with velar enlargement (*ru-roja*), probably with reference to the noise produced by the breaking of the *valá*-cave.[44]

Therefore, the sonority of the *vala*-myth is represented by the "Lord of formulation", the priestly god Bṛhaspati, as sacerdotal counterpart of Indra, the warrior god: such distinct roles – priest/warrior – result from an original single figure of a king-priest that is Indra himself: *bŕhaspati* was his epithet, according to Schmidt (1968: 237-240). In this sense, the tribal function of "raising a *lofty/high* voice", -*bṛh-ád vad*- (< PIE **bʰr̥ǵʰ*- "to become high, to rise") in order to proclaim the warrior **kleu̯os*-, is overlapped by the "strength of formulation"-*bṛh-as-pati* (zero grade < PIE **bʰréǵʰ*- "to formulate"),[45] so as to set the voice in a "regular/ordered" form (*bráhman*, e.g. ṚV 2.24.3c), such as chants and praise, which are rhythmically and metrically formed (*ŕc*) and therefore magically more powerful. In this way the warrior practice of capturing booty/cattle, essential for the survival of the clan and based on the distribution of the booty/prize and loud-voiced public appraisal, in compliance with the tribal model of the so-called IE **kleu̯os*- "glory, fame", is turned into a ritual practice.

Furthermore, the figure of Bṛhaspati becomes definitively distinct from the divine king Indra in the post-Ṛgvedic texts, confirming the Middle and Late Vedic process of "Brahmanisation": mythological sonority corresponds to the "ritualised" sonority, controlled by a category of specialists of sacredness and inserted in a cosmic taxonomy.

In fact in the post-Ṛgvedic texts Bṛhaspati is represented as enhanced with macro-cosmic powers, both in relation to lightness, connoting the passage from chthonian darkness to heavenly sunlight, and to sonority which spreads from the "bottom" (*budhná*) of rocky places to the "top" (*ágra*), from non-articulated voices (*krand*-) to the well "formulated" stanzas:[46]

> *budhnā́d yó ágram abhyárty ójasā bṛhaspátim ā vivāsanti devā́ḥ |*
> *bhinád valáṃ ví púro dardarīti kánikradat súvar apó jigāya ||*
> "The gods try to win Bṛhaspati, who powerfully rises from the bottom to the top; he broke Vala, he smashes the fortresses, roaring he has won the sky, the waters."

3.2. *bhūmidundubhi:* the ritual earth-drum and the mythical "foundation"-*budhná* of prosperity

The ritual counterpart of this powerful Bṛhaspati is the earth-drum or *bhūmidundubhi* employed in the *mahāvrata*: in fact, it can represent earthly sonority, spreading "from

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[44] Mayrhofer (1992-2001: II. 439, 465); Narten (1964: 224-226).

[45] As to the interpretation of the name Bṛhaspati, cf. Pinault (2016).

[46] TS 2.3.14.6 (on occasion of the special sacrifices) ≈ PS 5.2.8 (cosmic and mystic hymn): cf. Lubotsky (2002: 13-17). In the same Atharvavedic hymn, Bṛhaspati is referred to as a supreme chieftain (*saṃrā́j*), a supreme poet (*kaví*), who acts upon the cosmos, along the cosmic vertical axis, from the bottom (*budhnā́d/ budhnyā́d*) to the top (st. 4 ≈ ŚS 4.1.4cd, 4.1.5ab, TS 2.3.14.6, ṚVKh 3.22.3), and 'has won the cows, the sky and the waters' (*gā́ḥ súvar apó jigāya*: 5.2.8d). The context of the Atharvavedic hymn recalls not only the macro-cosmic motif, but also the theme of prosperity, included in a royal framework: a queen (*rā́ṣṭrī*) 'who stands on the earth (*bhū́man*)' is mentioned in the first stanza.

the bottom", equivalent to both the dangerous "dusky" noises of the enemy and the underground bellowing of the mythical cattle, source of wealth. This is how it is represented in the ancillary ritualistic literature (ĀpŚS 21.18.1-3; 19.8):

dikṣu dundubhīn pradnanti | sraktiṣu vā mahāvedeḥ ||1||
apareṇāgnīdhraṃ bhūmidundubhim avaṭaṃ khananti | ardham antarvedy ardhaṃ bahirvedi ||2||
tamārdreṇa carmaṇottaralomnābhivitatya śaṅkubhiḥ pariṇihatyātraitat pucchakāṇḍam āhananārthaṃ nidadhāti ||3||
[…]
dundubhīn samāghnanti | pucchakāṇḍena bhūmidundubhim ||8||[47]
"They fix drums at the cardinal points or at the corners of the great altar.
Behind the *āgnīdhra*-shed they dig a pit, the earth-drum, half inside the altar and half outside the altar.
Having spread on it a wet hide with its hairy side upwards, having fixed it all around by means of pegs (the *adhvaryu*) keeps here this tail as a stick for the sake of beating (the drum).
[…]
They beat the drums, [they beat] the earth-drum with the tail as a stick."

LŚS 3.11.1-2: *paścād āgnīdhrīyasyārdham antarvedi śvabhrasya khātaṃ syād ardhaṃ bahirvedi ||1||*
        ārṣbheṇottaralomnā carmaṇābhivihitaṃ syāt ||2||
        "Behind the āgnīdhra-shed there must be a digging of a hole, half inside the altar and half outside. It must be covered all around by a bull's hide with the hairy side upwards."

LŚS 3.11.3: *tvaṃ vāg asi | ye naḥ sattre anindiṣur dīkṣāyāṃ śrānta āsite 'rāddhin tebhyo dundubhe rāddhim asmabhyam āvadeti parāvada dviṣantaṃ ghorāṃ vācaṃ parāvadāthāsmabhyaṃ sumitriyāṃ vācaṃ dundubhe kalyāṇīṃ kīrtim āvadeti parāvada dviṣato vādyaṃ durhārdo ye viṣūkuho 'thāsmabhyaṃ puṣṭiṃ rāddhiṃ śriyam āvada dundubha ity enam etaiḥ pṛthag āhatya vāladhānenānyaṃ vāghnantam anumantriya |*[48]
"'You are the voice; o drum, announce our success to those who blamed un-success on us at the sacrificial session, at the initiation, at the ascetic session! Raise a terrible voice against one who hates (us)! Raise, then, the friendly voice, o drum, for us! Announce noble fame (for us)! Raise the speech against those who hate (us), who are evil and split on both sides! Then announce fertility, success, good fortune for us, o drum', beating it all over with the tail (of the bull), he must accompany this with these formulas, or he must speak these formulas to another one who is beating."

The ritual earth-drum is associated in these passages with the mythical motif of the earthly cave, inasmuch as a "pit is dug" in the ritual area, covered by a bull's hide: *avaṭa- khan^i-* or *śvabhra- khan^i-* are the phrases occurring; in particular, the former is mentioned in ṚV 4.50.3c, only in relation to the *vala*-myth:

bṛ́haspate yā́ paramā́ parāvád áta ā́ ta ṛtaspṛ́śo ní ṣeduḥ |
túbhyaṃ khātā́ avatā́ ádridugdhā mádhva ścotanti abhíto virapśám || 3 ||

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[47] Text after Fushimi's edition (2012) in http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/.
[48] Text after Ranade's edition (1998).

"O Bṛhaspati, that which is the farthest distance, (coming) from there have those who touch the truth [=Aṅgirases] sat down here (for sacrifice) for you. For you do the deep-dug springs, milked by the stone, drip an abundance of honey all about."

khātā́ avatā́ are the "dug pits", from which sweet and milky wealth springs, equivalent to the vessel for collecting the pressed soma:[49] the term *avatá*, mentioned especially in the late layers of the Ṛgvedic collection (16× out of 20×), can be considered as a higher variant of the more popular *avaṭa*. According to Kuiper (1955: 159), it may even be a loanword, which is another example of linguistic Sanskritisation, analogous to the *dundubhí* case. As for the latter phrase, the term *śvabhra* meaning "pit, pitfall", is frequently associated with the underworld and hell in the Vedic tradition,[50] recalling the same connotative value concerning the term *valá* in its Avestan variant. Therefore, such lexicon concurrently confers a double connotation on the *bhūmidundubhí*: it represents the threatening Otherness, and the fabulous source of wellness and treasure. It must thus be "beaten", as expressed by the root *han* "to strike, to smite", recalling the prototype of the heroic deeds, the HERO SLAY (*$g^{uh}en$-*) SERPENT (*$h_3ég^{uh}i$-m*), as if it were the embodiment of the enemy and of his shelter. However, it must also be made up by bovine elements, as if it were the fertile cattle and the vigorous bull. It must be located half inside and half outside the sacrificial altar, both as a marginal element and pivot, on which the whole system, sacred and not, is centred. The magic strength of onomatopoeic sonority is re-doubled and amplified by the ritual concrete object, which actually resounds from the depths of the earth,[51] assuming the same cosmic role as the supreme Bṛhaspati: through its/his "voice" it/he taxonomically maps the cosmos, defining the foundation-*budhná* and the highest layer-*ágra*.[52]

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[49] ṚV 1.130.2ab: *píbā sómam indra suvānám ádribhiḥ kóśena siktám avatáṃ ná váṃsagaḥ* | "O Indra, drink the soma being pressed by the stones, poured with a bucket, like a buffalo at a well-spring."

[50] Cf. Bodewitz (1999: 215, 217).

[51] In ṚV 4.50.3a the expression *yā́ paramā́ parāvád* recalls the *paramā́ vā́c*, which in JB 2.404 ≈ TS 7.5.9.2 rises loftily. As to the poetical references to *dundubhí* like 'bull'-*vṛ́ṣan*, cf. ŚS 5.20.3 = PS 9.27.4, where the comparison is fully developed, through the use of the "sounding" root *rav^i-* 'to roar, to bellow' (Rossi 2014).

[52] The same process of cosmicisation is applied to *dundubhí* in ŚS 5.20.7 (= PS 9.27.8): *dundubhí* opens the path to heaven by means of 'resonance'-*dhvaní* (cf. Rossi 2014); a secondary nominal formation, related to the more common Ṛgvedic adjective *dhúni* 'boisterous', *dhvaní* is a derivative of the root *dhvan-*, 'to sound, to roar, to make inarticulate noises' < PIE *$dʰuen$- (Lith *dundéti*, OE *dynian*), especially denoting the noises of the mid-space (e.g. ṚV 10.149.1c *antárikṣa*). Phonetically it evokes the derivatives of the root *dhvan^i* 'to smoke' (< PIE * $dʰuenh_2$-), i.e. *dhvāntá* interpreted as a name of a 'smoky/dusky wind', which mainly alludes to both Indra's mythical fury (ṚV 8.6.13a; ṚV; 6.18.10d; 10.113.7c), used as a weapon against enemies, and a 'smoky/dusky' place, where Indra's enemy (Dhuni or Vṛtra in ṚV 10.113.6; 9) dwells (cf. Narten 1964: 156). On the other hand, *dhúni* in a formulaic phrase, together with *cúmuri* (e.g. ṚV 2.15.9.a; 6.18.8b; 6.20.13b; 7.19.4c; 10.113.9c), is substantivised as the name of one of Indra's mythical demon-rivals of Indra: he/it is 'the boisterous', confirming that Otherness itself is characterised by sonority, albeit a non-articulated sound, against which an equivalent sounding weapon must be used: in fact, a *dhúna-* form is assumable in the compound *dhunéti* 'with roaring course', a hapax, referred to the Aṅgirases, in ṚV 4.50.2a, evidently referring to the *vala*-myth.

The earthly *dundubhí* also recalls the motif of fertility inasmuch as it is associated with the womb and the embryo's space: in RV 4.50.2d itself the *valá*-cave is the womb of the treasured cows guarded by Bṛhaspati (*bṛ́haspate rákṣatād asya yónim*); in RV 3.31.7b it is the rock-*ádri* which "sweetens" the embryo-*gárbha*; in RV 1.130.3abc it is a "depository of heaven" (*divó nidhí-*) enclosed in the stone (*párivīta- áśmani*) similar to the embryo-*gárbha* of the bird. Finally, in RV 10.108.7ab it is the "depository"-*nidhí* of wealth, "endowed with rock as a foundation"-*ádribudhna*. In relation to these poetic formulations the ritual covering of the dug pit for the *bhūmidundubhi*, expressed in ĀpŚS 21.18.3 by the root *pari-ṇi-dhā*, seems to be a lexical reminiscent. Furthermore, the same ritual beating of the earth-drum recalls sexual references, which prelude conception itself: according to Sani (1990: 73-74) the same root *han-* semantically implies sexual values, especially in RV 5.56.3a, where the earth-*pṛthivī́* is "beaten"-*párāhatā*; likewise, Parpola (1983: 48-49) highlights the erotic meaning of the term "tail" (*puccha/ lāṅgūla*), the means through which the earth-drum is beaten, in the ancillary literature. In this sense, the Ṛgvedic occurrence of the term *dundubhí* in 1.28.5 can also be interpreted:

> *yác cid dhí tvám̐ gṛhé gṛha úlūkhalaka yujyáse |*
> *ihá dyumáttamam̐ vada jáyatām iva dundubhíḥ || 5 ||*
> "For even though you are hitched up in house after house, little mortar,
> here speak most brilliantly, like the drum of victors."

Here, the term *úlūkhalaka*, considered as a substrate loanword, denotes the little mortar-*ulúkhala* used to pound the soma stalks:[53] it is compared to *jáyatām dundubhíḥ*, the "drum of victors". Little mortar-*ulúkhala* and *dundubhí* are comparable since they share the same magic function, related to "beating" and "splitting", expressed through an acoustic equivalence, playing on the assonance of /u/. Significantly, ŚB 7.5.1.22 proposes a form of "Sanskritisation" of the term *ulúkhala*, based on the allophones *ulu/uru*: "*urukara* (means): let it make (s.thing) extended/wide for me! So it is said, hence (the term) *urukara*. In fact, *urukara* is indeed that *ulūkhala*: thus it appears out of sight".[54] In this sense, the comparison also refers to the ability of both of these objects to make something "extended, wide": the mortar makes the soma stalk "extended" through its juice, the drum makes the sound "extended" through its "resonance".

Moreover, according to BŚS 16.21 the soma-pressing carried out by means of a domestic mortar-*ulūkhala* is performed during the *mahāvrata* rite, together with the race and the beating of drums: it can therefore be assumed that the ritual scene is also evoked in Ṛgvedic stanzas. According to Schlerath's interpretation (2002), the erotic connotation

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[53] Cf. Kuiper (1991: 14, 41).

[54] ŚBM 7.5.1.22 *urukara uru me karad iti tad urukaram, urukaram̐ ha vai tad ulūkhalam ity ācakṣate parokṣam*. Text after Gardner's edition (2012) in http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de.

must be conferred on these verses, as well as on the first stanza of the same Ṛgvedic hymn:[55]

> *yátra grā́vā pṛthúbudhna ūrdhvó bhávati sótave |*
> *ulū́khalasutānām ávéd u indra jalgulaḥ ‖ 1 ‖*
> "When the pressing stone with its broad bottom becomes erect in order to press,
> you, Indra, will keep gulping down the mortar-pressed (soma drops)."

The possessive compound *pṛthúbudhna*, "endowed with a broad bottom", is referred to the broad mortar, which is the basis on which the pressing stone is beaten (ŚS 12.3.14a; VSM 1.14a). This seems to be confirmed by both the expression *ulū́khalabudhna*, "endowed with a mortar as bottom, mortar-based" (TS 7.2.1.3) and *ulū́khasya budhnena*, "with the bottom of the mortar" (PS 15.18.3).

The same compound occurs in ṚV 4.2.5d and 10.47.3ab: the former is referred to the wealth-*rayí*, which is "long"-*dīrghá* and "endowed with a broad foundation/bottom"-*pṛthubudhná*; the latter defines the gift required from Indra, which is "lofty, endowed with good sacred formulations and gods, wide and deep, endowed with broad bottom",[56] and consists of bright, bullish wealth (10.47.3d *citrám vṛ́ṣaṇaṃ rayím*).[57]

Finally, such a phraseology recalls the above-mentioned compound *ádribudhna*, "endowed with rock as foundation", alluding to the *vala*-myth. Therefore, the ritual mortar-*ulū́kha(la)* and earth-*dundubhi* are equivalent since both are characterised by the broad "foundation-*budhná*" and sexually connoted, inasmuch as they are used within a ritual promoting fecundity and the related cosmic wealth. The term itself phonetically echoes the sonority of the term *dundubhi*, as a sort of "subliminal" anagram,[58] and evokes the cosmic function of Bṛhaspati, the sovereignty that spreads cosmically from the earthly bottom to heaven, providing universal prosperity. Thus, in ChUp 3.15.1, in the formula against the miscarriage, the expression *bhūmibudhna* "earth-bottom", recalls the image of the "earth-drum" *bhūmidundubhi* both phonetically and lexically:[59]

> *antarikṣodaraḥ kośo bhūmibudhno na jīryati,*
> *diśo hy asya sraktayo dyaur asyottaram bilam,*
> *sa eṣa kośo vasudhānas tasmin viśvam idaṃ śritam*
> "This chest does not decay! Its cavity – The intermediate region. Its bottom – the earth.
> Its corners – the quarters; its opening above – the sky.
> This chest contains wealth; in it this whole universe rests."

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[55] A similar scene is also pictured in the Kuntāpa hymns in ṚVKh 5.22.7 (= ŚS 20.136.6 = ŚŚS 12.24.7), which Witzel (1995: 11) considers as related to the *mahāvrata* rite: *mahānagny ulūkhalam atikrāmanty abravīt yathā eva te vanaspate pighnanti tathā eva me*, "The harlot, stepping over the mortar, said: 'Just as on thee, O tree [O wooden mortar], they strike (with the pestle) so they strike on me'." Text after Tokunaga's edition (1995) in http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de; translation after Caland (1953).

[56] ṚV 10.47.3ab: *subráhmāṇaṃ devávantam bṛhántam urúṃ gabhīrám pṛthúbudhnam indra.*

[57] It echoes the phrase *rāyó budhnáḥ saṃgámano vásūnāṃ* 'the foundation of wealth, the assembler of goods' in ṚV 1.96.6a.

[58] Cf. Klein (2012).

[59] Text and translation after Olivelle's edition (1998).

4. *Dundubhí* and *budhná*: etymological connections or cultural semantic extension?

The OIA *budhná*, "bottom, ground, depths", < PIE *$*b^hud^h$-n-o-*, derives from *$*b^hud^h$-mn-ós*, gen. sg. of *$*b^hud^h$-mên*, with the cluster simplification *-Cmn- > *-Cn-*.[60] Well attested in the IIr area (OAv *bina*, YAv *buna* "ground" < *budna-*; Khot *buna* "ground"; MiP *bun* "ground"; Pā *bunda* "root", with metathesis of the nasal),[61] and in the German area (OHG *bodam* "ground"; MoHG *Boden* "ground"; OE *botm*; MoE *bottom*), it corresponds to Gr *pythmên* "bottom of the vessel, ground, base", and Lat *fundus* "bottom", with metathesis of the nasal, as already argued by Vendreys (1913: 308-309), and more recently assumed by Beekes (2010: II. 1255). In the earlier Ṛgvedic textual layer, it occurs as a singular form, mainly in the locative case (6× out of 8×) and especially combined with *rájas*, in the phrase *budhné rájasaḥ* "at the bottom/at the foundation of the dusky realm" (3×).[62] As to the later Ṛgvedic textual layer, the term *budhná* occurs mostly in the singular form (10× out of 11×), mainly in nom./acc. cases (7×).

A survey shows that in the Ṛgvedic collection the term *budhná* "bottom, ground" is employed heterogeneously in both contexts of the *vṛtra*-myth (ṚV 7.34.16b; 1.52.6b) and *vala*-myth (ṚV 2.2.3a; 4.17.14d; 4.1.11b), with cosmic connotations (ṚV 3.55.7b; 10.111.8c; 10.135.6c) and ritual references, related to Agni (ṚV 3.39.3d; 1.95.8-9; 1.141.3a), especially as embryo; it is connected to Indra as hero of the *vala*-myth (ṚV 4.19.4a), and to Varuṇa (ṚV 3.61.7a; 1.24.7; 10.89.4b; 10.77.4a) as sovereign of waters and cosmic order.[63] Nonetheless, all of these textual occurrences suggest that the term *budhná* is mainly associated with the motif of prosperity: it is the earthly "foundation" of the cosmos, source of wealth. Instead, the motif of sonority is rarely hinted at: only in ṚV 4.19.4 the expression *kakúbhaḥ párvatānām* "the peaks of the mountains", referred to Indra who cuts them down, may allude metonymically to it, otherwise it is associated with the "sounding" mythical priest Bṛhaspati only in the post-Ṛgvedic text.

Its derivative *budhníya* "belonging to the bottom/depths" is more uniformly connotated: two occurrences out of 14 are plural neuter forms (*budhníyā*); the former is referred to wealth (*vásūni* "the goods which are in the depths", ṚV 7.6.7a) conquered by Vaiśvānara, the sun-fire which represents the union of the clan confederation,[64] and the latter to the *máhāṃsi* "deep-grounded great powers" belonging to the Maruts (ṚV 7.56.14a). *budhníya* is the epithet of the term *áhi* "serpent" in 12 occurrences, constituting the OIA phrase

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[60] Cf. e.g. Wackernagel (1954: § 609a).

[61] Lubotsky (2010).

[62] In ṚV 8.77.5b a similar phrase *abudhnéṣu rájassu-* 'in the bottomless dusky realms' is referred to a variant of the *vala*-myth, namely the myth of the boar Emuṣa which, according to Witzel (1999: 26), was influenced by the Para-Muṇḍa cultural substrate/adstrate.

[63] The motif of the foundation of the truth (e.g. ṚV 3.61.7a *ṛtásya budhné* "at the foundation of the truth") is also mentioned in ṚV 10.8.3cd, related to the story of Trita Āptya, recalling the *vala*-myth: *ásya pátmann áruṣīr áśvabudhnā ṛtásya yónau tanúvo juṣanta* | "At his flight the ruddy females [=flames? dawns?] with the horse [=fire?] as their foundation find pleasure in their own bodies within the womb of truth".

[64] Proferes (2007: 46-51).

áhir budhníyaḥ "Serpent of the bottom/deep", which, according to Toporov (1974: 5-6), might be associated with the Greek mythological figure of *Pythôn*, the dragon killed by Apollo: in fact, its name would derive from the same IE root *b^hud^h-.

It is worth noting that the phrase *áhir budhníyaḥ* is mainly mentioned in the Ṛgvedic collection; with an equal number of occurrences it appears in both the earlier and later textual layers,[65] in the hymns devoted to All Gods. It is inserted in a list of deities, entailed in the *ṛtá* cosmic *Weltanschauung*, and it is strictly connected to the waters, especially to *apā́ṃ nápāt* "the Child of the Waters",[66] to *ajá ékapād* "the one-footed goat", equivalent to the rising Sun,[67] as well as to Varuṇa's sphere and the Ādityas.[68] A few occurrences also associate it with the Maruts (ṚV 5.41; ṚV 7.38), and, in a certain way, with the practice of **kleṷos-* "glory, fame".[69] However, apart from the case mentioned after, we find no references to Indra, to the *vṛtrá*-myth, as slaying of serpent/dragon of the waters, or to the *vala*-myth, as the uncovering of cattle/Dawns. There are no traces of competitive context, as if every agonal tension had been overshadowed in the name of a sort of universal prosperous harmony. The IE mythological paradigm of slaying the serpent, suggested by the comparison to the Greek figure of *Pythôn* and the Hittite *Illuyanka*-myth,[70] seems to have been passed over as well. Taking into account the textual uniformity of such a representation throughout all the Ṛgvedic layers, this may be due to the accomplishment of the canonical redaction of the text. In fact, all the different mythical traditions are homogenised in such a representation, and a conception of a great, unique and pacified cosmic order is provided, corresponding to a much later Vedic ideal of sovereignty.[71] In this perspective, such a representation had yet to be fulfilled in the Kuru-Pañcāla period: in fact, on the one hand the *mahāvrata* rite implies competitive performances and sonority combined with fecundity, and on the other hand the only exception in this textual survey is associated with the figure of Bṛhaspati, representing the motif of sonority. In ṚV 10.64.4 he is defined as the *kaví tuvīrávān* "poet endowed with powerful bellowing", able to be "heard" by the cosmic entities:

kathā́ kavís tuvīrávān káyā girā́ bṛhaspátir vāvṛdhate suvṛktíbhiḥ |
ajá ékapāt suhávebhir ṛ́kvabhir áhiḥ śṛṇotu budhníyo hávīmani || 4 ||

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[65] 13× nom.; 1× instr.; ŚS 19.11.3b ≈ ṚV 7.35.13b; VSM 5.33 and 10.1d; TS 1.3.3.1 and TS.1.8.14.2; MS I 2, 12 and 2.6.11; KS 2.13 and 15.7; PB 1.4.11; ŚBM 5.4.2.5.

[66] ṚV 1.186; 2.31; 7.34; 7.35.

[67] ṚV 2.31; 6.50; 7.35; 10.64; 10.66; cf. Horsch (1965).

[68] ṚV 4.55; 6.50; 7.34; 7.38.

[69] ṚV 6.49; 6.50; 10.64; 10.92; namely ṚV 10.93.5d the redundant phrase *áhir budhnéṣu budhníyaḥ* is quoted.

[70] Cf. Watkins (1995: 460-63).

[71] Although in the IE mythology the figure of a cosmic serpent, coiled round the earth and connected to the sunrise, is relatively common (West 2007: 347-49), it is mostly pictured in negative terms, as a dangerous being. Instead, this Vedic figure of *áhir budhníyaḥ* seems to anticipate the palingenesis myth of Viṣṇu and *anantaśeṣa*, and in a certain way seems to recall the cult of *Inshushinak*, the king-god Serpent on the Waters of the Elamite civilisation; cf. De Miroschedji (1981).

"How will the powerfully roaring poet Bṛhaspati grow strong, through what hymn with its well-twisted (ornaments)? Let Aja Ekapād with the chanters who are easy to call, let Ahi Budhnya harken to my call."

The first member in the compound *tuvīrávān* is an *-i* stem from the zero grade form (*tuh_2-i-*) of the adjective *tavás*, a derivative of the root *tav^i* "to be strong" < PIE *$teuh_2$-/tuh_2-* (Lat *tumēre* "to be swollen'; Gr σάος/σῶς "safe, healthy"). This stem is very productive, since it occurs in significant compounds, such as *tuvijāta*, *tuvidyumná*, *tuvīráva*, *tuvíbrahman* (e.g. ṚV 5.25.5b), and especially *tuvíśravas-tama* "endowed with very mighty fame" (ṚV 5.25.5a; 3.11.6c), which is etymologically equivalent to Cypr σαμοκλέμης (Lubotsky 1988, 123), thus confirming the IE matrix and the relevance of the IE "sonority" motif connected to *kleu̯os-* "glory, fame". However, compared to *tuvīráva*, the epithet *tuvīrávān* is a morphological innovation,[72] connoting the emerging role of Bṛhaspati: whereas the former is used as an epithet connoting the enemy *dāsa*, who is the "mightily roaring", "three-headed" Viśvarūpa (ṚV 10.99.6a), in the IIr variant of the *vala*-myth,[73] the latter, as a sort of morphological redundancy (*tuvīrávān* analogically < *tuvīrávās-*, and modelled on the *-vant* stem), is the linguistic means of turning the dangerous Otherness into a mimetic weapon to conquer and domesticate the enemy itself. Moreover, despite the IE matrix, it assumes a new "pregnant" value in the Brahmanised context – represented in the late Ṛgvedic textual layer – as suggested by the verb *vṛdh-* "to increase". It semantically reflects the same interferences between "warrior strength" and "swollen shape", already highlighted as regards the interpretation of the variants of the term *udumbára*, but explicitly combined with sonority as *ráva* "bellowing, roaring", in a new cosmic perspective. This is the only sound which can be "heard" from the bottom of the earth to the heavenly top, as a cosmic vertical "extension": it is able to fill up the cosmos, assuring prosperity all over. In the same hymn in stanza 15c Bṛhaspati is said to be "where the honey-pressing pressing-stone is given a lofty voice" (*grā́vā yátra madhuṣúd ucyáte bṛhád*), and in stanza 16a he is the "one who knows the ṛtá" (*ṛtajñā́*). In this sense, the process of Brahmanisation, in the form of Bṛhaspati, is the main means of establishing such a "true" new Vedic universal order, in so far as the *mahāvrata* rite constitutes the pivot of such an innovative process, combining the motif of sonority with the motif of prosperity.

In fact, in this ritualistic context *budhná* and *dundubhí* coincide: the earth-drum represents concretely the bottom of the earth, which is mythically reminiscent of the IIr tradition and metonymy of the IE sonority connected to the *kleu̯os-* motif, and, at the same time, it promotes a cultural innovation, integrated into the northern Indian cultural reality, and exposed to Near Eastern influences.

With regard to this cultural concurrence, the other etymological considerations, suggested by Vendryes (1913: 306-307) and Toporov (1974: 5), are worthy of note: terms

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[72] Cf. Gotō (1987: 267 n. 610).

[73] According to Durante (1976: 58) this mythical motif of the enemy as "roaring, shouting" is also found in the Greek representation of the giant Geryon, slain by Heracles, whose name is a cognate of Γῆρυς "voice, speech".

semantically equivalent to the OIA *budhná*, "bottom, foundation", attested in Celtic, Baltic and Slavic languages (e.g. OIr *domun* 'world" < *dubno-*; *domain* "deep"; Lith *dùgnas* "bottom" < *dùbnas*; *dubùs* "deep"; Russ *dno* "bottom"; OCS *dъno* "bottom" < *dъbno-*) can be interpreted as allotropes of the same PIE *b^hud^h-n-o-*, with metathesis between the occlusives. In this sense, the Greek names *Typhôn/Typhôeus*, constructed on the root *t^hup^h-*, could also be allotropes of *p^hut^h-* > *Pythôn*, so that the names of these mythological figures can be considered the Greek outcome of the IE doublets *b^hud^h-* ~ *d^hub^h-*, referred to the IE mythologem of the Dragon/Serpent or primordial Monster of the Deep.[74] In fact, these two monsters and their legends have some features in common, even though, according to the textual and iconographic sources, *Typhôn/Typhôeus* seems to represent a different cultural realm (Fronterose 1980[2]: 77-93). Not only is he/it an anguiform being, but he/it is also a hybrid being, who/which presents some anthropomorphic traits, connected to both the chthonian sphere – he/it is closed inside mountains – and the atmospheric sphere – the stormy whirlwind. Moreover, he/it is especially characterised by "sonority" traits, as highlighted in *Iliad* (2.781-782), according to which the earth around Typhôn groans (στεναχίζω < PIE *$(s)tenh_2$-* "to thunder"), and in particular Hesiod's *Theogony* (vv. 829-35; 839-40).[75] In this case too, scholars have proposed manifold relationships with Near Eastern mythical figures, from the Ugaritic *Baal Ṣaphon,* up to *Ullikummi* of the Hurrian Kumarbi cycle and the Hittite *Illuyanka*.[76] On the other hand, the motif of the multi-headed monster recalls the Iranian myth of the three-headed anguiform monster Aži Dahāka, which causes drought by damming the waters: he is slain by Thraētaona, related to the Vedic Trita Āptya, who in ṚV 10.8 and ṚV 10.99 kills the three-headed Viśvarūpa, and whose deed is assimilated to the *vala*-myth (West 2007: 259-62). In addition, archaeological evidence (Francfort 1994) shows that the BMAC also elaborated a cult of a human-headed being with snake-ending members, pictured on Bactrian seals, or the statuettes of a portly, roundish, anthropomorphic figure with a beard and the scaled skin of a snake, who/which stands erect, holding a sort of vessel under his/its right arm. According to Witzel (2008: 270-73), he/it represents a relevant eastern Iranian variant of the extremely widespread ophidian myth.

Linguistic evidence confirms both the etymological relationship between the OIA *budh-ná* and the Greek *pythmên* and the equivalence of the OIA phrase *áhir budhníyaḥ*

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[74] Watkins (1992: 322; 1995: 460-463); more cautiously West (2007: 347 n. 27).

[75] φωναὶ δ᾽ἐν πάσησιν ἔσαν δεινῆς κεφαλῆσι | παντοίην ὄπ᾽ἰεῖσαι ἀθέσφατον: ἄλλοτε μὲν γὰρ | φθέγγονθ᾽ ὥς τε θεοῖσι συνιέμεν, ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖτε | ταύρου ἐριβρύχεω, μένος ἀσχέτου, ὄσσαν ἀγαύρου, | ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖτε λέοντος ἀναιδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντος, | ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖ σκυλάκεσσιν ἐοικότα, θαύματ᾽ ἀκοῦσαι, | ἄλλοτε δ᾽ αὖ ῥοίζεσχ᾽, ὑπὸ δ᾽ ἤχεεν οὔρεα μακρά. | [...] | σκληρὸν δ᾽ ἐβρόντησε καὶ ὄβριμον, ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα | σμερδαλέον κονάβησε καὶ οὐρανὸς εὐρὺς ὕπερθε | "And there were voices in all his fearsome heads giving out every kind of indescribable sound. Sometimes they uttered as if for the gods' understanding, sometimes again the sound of a bull bellowing whose might is uncontainable and whose voice is proud, sometimes again of a lion, who knows no restraint, sometimes again of a pack of hounds, astonishing to hear; sometimes again he hissed; and the long mountains echoed beneath. [...] He thundered hard and stern, and the earth rang fearsomely round about and broad heaven above." Text after West (1966), translation after West (1988).

[76] Cf. e.g. West (1966: 379-81; 2007: 258-59); Watkins (1992); Bonnet (1987). As to the variety of noises emitted by Thypheus, it may be connected to an ancient Egyptian mythical motif related to metamorphoses, according to West (1966: 386).

"Serpent of the bottom/deep' with the Gr syntagma *Pythô ophis*, notwithstanding the different cultural application. However, the case of the Greek *Typhôn/Typhôeus* and the related etymological interpretation seems more uncertain, though its hybrid nature is confirmed. According to Beekes (2010: II 1522), as a sort of "whirlwind" personified, it could be one of the derivatives of the verb τύφομαι "to smoke, smoulder, glow", or "to make smoke, burn slowly", even though its etymology is not clear and a wide range of possible interpretations exist that entail the extremely productive semantic field of "rush, rage, whirl, make dust, smoke".[77] These characteristics pertain partially to the semantic area in which the mythical representation of *valá* and the ritual earth-*dundubhí* converge: smokiness is evoked by the derivative of the root *dhvan^i* "to smoke", but sonority and depths are their distinctive traits.[78]

Finally, according to Beekes (2010: II. 1521), the relation between the name *Typhôn/Typhôeus* and the IE root *d^hub^h*-, assumed by Vendryes to be the doublet of *b^hud^h*- with metathesis, is dubious. The root *d^hub^h*- and its ablauting variants *d^heub^h-/*d^houb^h*- can be assumed for the Gr τυφλός "blind, dark, blocked" (< PIE *d^houb^h-; e.g. also OIr *dub* "black", OHG *toub* "deaf"), which, albeit, is probably unrelated to τύφομαι.[79] Lastly, Semitic interferences could also be implied (Bonnet 1987: 136-37), and, at any rate, "the consonant variations and the prenasalisation point to the conclusion that *$d^{hu}b^h$*- is probably secondary Indo-European", according to Kuiper (1995: 72): in effect no OIA derivative of a PIE root *d^hub^h-/*d^hub*- is attested, unless it might be assumed as the etymological base for the OIA *dundubhí*. In this sense, the Celtic, Baltic and Slavic derivatives, as well as the German cognates,[80] refer to the semantic field of "depths", metonymically expressed by the term *dundubhí* as ritual counterpart of the mythical *valá*-cave. Moreover, the Toch A *täpr* and Toch B *tapre* meaning "high, fat" < PIE *$d^{hu}b^h$-ro* (i.e. OIr *dobur[o]* "black, unclean", "dark water"; OCS *dъbrnъ* "abyss") suggest that a semantic shift from "depths" to "heights" is possible, probably because "what is deep when viewed from above may be taken as high when viewed from below" (Adams 2013: 296). Indeed, in the case of the term *dundubhí* the extension of sonority from the depths of the earth to the heights of heaven would be highlighted, though chiefly in ritual context. Nonetheless, this etymological solution cannot explain the duplication with nasalisation: behind the grammaticalised façade, it remains an irregular outcome, basically due to its onomatopoeic nature. It is a hybrid item, mostly associable with the Middle-Iranian isoglosses < *$dumb^{(h)}$*- "tail, extremities, fat-tailed animals", with Proto-Muṇḍa isoglosses <

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[77] It could be an outcome of the IE root *$d^{hu}eh_2$-/*d^huh_2*- "to smoke", but with an enlargement *-b^h*- (Rix & Kümmel 2001: 158), to which the Gr θύω "to offer by burning, sacrifice" is also related, as well as other IE derivatives (e.g. Skt. *dhū-ma*, Lat. *fumus,* etc.). However, the same IE root can be a variant of the IE root *d^hu-en-h_2*- "to smoke", attested in OIA *dhvan^i·* "to smoke" (Rix & Kümmel 2001: 159), and of the IE root *d^heuh_2-/*d^huh_2*- "to shake" which gives rise to the Gr θύ͞ω "to rush in, to storm" **(**Rix & Kümmel 2001: 149-50), as well as other OIA verbal forms (Lubotsky 2010: *sub voce*).

[78] Cf. n. 52.

[79] Chantraine (1968-1980: 1148) does not mention the relation between *Typhôeus* and *Pythôn*, and assumes that the semantic association with τύφομαι is due to popular etymology.

[80] Go *diups* "deep" < *deu^upa*- < PIE *d^heub^h-nó*-; OHG *tumpfilo* "deep place in water" and NE *dump* "deep hole in pond" with nasal infix; OE *dyfan/dufan* < *$dheup$*- "to dive" with final voiceless stop.

ḍub-/*dum-* "to be swollen, roundish", even with PAA isoglosses < *duby-*/*dub-* "tail, buttock, animal limbs", in relation to which the IE reconstruction *d^hub^h-*/*d^hub-* "depths" is a secondary outcome.

The lexical hybridism corresponds both to mythologically hybrid figures, such as *Typhôn/Typhôeus*, and metaphorical process of semantic extension, belonging to the onomatopoeias. In this way Otherness is represented and "included" in a specified cultural reality. In fact, the Vedic *dundubhí* is a part of that cultural transformation reliant on a sort of "Inclusivism", characterising the Middle and Late Vedic culture. Its semantisation results from linguistic interferences which were "Sanskritised" in the regularly grammaticalised noun *dundubhí* only within the process of ritualism, which supported the paradigm of the Kuru-Pañcāla sovereignty: the term *dundubhí* conveys the double "redundant" value of deep/high sonority and swollen/roundish abundant prosperity only within this cultural reality. Here it is thus able to fill the cosmos and ratify the new cosmic sovereignty.

5. Conclusions

The OIA *dundubhí* is not only an onomatopoeic noun denoting a musical instrument, namely the "drum", but it also embodies a process of ritualisation. Such a process was promoted by the Kuru tribe, allied with the Pañcāla clan, in the establishment of a new form of political confederation of states in northern India during the Middle and the late Vedic period. As a "mimetic" sounding sequence, *dundubhí* is semantised, inasmuch as it re-echoes the "mighty bellowing" of sovereignty from the depths of the earth to heaven, representing cosmic power. Corresponding to the new ideal of stable and enduring leadership, it must guarantee the yearly re-foundation of the cosmos, the seasonal fertilisation of the earth and the cattle, and prosperity for every member of the entire confederate-realm. This sort of "cosmicisation" of tribal, magic and mythical Indo-European traditions also involves the local cultural substrate/adstrate, and Near Eastern and BMAC interferences are also embedded, as a result of cultural exchanges, in linguistic terms. This has led to an "upgrading" of a new model of taxonomic society and new modalities of interaction in competitive contexts. In this sense, one of the most significant cultural outcomes is the *mahāvrata* rite, the festival for the winter solstice, in which musical instruments, and especially drums, play a crucial role. Here, every year, in a Brahmanised context, the mighty sonority of the earth-drum announces prosperity and good fortune, spreading them loftily, throughout the cosmos.

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