

similar phenomena to the sky. In some passages³ the vault (*nāka*) of the sky is added after the usual triad, and before the celestial light (*sva*, *jyotis*).

The threefold division of the universe is reflected in a threefold division of the three elements—earth, air, and sky. Thus a highest (*uttama*,⁴ *uttara*,⁵ *pārya*⁶), a middle, and a lowest heaven are specified.⁴ In the Atharvaveda⁷ the three heavens are distinguished as 'rich in water' (*udanvatī*), as *pīlumatī* (of uncertain meaning), and as the *pradyaus*, where the Fathers sit. Heaven is frequently called *vyoman* as well as *rocana*⁸ (properly the 'luminous space' of heaven), and the dividing firmament which separates the visible upper world from the highest heaven is called, besides *nāka*, 'vault,' *sānu*, 'summit,' *viṣṭap*, 'surface,' and *prsthā*, 'ridge,' and even 'ridge of the vault,'⁹ or 'summit of the vault.'¹⁰

Similarly three atmospheres (*rajas*), or oftener two, are alluded to,¹¹ but the division here is merely artificial. In one passage¹² six *rajāṃsi*, 'regions,' are referred to, the heavens and the earths no doubt being meant. The usual name for the atmosphere is *antarikṣa*.

The three earths are equally artificial, the origin of the triad being probably the use of *prthivī* in the plural¹³ to denote the three divisions of the universe (just as *pitarau*, 'two fathers,' denotes 'father and mother').¹⁴ The earth is called *kṣam*, *kṣā*, *gmā*, or designated by the epithets *mahī*, 'the great,' *prthivī* or *urvī*, 'the broad,' *uttānā*, 'the extended,' and is regularly contrasted as *idam*, 'this world here,' with the upper sphere.¹⁵

³ Av. iv. 14, 3 = Vājasaneyi Samhitā, xvii. 67.

⁴ Rv. v. 60, 6.

⁵ Rv. iv. 26, 6.

⁶ Rv. vi. 40, 5. In Rv. v. 4, 3, it is called *īrīya*.

⁷ xviii. 2, 48.

⁸ *Trīṇi* or *trī rocana*, Rv. i. 102, 8; 149, 4; v. 69, 1, etc.

⁹ Rv. i. 125, 5. Cf. iii. 2, 12.

¹⁰ Rv. viii. 103, 2. Cf. also ix. 86, 27.

¹¹ Rv. iv. 53, 5; v. 69, 1. Cf. also the references to the 'highest' atmo-

sphere, *uttama*, ix. 22, 5; *parama*, iii. 30, 2; *īrīya*, ix. 74, 6; x. 45, 3; 123, 8. The 'lower' (*upara*) or 'terrestrial' (*pārthiva*) is contrasted with the 'heavenly' (*divya*) space. See i. 62, 5; iv. 53, 3.

¹² Rv. i. 164, 6. Cf. vii. 87, 5.

¹³ Rv. i. 188, 9, 10; vii. 104, 11.

¹⁴ Cf. Delbrück, *Altindische Syntax*, p. 98; Macdonell, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 183c (p. 158).

¹⁵ Rv. i. 22, 17; 154, 1, 3; and regularly in the later Samhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.