

INDO-EUROPEAN POETICS
and
THE LATVIAN FOLKSONGS

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Rigveda (RV), Atharvaveda (AV) and White Yajurveda (VS): Ralph T. H. Griffith 1895-1899;
Black Yajurveda (TS): Arthur Berriedale Keith 1914;
Mahābhārata: J.A.B. van Buitenen 1973-1975; book 6 Alex Cherniak 2009; books 10 and 11 Kate Crosby 2009;
Avesta: James Darmesteter 1882 except Gāthās: M.L. West 2010;
Homer, Iliad and Odyssey: Samuel Butler 1898-1900;
Hesiod (and “Hesiod”): G. W. Most 2006-2007;
Epic Fragments, “Homeric” Hymns and Epigrams: M. L. West 2003;
Aeschylus: A. H. Sommerstein 2008;
Alcaeus, Alcman, Anacreon, Bacchylides, Corinna, Praxilla, Stesichorus, Timotheus, Scola and Anonymous Fragments: D. A. Campbell 1982-1993;
Alexander of Aetolia, Hermesianax: J.L. Lightfoot 2009;
Apollonius Rhodius, Pindar: William H. Race 2008 and 1991 resp.;
Callimachus, fragments: C. A. Trypanis 1958;
Callimachus, Hymns and Epigrams, Aratus, Lycophron: G. R. Mair 1921;
Euripides: David Kovacs 1994-2002;
Mimnermus, Theognis: D. E. Gerber 1999;
Nonnus: W. H. D. Rouse 1940;
Ovid, Fasti: James George Frazer 1931;
Sophocles: Hugh Lloyd-Jones 1994;
When parts of their translations have been modified, changes are indicated between [].
Other translations are mine.

(...)

ζ.I.B *the Wind-god*

ζ.I.B.1 *the Wind’s car*

ζ.I.B.2 *the Wind’s horses*

(...)

§I.B.1 *h₂ēiu-... rótho- – the Wind’s car

Except for the stem, Latvian *Vējš* ‘wind’ is identical with Vedic *Vāyú-*. The typical means of transport of this god¹ are chariots, and he himself is said to be “Indra’s car”:

RV 3.49.4ab

dhartá divó rájasas prṣá ūrdhvó rátho ná vāyúr vásubhir niyútvan

Supporting heaven, the high back of the region, his (= Indra) *car* is *Vayu* with his team of Vasus,

RV 1.134.3ab

vāyúr yunkte róhitā vāyúr aruṇá

vāyú ráthe ajirá dhurí vólhave

váhiṣṭhā dhurí vólhave

Two red steeds *Vāyu* yokes, *Vāyu* two purple steeds, swift-footed, *to the chariot*, to the pole to draw, most able, at the pole, to draw,

RV 2.41.1

vāyo yé te sahasríṇo ráthāsas tébhir á gahi

niyútvan sómapītaye

O *Vayu*, come to us with all the thousand *chariots* that are thine,

Team-borne, to drink the Soma juice.

This linkage is still attested in post-Vedic tradition:

MBh 2.22.20ab

hayair divyaiḥ samāyukto ratho vāyusamo jave

Yoked with divine steeds *the chariot*, *which matched the wind* in speed.

In Latvian, the identical *Vēja rati*² is the chariot of the Sundaughter’s future husbands, i.e. the Divine Twins³:

LD 33798

Kam tie zirgi, kam tie rati,

Whom do these horses belong to, whom this chariot?

Kas tie tādi sabraukuši?

Who are these who have arrived?

Vēja zirgi, Vēja rati,

The Wind’s horses, the *Wind’s chariot*,

Saules meitas precinieki.

The Sundaughter’s suitors.

The other Indian Wind-god *Vāta* also appears to be a charioteer:

RV 10.168.1

vātasya nú mahimānaṃ rāthasya rujānn eti stanáyann asya ghóṣaḥ

¹ about Wind-gods, see West 2007, p. 263ff.

² PIE *h₂ēiús (or *h₂eh₂iús[?]), G *h₂e(h)iéus; *h₂(e)n(h)t(o)- ‘wind, Wind-god’: Ht. *huwant-*; In. *vāyú-*, *vāta-*; Ir. *vayu-*, *vāta-*; Persian *bād*; Os. *uad* (Digor *uadæ*); Gr. *áēmi* ‘to blow (like the wind)’; Lt. *uentus*; Gmc. *windaz (Got. *winds*; ON *vindr*; OHG *wind* > Germ. *Wind*; E *wind*); W *gwynt*; Br. *gwent*; Blt. *vējas (Lith. *vėjas*; Lv. *vējš*); OSl. *vějati* ‘to blow’; Toch. A/B *want/yente*.

³ Calin 2008 in KF nr. 18 (307).

divispr̥g yāty aruṇāni kṛṇvānn utó eti pr̥thivyā reṇúm áśyan
O the *Wind's chariot*, O its power and glory! Crashing it goes and hath a voice of thunder.
It makes the regions red and touches heaven, and as it moves the dust of earth is scattered.

Vāta is called a friend of Vāyu, and both share a relation to horses:

RV 10.136.5

vātasyāśvo vāyóh sákhátho devéṣito múnih
ubhaú samudráv á kṣeti yás ca pūrva utáparaḥ
The *Steed of Vāta*, *Vāyu's friend*, the Muni, by the Gods impelled,
In both the oceans hath his home, in eastern and in western sea.

ζ.I.B.2 *h₂u₂éi₂ous/h₂u₂ntos₂jo é₂kuōs – the Wind's horses

Here are a few more Vedic attestations of the Wind's horses⁴:

RV 10.22.5ab

tvám tyá cid vātasyāśvāga ṛjrá tmánā váhadhyai
Even to these dark *Steeds of Wind* thou of thyself hast come to ride,

RV 5.31.10ab

vātasya yuktán suyújaś cid áśvān kavís cid eṣó ajagann avasyúḥ
Even this sage hath come looking for succour even to *Vāta's* docile *harnessed horses*.

Latvian has replaced IE *é₂kuōs with *zirgs*, and this formula is attested more often than the previous *Vēja rati*. A cognate of Indic *yuktá-* (< *yunákti/yuñjati* “to yoke” < IE *_hu₂eg-⁵) – in RV 5.31.10ab above and

RV 1.134.3ab vāyúr yunkte róhitā Two red steeds *Vāyu yokes*,

is systematically found near the Avestan and Latvian Wind's horse(s):

Y 44.4d

kē vātāi duuṇmaibiascā yaogæt āsū Who yoked the *wind's* and the clouds' *swift pair*?

LD 17123

Es iejūdzu <u>Vēja zirgu</u>	I yoked the <i>Wind's horse</i>
Viesulīša kamanās,	To the whirlwind's sleigh,
Lai brauc mana līgaviņa,	For my bride to drive
Kā saulīte vizēdama.	Glimmering like the sun,

Tdz 55172

Tdz 55173

⁴ and with *haya-* replacing *asva-* in the Mahābhārata: MBh 2.45.56ab gaccha tvam ratham āsthāya *hayair vātasamair* jave (Go at once to your chariot, with steeds that match the wind in speed.)

⁵ IE *_hu₂eg- ‘to yoke, harness, join’, present *_hu₂négmī: In. *yunákti*; Ir. *yuǵ-*; Gr. *zeúgnūmi*; Lt. *iungere*; Lith. *jūngti*; Lv. *jūgt*; and PIE *_hu₂góm ‘yoke’: Ht. *yugan*; In. *yugám*; Ir. *yugám*; Pers. *joy*; Gr. *zugón*; Lt. *iugum*; Arm. *lowc*; Old Welsh *iou*; Got. *juk*; ON *ok*; OE *geoc* (> E *yoke*); OHG *joh* (> Germ. *Joch*); Lith. *jūngas*; Lv. *jūgs*; probably OIr. *cu-ing*; *_hu₂gos- in OSl. *igo*, Pl. *ižesa*.

Jyudzit man Vēja zirgus (...)

Es iejūdzu Vēja zirgu (...)

Yoke for me the *Wind's horses*!

I *yoked* the *Wind's horse*.

In the Latvian songs, the plural *Vēja zirgi* is more common:

LD 33798

(...) Vēja zirgi, Vēja rati (...)

The *Wind's horses*, the *Wind's chariot*,

LD 17144

Raugaties, labi ļaudis,

Behold, good people,

Kādi mūsu vedējiņi:

Who are our coachmen:

Vēja zirgi, Laimes rati,

The *Wind's horses*, *Laime's chariot*,

Jauni puīši ormanīši.

Young lads as drivers.

In the same way Indra's car is Vāyu, a Latvian god, maybe Pērkons, uses Wind's horses to pull his sleigh:

Tdz 54643

Dīvenč brauca Vēja zirgus,

The *god* drove the *Wind's horses*

Suņa kaula kamanīņas;

And his sleigh made of dogs' bones;

Ni puori skrēja Vēja zirgi,

The *Wind's horses* never tired,

Ni saliuza kamanīnis.

Nor did his sleigh break.

The Vedic formula *vātasya aśva-* may well be the origin of the Sanskrit epic “wind-swift horses”:

MBh 1.215.16ab

aśvāmś ca *divyān* iccheyam pāṇḍurān vātaramhasaḥ

Divine horses I want, white and *fast as the wind*,

MBh 10.11.28d-29ab

tūrṇam aśvān acodayat

te *hayāḥ* (...) coditā vātaramhasaḥ

He set his *horses* rushing forward. Those *steeds*, pressed forward, flew *like the wind*,

(*vātaramhasaḥ* also MBh 3.69.22ab, 5.166.31d, 6.92.12cd, 7.75.32cd),

MBh 5.55.12a

vātavegāḥ sadaśvā

horses as fast as the wind,

MBh 6.50.106c (= 7.93.33c, 7.96.41c)

vātāyamānais tair aśvaiḥ

by his *horses running like the wind*,

MBh 7.122.79a aśvair vātajavaiḥ

with *horses fleet as the wind*.

Greek WIND HORSES are only attested in Sophocles' following verses, whereby *aellád-*, suffixed variant of *áella/aéllē/aúella* (< *awel-ya < *h₂ue-l-+-ia), is a derivative of the same root *h₂ue(h)- found in Lv. *vējš* and In. *vāyú-* and *vāta-*:

Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus 467f

with strength mightier than that

ἀελλάδων ἵππων of the *horses of the winds*,

and Pindar calls horses “WIND-footed”⁶:

Nem. 1.6

ἀελλοπόδων ... ἵππων,

while Ovid's *uentōsi equī* may copy these Greek sources:

Fasti IV.392

uentosis ... equis with *wind-swift horses*.

⁶ copied by Apollonius Rhodius, Arg. 1.1158 ἀελλόποδες ἵπποι.