

The shape of the earth is compared with a wheel in the Rigveda,¹⁶ and is expressly called 'circular' (*pari-maṇḍala*) in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.¹⁷ When earth is conjoined with heaven, the two are conceived as great bowls (*camvā*) turned towards each other.¹⁸ In the Aitareya Āraṇyaka¹⁹ the two are regarded as halves of an egg. The distance of heaven from the earth is given by the Atharvaveda²⁰ as a thousand days' journey for the sun-bird, by the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa²¹ as a thousand days' journey for a horse, while the Pāṇcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa²² whimsically estimates the distance as equivalent to a thousand cows standing one on the top of the other.

According to Zimmer,²³ the Vedic poets conceived the atmosphere to be above the earth in its upper division only, but below it in its lower stratum. The evidence,²⁴ however, for the latter assumption is quite insufficient.²⁵ The theory of the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa²⁶ is that the sun merely reverses its bright side at night, turning its light on the stars and the moon while it retraverses its course to the east; and it has been shown²⁵ that this is probably the doctrine of the Rigveda also.²⁷ See also *Sūrya* and *Candramās*. For the Vedic knowledge of the planets, see *Graha*.

There is no geographical division of the earth in Vedic literature. The Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa²⁸ states that the centre of the earth is a span north of the *Plakṣa Prāsravaṇā*, and that the centre of the sky is the constellation of the seven *Rṣis*, the Great Bear. For the quarters, see *Diś*.

¹⁶ x. 89, 4. On the other hand, the earth is regarded as *catur-bhṛstī*, 'four-cornered,' in Rv. x. 58, 3.

¹⁷ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Rv. iii. 55, 20.

¹⁹ iii. 1, 2; Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka, vii. 3.

²⁰ x. 8, 18 = xiii. 2, 38; 3, 1.

²¹ ii. 17. Cf. *Āśvina*.

²² xvi. 8, 6; in xxi. 1, 9, with the alternatives of 1,000 days of the journey of a horse, or of the sun, or 1,000 leagues.

²³ *Altindisches Leben*, 357, 358.

²⁴ Rv. v. 81, 4; vi. 9, 1; vii. 80, 1.

²⁵ Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 10.

²⁶ iii. 44, 4. Speyer's interpretation of this passage, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, 723-727, is anticipated and supplemented by Macdonell, *loc. cit.*

²⁷ i. 115, 5; x. 37, 3.

²⁸ iv. 26, 12. Cf. Pāṇcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, xxv. 10, 16; Hopkins, *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 15, 31, n. 2. Cf. Bergaigne, *Religion Védique*, 1, 1-3; Wallis, *Cosmology of the Rigveda*, 111-117; Zimmer, *op. cit.*, 357-359; Macdonell, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-11; Thibaut, *Astronomie, Astrologie und Mathematik*, 5, 6; Weber, *Indische Studien*, 9, 358-364.