APHRODITE OF THE DAWN:
INDO-EUROPEAN HERITAGE IN GREEK DIVINE
EPITHETS AND THEONYMS

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ABSTRACT: §1. Aphrodite, originally an epithet of PIE *h₂énos, has
taken over numerous features of the goddess of dawn. Like the Vedic
Uṣas she is the ‘daughter of the sky’. She is connected with the calm of
the sea (γαλήνη) and a rescuer of seafarers, a function fulfilled by Uṣas’
suitors in Vedic mythology. Her name may derive from *abhro-đih₂-ō-
‘shining up from the mist/foam’. §2.1 The epithets of Aphrodite made
up of or including colour terms (χρυσής, χρυσοστέφανος, etc.) may
refer to her original character as personification of dawn. §2.2 Her
connection with chariots as reflected e.g. in χρυσάνιος may derive
from her association with the chariot of the sun. This could also be
the case of χρυσόθρονος. §2.3 The use of ἅλκιακος in connection
with Aphrodite may be compared to Ved. vocamā-, said of Uṣas. §2.4 Her
epithet Ἀργυννίς corresponds to Ved. ārjanī-. §2.5 Aphrodite ῥοδέη
and ῥοδόχρους corresponds to ῥοδοδάκτυλος Eos. §3. The Vedic
dawn-cows can be compared with the cows of Helios on Thrinakia.
The epic epithets ἕλιξ and ἑλικοβλέφαρος may refer to the celestial
movement. §4. The inscriptional Aphrodite Ὄρθροῦ could be dawn
or the morning star as daughter of the morning twilight and may be
identical to the Ὄρθρια of Alcman fr. 1 and a riddle of Theognis (ll.
861-4). The Ἐρίβοια attested next to Aphrodite Ὄρθροῦ can be
understood as the one ‘rich in dawn-cows’.

KEY WORDS: Aphrodite and the Vedic Uṣas; goddess of dawn and
morning star; divine epithets and theonyms.

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1. Aphrodite, heiress to the PIE goddess of dawn

Since Dickmann Boedeker (1974) and Dunkel (1988) it has been a communis opinio that the Greek goddess Aphrodite has adopted features of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) goddess of dawn, sharing in this inheritance with Eos < PIE *h₂eúsòs and probably Helena, as well. Numerous features of Aphrodite point in this direction, e.g. the designation as *diús dugh₂tér 'daughter of the sky(god)' found in the Rig-Veda (RV) as divó duhítā, usually Uṣás 'dawn', which is reflected in Greek as θυγάτηρ Διός, who is the daughter of Hyperion (Hes. Th. 371-74, h. Hom. 31.6), but of other goddesses like Athene (Hes. Sc. 197), Artemis (Alkm. 27.1, 28), and the Muses (ll. 2.491, Od. 1.10, Hes. Th. 76), and also of Aphrodite (h. Aphr. 81 et passim). The epithet φιλομειδής 'having a lovely smile' – in Hesiod etymologized as φιλομηδής, since in Greek myth Aphrodite was born from Ouranos' μήδεα 'genitals' – is almost exclusively used of Aphrodite and recalls the frequent co-occurrence of Vedic smí 'to smile' and Uṣás in the RV, and like Aphrodite the Vedic goddess of...
dawn has a strong sexual aspect as represented in numerous passages, e.g.

RV 1.123.10

\begin{verbatim}
kanîyeva tanīvā śāśadānāṁ, ēṣi devi devāṁ iyakṣamāṇam
saṃsmāyamānā yuvatiḥ purāstād, āvīr vākṣāṃsi kṛṇe vibhāṭi
\end{verbatim}

Like a maiden, proud of her body, you, o goddess, approach the god desirous of you; smiling, a young woman, you unveil your breasts before him, shining up in the east.

Like a maiden, proud of her body, you, o goddess, approach the god desirous of you; smiling, a young woman, you unveil your breasts before him, shining up in the east.

RV 1.92.6

\begin{verbatim}
ätāriṣma tāmasas pārāṁ asyā, uṣā uchāntī vayunā kṛṣnoti
śrīyē chāndo nā smayate vibhāṭi, suprātikā saumanasā yājīgah
\end{verbatim}

We have reached the end of this darkness. Shining up Uśas determines the time. Like a seductress she smiles beautifully when she is shining. Of beautiful appearance she has given rise to cheerfulness.

In

RV 10.172.1 ā yāhi vānasā sahā

come along with your desire

the hapax vānasā ‘desire’ is used in combination with Uśas. This feature of dawn’s character has been inherited in Greek mythology by both Aphrodite and Eos, and it has been hypostatized into a new personality of her own, Venus, in the Roman world. In Greek mythology, both Eos and Aphrodite have manifold sexual relations with humans: as Eos abducts Orion (Od. 5.121), Tithonos (h. Aphr. 218), Kephalos (Eur. Hipp. 455) and Kleitos (Od. 15.250), Aphrodite abducts Phaethon (Hes. Theog. 990) and falls in love with Adonis (Athen. Deipn. 10.83.34) and Anchises (h. Aphr. 218-38). In the latter case, Aphrodite makes explicit reference to the abduction of Tithonos by Eos as a precedent (Nagy 1996: 49). In the myth of Phaethon the goddesses appear side by side, Eos as his mother, Aphrodite as the one who falls in love with him and abducts him to serve in her temple (cf. Hes. Th. 984-91). It is not unlikely that this version of the story is the result of a reshuffle of the protagonists.

\footnote{Cf. Geldner’s German translation: “Wie eine Maid, die stolz auf ihren Körper, gehst du, Göttin, zu dem dich begehrenden Gott. Lächelnd enthüllst du, die junge Frau, vor ihm die Brüste, wenn du im Osten erstrahlt.”}
after Eos and Aphrodite had become two deities independent from each other. Their co-occurrence in the same myth, however, may point to an earlier state of affairs: in the RV Uṣas is both mother and consort or bride to the sun(-god) Sūrya, a situation matching the Greek state of affairs if we interpret Phaethon ‘the shining one’ as an instantiation of the sun. Another, though indirect, connection between Aphrodite and the lovely smile may be seen in the fact that she is connected with the calm and shining sea, the γαλήνη, in a number of passages, e.g. she is called γαληναίη in AP X.21 Κύρια γαληναίη, and is responsible for the calm of the sea reported in the story of Dexicreon told by Plutarchus (Aetia Romana et Graeca, Stephanus 303C9) (Pirenne-Delforge, 1994: 433-37):

Τίς ἡ αἰτία, δι᾽ ἣν ἐν Σάμῳ τὴν Δεξικρέοντος Ἀφροδίτην καλοῦσι; πότερον διὰ τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τρυφῆς καὶ ὑβρεῖς ἀκόλουθα ποιοῦσας Δεξικρέον ἀνήρ ἀγώρης καθαρμὸς χρησάμενος ἐπήλαξεν ὥς ἦν ναῦκληρος οὗ ὁ Δεξικρέων ἐπέλευσεν εἰς Κύπρον ἐπ᾽ ἐμπόριαν καὶ μέλλοντα γεμίζειν *** τὴν Ἀφροδίτην κελεύειν ὑδώρ ἐμβαλόμενο καὶ μηδὲν ἄλλο πλεῖν τὴν ταχίστην· πεισθεὶς δὲ καὶ πολὺ ὕδωρ ἐνθέμενος ἐξέπλευσεν, εὖ δὲ ἐμπόρῳ καὶ γαλήνης ἐν τῷ πελάγει κατασχούσης, διψῶσι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐμπόροις καὶ ναῦκληροῖς ὑδώρ πυράσκων ἀργύριον πολὺ συνήθροισεν, ἐκ δὲ τούτου κατασκευάσας τὴν θεὸν ἄφροτα ἐκαλεύσεως;  

Why is it that on Samos they call upon Aphrodite of Dexicreon? – Is this the reason that the women of Samos, by lasciviousness and bawdry falling into great debauchery, were reformed by Dexicreon, a charlatan, using some charms towards them? Or was it because Dexicreon, being the master of a ship, and sailing to Cyprus on a trading voyage, and being about to take in his lading, was commanded by Venus to saddle with water and nothing else, and sail back with all possible speed? Being persuaded to do so, he took in much water and

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9 E.g. RV 1.115.2 sūryo devīm uṣāsan r̥camaṁ nā mṝyaṁ abhy eti paśeḥ. “Like a young man goes after a maiden, so Sūrya follows the shining goddess Uṣas”, 7.78.3 aṁjanu sūram “she (sc. Dawn) has given birth to Sūrya.”

10 Cf. Nagy (1996): 49. The same may be true on the cosmological level: in Hes. Th. 378ff. Eos gives birth to the stars, among them the morning star (Eosphoros), which can be identified with Aphrodite, the morning and evening star (Venus). Thanks to A. Filoni for pointing this out to me.
set sail immediately; still winds and a calm detaining him, he sold his water to merchants and seamen distressed with thirst, whereby he gathered up much money; from which he erected a statue to Venus, and called it by his own name. If this story be true, it is manifest that the Goddess intended not only the enriching of one man, but the saving of many alive by one man (after Goodwin, Plutarch, The Morals, 1878).

Similarly, in a story attributed to Polycharmos of Naukratis (fr. 5 Müller, FHG IV, p. 480), quoted by Athenaios XV, 675f-76c, Aphrodite is responsible for the calm of the sea and the final rescue of the voyagers:

In the 23th Olympiad, Herostratos, one of my co-citizens, a merchant who had already sailed to a number of countries, once came to Paphos on Cyprus and bought a little statue of Aphrodite, a span long, of old workmanship, and then went back on his way to Naukratis. When he approached Egypt, suddenly a storm broke out and they could no longer see where they were (heading); they all took refuge to this statue of Aphrodite, asking her to rescue them. The goddess, who had always loved the people of Naukratis, suddenly transformed everything around her into a green space of myrrhe and filled the whole ship with the sweetest scent, when everybody on board had already despaired of salvation because of the seasickness. After a lot of vomiting had occurred and the sun had begun to shine again, they finally beheld the coastline and reached Naukratis.
A connection between γαλήνη and the rescue of a seafarer is established also in Od. 5.390 where Ulysses is about to reach safe land. The goddess in question here, however, is not, as one might expect, Aphrodite, but her alter ego, Eos:

\[
\begin{align*}
nά\,\tau\nu\,\gammaάλήνη\,\tauο\nu\,\nu\ddot{o}\nu\ddot{o}\nu\ddot{o}
\end{align*}
\]

But when fair-haired Dawn brought on the third day and then the wind stopped and there was a windless calm, he beheld a land nearby, looking forward keenly, when a great wave lifted him up.

The imagery of the calm sea and the smiling waters is taken up in the invocation and description of Venus in Lucr. 1.6–9

\[
\begin{align*}
te, \text{ dea, } te \text{ fugiunt venti, te rubila caeli} \\
\text{adventu} \text{ventum } t\text{uam, tibi suavis daedala tellus} \\
\text{summitta } \text{flores, tibi rident } a\text{equora ponti} \\
\text{placetumque } \text{nitet diffuso hemine cachum.}
\end{align*}
\]

Before thee, Goddess, and thy coming on,
Flee stormy wind and massy cloud away,
For thee the daedal Earth bears scented flowers,
For thee waters of the unvexed deep
Smile, and the hollows of the serene sky
Glow with diffused radiance for thee. (Leonard/Dutton 1916)

Beside this, there is also a morphological connection between Aphrodite and the calm of the sea, since γαλήνη is derived from the same root as γέλως ‘laughter, smile’, γελάω ‘to laugh’, i.e. *gěl2₃-neh₂ > *galasnā > *gəlānā, cf. also Arm.  căl ‘laughter’. The connection is also valid outside Greek: in Vedic religion rescuing seafarers is part of the Aśvins’ sive the Nāsatyas’ (“Saviours”) duties who are intimately related to the dawn-goddess Uṣas as her suitors and correspond to the Greek Dioskouroi.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The connection between the two concepts can also be seen in the gloss of Hesychius } \\
\gammaάλην’ λάμπειν. \text{ ἀνθεῖν.}
\end{align*}
\]
The etymological proposals to explain the name of Aphrodite itself have centered around these ideas, and the most promising candidates so far – if one does not want to abandon any attempt to find an Indo-European etymology\(^1\) – seem to be those starting from a second element *dih₂*-to- ‘shining’ from *dei₂h₂- (: Gk. δέαται/-το). While Witzack (1993) assumes a first element *abhro*- ‘strong’ as in Gothic abrs ‘strong’ (: ἰσχυρός), Welsh afr ‘very’, Janda (2005: 349-360) returns to Leo Meyer’s view that the first element is nothing else but the well-known Greek word ἀφρός ‘foam’, just like Greek learned and popular etymology understood the form in antiquity\(^2\) – it was only the second element that was no longer connected with the relic-form δέαται – cf. Meyer (1901: 1.166f): ”shining in the foam” (“im Schaume glänzend”), Janda (2005: 360): “who (starts to) shine(s) in the foam” (“die im Schaum aufstrahlt”).\(^3\) Just like Eos regularly rises from the sea, so Aphrodite is lead by Zephyros across the sea in h. Aphr. 1-6:

Αἰδοίην χρυσοστέφανον καλήν Ἀφροδίτην ἄσωμι, ἡ πάσης Κύπρου κρήδεμνα λέλογχεν εἰναλίας, δόθι μν Ζεφύρου μένος ὑγρὸν ἀέντος ἣνικιν κατὰ κόμμα πολυφλοίσβοι θαλάσσης ἀφρῷ ένι μαλακῷ· τὴν δὲ χρυσάμπυκες Ῥώαι δέξαντ’ ἀσπασίως, περὶ δ’ ἀμφίποτα ἐματα ἐδοσαιν

I will sing of that beautiful goddess who wears a crown of gold, revered Aphrodite, who owns on all Cyprus surrounded by sea. Each circling head-dress of towers. There strong Zephyr’s moist breath through crashing waves conveyed her, amid the soft foam, to shore. The Seasons whose fillets are golden gave her a welcome of joy.

(Cr Cutten)

She is described as rising up from the sea in various poems in the AP, e.g.

\(^1\) As do e.g. Frisk (1960 s.v) and West (2000) who opts for a Semitic origin of the name, viz. a title of the goddess 'Aštart, ṣrāt 'she of the villages’. On inner-Greek interpretations of the name cf. Pironiti (2005).

\(^2\) Cf. the epithets ἀφρογένεια (Mosch. 2.71), ἀφρογενής (Orph.fr. 183), Ἀφρώ Nic. Alex. 406, etc.

\(^3\) A similar image is presented in Il. 1.359 where Thetis rises from the sea “like a cloud” or “like mist”, καρπαλίμως ὁμίχλη “quickly she rose from the grey sea like a cloud”. One may note that ἀφρός ‘foam’ is usually considered related to Skt. abhrā- ‘cloud’, cf. Mayrhofer (1992-2001): I. 94 (despite Frisk 1960 s.v).
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11.174.1f. Τὰν ἀναδυομέναν ἀπὸ ματέρος ἄρτι θαλάσσας
Κύπριν ὄλην χρυσῆν ἐβάλες ἐκλείψε Δίων

A Cypris made of gold, rising from her mother, the sea, Dion has
stolen yesterday,

is ποντογενής ‘sea-born’ in the Orphic poems (h. 55.2)

Οὐρανία, πολύυμνε, φιλομειδής Ἀφροδίτη,
ποντογενής, γενέτειρα θεά, φιλοπάννυχε, σεμνή

Heavenly, much-sung, lovely smiling Aphrodite, sea-born, goddess of
procreation, friend of all-night festivals, revered one.

and θαλασσίγονος in Nonn. D. 13.458 (θαλασσίγονον Παφίης) or simply
θαλασσία in AP 5.301.6 (θαλασσία ... Παφίη, et passim), εἶναι ‘being in the
sea’ (AP 9.333.2, εἶναι Νονν. D. 42.456). She was depicted as rising from
the sea in a famous painting of Apelles entitled Ἀφροδίτη ἀναδυομένη, in AP 12.207
simply referred to as “the Ἀναδυομένη”15, which is similar to the epithet of Ψάσ
'brhat’ ‘the lofty one’ (PIE *bʰరǵʰh₂, which survives in the name (and mythological
features) of St. Brigid in Old Irish) which probably originally meant ‘the rising one’
as PIE *bʰṃrkʰ- is used in this sense of the moon and the stars in Hittite pärk-, e.g.

15 Str. 14.2.19 ἐν δὲ τῷ προαστείῳ τὸ Ἀσκληπειόν ἦσσι, σφόδρα ἐνδοξὸν καὶ πολλὸν ἀναθημάτων μετοχών, ἐν ᾗς ἔστι καὶ ὁ Ἀπελλόος Ἀντίγονος. ἂν δὲ καὶ ἡ ἀναθημαίνη Ἀφροδίτη, ἢ γὰρ ἀναθημαίνεται τῷ θεῷ Καϊσαρί ἐν Ρώμη. Πλι. HN 35. 91 Venerem ex-
cunctem e mari dies Augustus dicavit in delubro patris Caesaris, quae anaphumene vocatut,
versibus Graecis tantumpe dum laudatur, aetis victa, sed inlustrata.

— 112 —
kauc ka kam [sai] pärkəw
high had the sun risen.

pärkə meñ e wohnmentsa täñ
the moon rose over thy creatures

Her connection with the sea is also evidenced by epithets like εὔπλοια 'securing safe passage' (in Piræus, cf. Paus. 1.1.3, Knidos, Olbia, Delos, etc.), πόντια καὶ ἐπιλιμένια 'protectress of the sea and harbour' in Hermione (Paus. 2.34.11)\(^1\), and θαλασσαίη.\(^2\)

In Greek myth itself Aphrodite is literally the daughter of 'heaven', the god Uranos. In his Theogony Hesiod describes how she was born when Kronos – probably derived from PIE *ker- 'to cut', Gk. κείρο, *kr̩-ono- (Janda 2010: 50f.) – cut off Uranos’ genitals and threw them into the sea, where from the foam (αφρός) Aphrodite was born.\(^3\) This myth might be related to the slaying of Vṛtra (and Vala) by Indra and the subsequent release of the light (Janda 2010: 60f., 243ff.) as in RV 8.3.20

\[
\begin{align*}
nir & \text{agnāyō} \ rurucur \ nir \ u \ sūryo, \ nīh \ soma \ indriyō \ rāsah \nir & \text{antārikṣād} \ adhamo \ mahām \ āhīm, \ kṛṣé \ tād \ indra \ paīmsyam
\end{align*}
\]

The fires came to light and the sun and the soma, Indra's drink.
Away from the sky you blew the great dragon, this manly deed you have done, o Indra,

and in

\(^{16}\) Αφροδίτης ναὸς ἐστίν ἐπίκλησιν Ποντίας καὶ Λιμενίας τῆς αὐτῆς, ἄγαλμα δὲ λευκοῦ λίθου μεγέθει τε μέγα καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ τέχνῃ θέας ἄξιον.


\(^{18}\) Gk. οὐρανός is usually considered an old epithet of *dī́yōs, the PIE defied sky, for which various etymological proposals have been put forward, either equating it with the Indic Varuna-, PIE *yēr̩-u-r̩mayo- from *yēr̩- ‘to cover, enclose’ (: Skt. var-, prs. vṛ̱n̩ādi ‘enclose, fence in, hold back, cover’), cf. Dunkel (1988: 3), or connecting it with PIE *h₂y̱ers- ‘rain’ as first proposed by Bopp (1861: 453 fn. 3), maybe used metaphorically as ‘to impregnate’ (cf. Peters 1993) or, as per Janda (2004) and Janda (2010: 48-50), as *yārsman- ‘the one in the height’, a derivative of *yārsman- ‘height’ attested in Skt. varśman- ‘height’ said of the sky in RV 4.54.4 varśman divāḥ ‘the height of the sky’.
RV 6.17.5
yēbhēḥ sāryam usāsam mandāsānō, 'vāsayō ’pa drāhāṇi dādrat

inspired by them [sc. the soma drinks] you let shine the sun and the
dawn, crushing the citadel.

It is in the light of this IE ancestry of Aphrodite that some of her epithets\textsuperscript{19} attested both in Greek literature and in inscriptions shall be investigated in what follows, namely the colour terms most frequently used in describing her appearance (2), the epithet ἑλικόβλέφαρος (3) and her connection with ὀρθρός 'morning twilight' and Ἑριβοία (4).

2. The colours of love

2.1. Golden Aphrodite:

Among the commonest epithets applied to Aphrodite are derivatives of χρυσός ‘gold’ such as χρυσεῖα, χρυσείη in ll. 3.64 (; χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης), or πολύ-χρυσός which is used only of Aphrodite (h. Aphr. +9 ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης, Hes. op. 521, th. 980, sc. 8. 47, fr. 146 [Kinkel]).\textsuperscript{20} She is χρυσόπεπλος ‘wearing a golden garment’ in

Anacr. fr. 73 κλὸθι μεῳ γέροντος εὔθειρα χρυσόπεπλε κοῦρα\textsuperscript{21}
Listen to me, who am an old man, o maiden with beautiful hair,
wearing a golden garment,

she wears a ‘golden wreathe’, χρυσοστέφανος, in

*h. Aphr. 1 αἰδοίην χρυσοστέφανον καλὴν Ἀφροδίτην
Reverend, beautiful Aphrodite, wearing a golden wreathe,

Sapph. 33.1 χρυσοστέφαν’ Ἐφρόδιτα
Aphrodite, wearing a golden wreathe,

\textsuperscript{19} For an exhaustive list of literary epithets cf. Bruchmann (1893).
\textsuperscript{20} In Homer πολύχρυσος is otherwise said only of cities (Mycene ll. 7.180, 146, Od. 3.304, Troy ll. 18.289, Dolon ll. 10.315).
\textsuperscript{21} Where κοῦρα is most likely to refer to Aphrodite, cf. ll. 20.105 Διὸς κούρης Ἀφροδίτης, Orph. h. 57.4 Παιδίς κούρης.
an epithet said of Phoibe (‘the bright one’, Hes. Th. 136) and Hebe (‘youth’, Pl. P. 9.109), as well, two central characteristics of the PIE dawn.

Aphrodite’s Indic sister Uṣas has similar characteristics, she is of golden colour, hiranyakāṃ (Dickmann Boedeker 1974: 22), and like Aphrodite she wears ‘a shining garment’; cf.

RV 7.77.2
viśvam prátiḥ saprāthā úd asthād, riśad vāśo bibhrati śukrām aśvait hiranyakāṃ śudrṣikasamdegr, gāvām mātā netry āḥnām aroci

Turning to everyone she has risen in all her breadth, wearing a white shining garment she has begun to shine; golden-coloured, the mother of the cows is beautiful to behold, the leader of the days has begun to shine

RV 3.61.2
úṣo devy ámartyā vi bhāhi, candrārathā sūnja śrāyantī aśvā vahantu suyāmāsō aśvā, hiranyakāṃ pṛthuṣpājasa yē

Divine, immortal Uṣas, shine forth on your splendid chariot, bringing great gifts, may the horses with broad features drive you hither, you of golden colour.

2.2.

Both goddesses are naturally associated with the chariot of the sun-god. Plutarch reports that there was a cult of Ἀφροδίτη Ἀρμα at Delphi

Plut. Erot. 23, 769b τὴν Ἀφροδίτην Ἀρμα’ καλοῦσιν
They call Aphrodite ‘Arma’,

in Sapph. fr. 1 she uses a chariot to descend to earth:

23 The frequency of χρυσός and derivatives as epithets of Aphrodite has been remarked by Meyer (1901: i.161) as well: “Dass sie ursprünglich als ‘leuchtend, glänzend’ gedacht worden ist, geht am deutlichsten daraus hervor, dass sie oft geradezu als ‘die goldene’... bezeichnet ist.”
Leaving your father's house, you came, having yoked your golden chariot, and is described as mounting the Graces' chariot in fr. 194 (from Himerius Orat. 9.4), Ἀφροδίτην ἐφ’ ἅρμα Χαρίτων.

As seen in RV 3.61.2, Ušas uses a 'shining chariot' to ascend into the sky and the chariot used by the Aśvins – her mythological suitors – is made of gold, including a golden seat, hiranyavandhura-²⁴, and golden reins (hiranyabhīṣuh), cf.

RV 8.5.28

rāthaṁ hiranyavandhuraṁ, hiranyābhiśum aśvinā
dhi sīhaṁh daivipśam
. 29 hiranyāyāṁ vāṁ rábhīr, ṯaṁ ṯaṁ hiranyāyāṁ
ubhaṁ cakraṁ hiranyāyā

Mount the chariot with the golden seat, with the golden reins, o Aśvins, that reaches up to the sky. [29] Golden is its back rest, golden is its axle and both wheels are made of gold.²⁵

The latter corresponds to Aphrodite's epithet χρυσάνιος in

S. OC 693 ἀ χρυσάνιος Ἡ Ἀφροδίτα²⁶
Aphrodite of the golden rein

Similar to her co-heiress Eos who 'has a golden throne' – χρυσόθρονος – (e.g. Od. 12.142, h. Aphr. 218), an epithet used also of Hera and Artemis, Aphrodite is described as ποικιλόθρονος in the famous first fragment of Sappho's poems,

fr. 1 πο[ικ]ιλόθρονος’ ἀθανάτ’ Ἀφρόδιτα
immortal Aphrodite of the colourful throne

²⁴ Also said of Indra's and Vayu's chariot in RV 4.46.4 rāthaṁ hiranyavandhuraṁ. In both cases it is described as divāpīṣ-'reaching the sky'.
²⁵ Also RV 8.22.5 rāthaḥ … hiranyabhīṣuh.
²⁶ Also said of Ares, Artemis, and Demeter.
The much-disputed form has either been interpreted as referring to a θρόνος of Aphrodite, probably making reference to a cult-image of the goddess representing the goddess herself seated on a golden throne, or as referring to the Homeric ἡφαῖξ θρόνα attested in Il. 22.441, where it seems to indicate ‘ornaments’, cf.

Il. 22.441 δίπλακα πορφυρήν, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ’ ἐπαρσο[...]

while in later authors it is used in the meaning ‘healing / magic herbs’:

Theocr. 2.59 Θεστυλί, νῦν δὲ λαβόισα τὸ τὰ θρόνα ταῦθ’ ύπόμαξον τὰς τήνω φλαζ καθ’ ύπέρτερον, ἄς ἔτι καὶ νῦς,

Thestylis, now take these herbs and smear them on his door, the part above the jambs, while it is still night,

Nic. Ther. 98-101 Εἴ γε μὲν ἐκ τριόδοιο μεμιγμένα κνώδαλα χύτρῳ ζωὰ νέον θορνύντα καὶ ἐν θρόνα τοιάδε βάλλῃς,

If however you can cast snakes coupled at crossroads, alive and just mating, into a pot, and the following medicaments besides, you have a preventive against deadly disasters (Gow 1953),

Lycophr. 673-5 ποίαν δὲ θηρόπλαστον οὐκ ἐσώφεται ὄραμαν, ἐγκυκῶσαν ἀλεξητήριον θρόνα καὶ κῆρα κνωπόμορφον;

And what she-dragon shall he not behold who moulds wild beasts, who blends with barley drugs and doom of monstrous forms? (Mooney 1979).

Scholia and glosses point into the same direction, cf. the scholion on Theocr. 2.59:

θρόνα: Θεσσαλοὶ μὲν τὰ πεποικίλμενα ζῷα, Κύπριοι δὲ τὰ ἄνθινα ἰμάτια, Αἰτωλοὶ δὲ τὰ φάρμακα, ὃς φησὶ Κλείταρχος

and Hesychius’ gloss

θρόνα· ἀνθή, καὶ τὰ ἐκ χρωμάτων ποικίλματα,
but none of them is necessarily independent from the passage in Homer. In Risch’s view (Risch 1972) the adjective ποικιλόθρονος ‘having a colourful throne’ as used in Sappho is likely to be the older form that was re-analyzed as containing a second element θρόνα ‘ornament, embroidery’ before or when it was taken over into hexametric poetry. The equation with φάρμακα found in later poetry is likely to rely on a re-interpretation of the otherwise unknown θρόνα in ll. 22.441 due to the frequent co-occurrence of the verb πάσσω ‘to embroider, to strew’ with φάρμακα (cf. ll. 5.401 = 900 ὀδύνφατα φάρμακα πάσσων, ll. 11.515 ἡ πάσσα φάρμακα πάσσειν, etc.; cf. Risch 1972: 25).

If one subscribes to this view, one may assume that ποικιλόθρονος refers to a cult-image of the goddess seated on a throne in her sanctuary. But there may be yet another possibility: in view of the Vedic description of Uṣas and the chariot with a golden seat one may assume that θρόνα could not only refer to a ‘throne’ in a temple, but also to a ‘seat’ more generally and also to the ‘seat’ of a chariot. A parallel for this assumption may be the use of δίφρος which can either refer to the box of the chariot in which both the combatant and the chariot-driver could stand, whence it was used metonymically for the chariot as a whole, or to a seat in general (Plath 1994: 194f.). ποικιλόθρονος, which in Risch’s opinion (loc. cit.) was a traditional epithet already for Sappho, could thus be a semantic match for the Vedic hiranyavandhura-. In addition, one may note that Uṣas’ chariot is supeśas- ‘beautifully adorned’ (RV 1.49.2), where the element -peś- corresponds etymologically to the first member of ποικιλόθρονος (: PIE *pejk-, Ved. piṃśati ‘cuts, forms, adorns’, toch. B pīnak ‘they paint, write’, etc.).

2.3.

While it is true, as we have seen, that derivatives based on χρυσός can of course be applied not only to Aphrodite, but to a number of gods and goddesses, the frequency with which they apply to Aphrodite on the one hand, and the exclusiveness of some of these epithets on the other hand (cf. πολύχρυσος) make it unlikely to assume that we are dealing here with a meaningless abundance of epitheta ornantia. This is all the more likely when apart from a semantic, there is also a formal match as in the case of Aphrodite λευκά in Anacreontea 55.5f. [Bergk] (λευκάν ... Κύπριν) where the same root (: PIE *leuk-) is used of Aphrodite that frequently applies to the Vedic Uṣas, too (rocamanā ‘shining’, e.g. RV 1.115.2).
2.4.

An even closer match has been described recently by Janda (2005: 333f., 2006: 16-20) who drew attention to the epithet Ἀργυννίς which can be compared to arjunī, the feminine form of Skt. arjuna- ‘silver-coloured, white’, said of Uṣas in

RV 1.49.3
váyaś cit te patatríno, dvipác cátuspad arjuni
ūṣāḥ prārann rṣūṁ ānu, divo ānteḥyas pári

The lively birds, all two-footed and four-footed beings have appeared according to your temporal order from all ends of the sky, o bright-shining Uṣas.

The Greek form is attested in the lexicon of Stephanus of Byzantium (~ 6 c. AD),


Argynnos, son of Peisidike ... lover of Agamemnon, a Boeotian, who died in the river Kephisos, whence he (Ag.) honoured Aphrodite Argynnis, also called Argunis,

and earlier in a testimonium on Phanocles in Clemens of Alexandria’s Ὀρώπεικος (2/3 c. AD), cf.

Clemens Alex. Ὀρώπεικ. 2.38 Φαινοκλῆς δὲ ἐν Ὑμεροσὺν ἢ Καλοῖς ἱστορεῖ Ἀγαμέμνονα τῶν Ἐλλήνων βασιλέα Ἀργυννίδος νιὼν Ἀφροδίτης εἴσασθαι ἐπὶ Ἀργύννῳ τῷ ἐρωμένῳ.

27 Janda loc. cit. only quotes Steph. Byz., but, as the examples show, the form is attested already at an earlier date.
Phanokles in his “Erotes and Kaloi” tells the story of Agamemnon, king of the Greeks, how he built a temple for Aphrodite Argynnis in memory of his lover Argynnos.28

In Athenaios we find

Athen. Deipnosophistae 13. 603d (2/3 c. AD) ἴσαμεννονά τε Ἄργυννον ἐρασθῆναι λόγος, ἰδόντες ἐπὶ τῷ Κηφισῷ νηχόμενον· ἐν ὦ καὶ τελευτήσαντα αὐτὸν (συνεχῶς γὰρ ἐν τῷ ποταμῷ τούτῳ ἀπελούετο) θάψας εἶσατο καὶ ἱερὸν αὐτὸθι Ἁφροδίτης Ἄργυννίδος.

Agamemnon, the story goes, fell in love with Argynnos when he saw him swimming in the river Kephisos; when he died there (for he frequently took a bath in that river), Agamemnon buried him and built a temple on the same spot for Aphrodite Argynnis.

As pointed out by Janda loc. cit., it seems likely that the story of Argynnos has been spun out of the epithet when it was no longer understood in Greek itself.29

To Argynnis one may add ἄργυρόπεζα ‘with silver feet’, said in Homer only of Thetis, used of Aphrodite in Pind. P. 9.16 (9) ἄργυρόπεζα Αφροδίτα.

2.5.

Like ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἡώς ‘rosy-fingered Eos’ in Homer, Aphrodite is ῥοδή in AP 9.386.4 (ῥοδής Παφίης, said only of Paphia = Aphrodite) and ῥοδόχρους ‘with rosy skin’ in the Anacreontea 53.22 [Bergk] cf.

ῥοδοδάκτυλος μὲν Ἡώς,
ῥοδοπήχεες δὲ Νύμφαι,
ῥοδόχρους δὲ κἀφροδίτα
παρὰ τῶν σοφῶν καλείται.

28 This is the text as given by Powell (1925) who bases his corrections on the information given in Athenaios.

29 One might suspect (A. Filoni p.c.) that in an earlier version of the story it was not Agamemnon, but Aphrodite herself who fell in love with Argynnos. This might explain why he was buried next to a temple of hers.
Eos is called rosy-fingered by the sages, the nymphs are called ‘with rosy elbows’ and Aphrodite ‘with rosy skin’.

Finally, πορφυρέη ‘bright-red, rosy’ in Anacr. 2.3 [Bergk] (πορφυρῆ τ’ Ἀφροδίτη) is said only of Aphrodite among the gods.

As we can see, these colour-terms find their correspondences both in Greek in that they are partially common to Eos and to Aphrodite and in Vedic where Uṣas is described with etymologically and/or semantically matching terms.

3. Cows on the move

It is well-known that one of the forms the PIE goddess of dawn could take at least in Vedic mythology is that of the cow. As we saw above in RV 7.77.2, she is the ‘mother of the cows’ and the one who ‘leads / brings on the days’, gāvāṃ mātā netīyāṁ, and in RV 7.79.1 she comes along with beautiful cows (susamāṃgābhir ukṣābhir) who are also simply called usriyās and usrās ‘dawn-cows’ (“vaches-aurorales” in Renou’s terms). In Greek, it is obvious that Helios’ cows and sheep, numbering each seven times fifty, represent the single days of the (moon) year, cf. Od. 12. 127ff.

30 E.g. RV 4.5.8, 7.81.2 (led by the Sun itself), cf. Watkins (2009: 225) and EVP 3.4-7, 33.
31 Cf. in this sense Ohlert (1912: 86). Also the cows in the Hymn to Hermes (192-4) are probably related to this, cf. Ohlert loc. cit. If they are not counted and equated with the days of the year, the sun-cows may also represent its rays, as in Vedic and Avestan tradition as well. In the Odyssey Hyperion threatens the gods that if he does not get a compensation for the slaying of his cows, he will have to reside in the underworld (Od. 12.382f.), deprived of his cows, i.e. his rays, cf. Campanile (1986). Cf. also Vegas Sansalvador (2010: 689).
Then you will reach the island of Thrinakia. There many cows and fat sheep of Helios graze, seven herds of cattle and as much fine flocks of sheep, fifty in each. They have no offspring nor do they ever perish. Goddesses are their shepherds, nymphs with beautiful hair, Phaethousa and Lampetiê whom divine Neaira bore for Helios Hyperion, and their lady mother bore and raised them and sent them off to live far away on the island of Thrinakia to guard their father’s sheep and winding cattle.

The riddle expressed in “they have no offspring nor do they ever perish” does not simply refer to divine immortality, but to the repetition of the celestial phenomena that constantly renew themselves, an idea probably also represented in the telling name of Νέαιρα from νεαρός ‘youthful; new’,32 like Uṣas who is both ‘old’ and ‘young’ in RV 3.61.1 purāṇī devi yuvatih, and asked to shine navyasi ‘anew, again’ in the same hymn v. 3.33

The troublesome epithet ἕλιξ said of cows may in this light be understood as referring to that very same movement of dawn and sun, winding their way (εἰλέω, PIE *u̞l-, arm. gelowm, lat. volvo) through the sky each day.34 The same image, expressed by means of vart ‘to turn’ (: lat. verto) is attested also for the Vedic Uṣas who is invoked to ‘roll like a wheel’ across the sky:

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34 Cf. the sun as ἐλλύσας, E. Ph. 2 Ἡλιος, θεώς ὑπεκούσαν ἐλλύσας φλόγη, Theodect. fr. 10 [Nauck] ὦ καλλίφεργη λαμπάδι ἐλλύσας φλόγης. ‘Ἡλιος, θεώς οὐκ ἔστερες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἐλάληται Luc. Astr. 29; περὶ τὴν γῆν ἢ μήν ἢ μήν ἢ ἡμέρα ἢ νύκτα, ἢ τοὺς τοῖς ἡμέρας περιεστάνειν εὑρήσεις. (10) Eustathius p. 1717. ἰσίενον δὲ ὅτι τὰς ἀγέλας ταύτας καὶ μάλιστα τὰς τῶν βοῶν φασι τὸν Ἀριστοτέλην ἀλληγορεῖν εἰς τὰς δωδεκάδας τῶν σεληνικῶν μηνῶν ἡμέρας γινομένας πεντήκοντα πρὸς τὰς τριακοσίας, ὅσος καὶ ὁ ἄριθμος ταύτας ἀπὸ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἔχουσας ἀνὰ πεντήκοντα δύο. (15) διὸ ὅτε γόνων αὐτῶν γίνεται Ὀμήρος λέγει ὅτε φθοράν· τὸ γάρ ἄυτο ποσὸν ἢ ἄυτο τοιαύτας ἡμέρας μένει. Cf. also West (2008: 370-72).
RV 3.61.3 cakrám iva navasyā ā vaytsva

Turn hither anew like a wheel.35

If this is the original meaning of ἐλίκας βόες, one has to assume that subsequently the epithet was reinterpreted as either referring to the movement of cows in a literal sense, or to their having 'curved horns'. The various interpretamenta found for this form in Hesychius and the Homeric scholia point in this direction:36

εἰλίποδας βοῦς· ἐπιθετικῶς τὰς βοῦς (Φ 448), διὰ τὸ ἑλίσσαιν τοὺς πόδας κατὰ τὴν πορείαν τρ .. τὰς αὐτάς καὶ εἰλίποδας ἐλίκας διὰ τὸ οὕτως βαδίζειν λέγουσι (I 466)

ἐλίκας· ἐλικοκεράτους S ἐπικαμπῆ τὰ κέρατα ἐχοντας (I 466)

ἐλίκας βοῦς· ἦτοι ἄπο τῶν κεράτων, ἂν ἄπο τῶν ποδῶν ἐλικοειδεῖς, ἐλικόν γὰρ τὸ συνεπεραμένον (Φ 448),

Schol. in Od. ἐλίκας δὲ ὡς ἐλικοειδή κέρατα ἐχοντας. R.Q. ἦτοι ἐλικοειδή κέρατα ἐχοντας

The frequent and formulaic co-occurrence of εἰλίπος· 'rolling in their gait, moving their feet in a circular motion' and ἐλις (Hom. 6x εἰλίποδας ἐλικας βοῦς), makes it unlikely that the words are synonyms and the formula may have been the place where ἐλις was reinterpreted as a synonym of εἰλίπος. Since Helios' cows are both ὀρθόκραιραι 'having straight or upright horns' (Od. 12.348) and ἐλικας (Od. 12.136, 355) it seems equally unlikely that they have both (or some of them) curved and (some of them) straight horns. The only other solution is to view the use of this epithet as purely ornamental (Richter 1968), i.e. to assume that its original meaning was no longer understood already in Homeric times.37

35 The sky itself is of course also conceivable as a wheel, cf. h. Mart. 6 πυραυγέα κύκλον ἑλίσσων / αἰθέρος, Hdt. 1.131 τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ σώματος θάλαττος, etc.

36 For the status quaestionis cf. LfgE ((Snell 1979) s.v. [O'Sullivan]) where the various proposals made so far are rightly rejected ('black', 'shining', 'with curved horns').

37 This is evident also in the use of ἐλικός in h. Merc. 192 (βοῦς) ... πάσας θηλείας, πάσας κέρασιν ἐλκτάς, which was probably intended as an interpretation of the unclear ἐλις.
It is tempting to view another epithet of Aphrodite in the light of this explanation of ἐλίξ, viz. ἐλικοβλέφαρος, which is usually understood as built after ἐλίκωπες (Ἀχαιοί, etc.) ‘having quickly moving, turning eyes’, whence βλέφαρον is taken to mean ‘eye’, not ‘eyelid’. Frisk (1960: s.v.) connects ἐλικοβλέφαρος with ἐλίξ ‘spiral’ and translates it as ‘with curved eyes’ (‘mit gewundenen, gebogenen Augen’). If, as in the case of ἐλίξ, the cosmological was the primary meaning, one could assume that from the ‘spiralling eye’ of dawn – either a description of the rays of dawn, or, more likely, the sun itself – the mundane sense was derived. The concept of the sun as the ‘eye’ of the sky is of course well-known, present both in Greek, e.g. ἀμέρας βλέφαρον ‘the day’s eye’ (S. Ant. 104) and in Vedic, e.g. in RV 7.77.3 where Usás brings along ‘the gods’ eye’, devānām cāksuh. A converse parallel for the development assumed here could be the case of Old Irish süil ‘eye’, where the metaphor has worked in the opposite direction and the word for ‘sun’ (PIE *seh₂u-) has taken on the meaning of ‘eye’ in general.

4. Morning glory

With the data reviewed so far, it may not come as a surprise to find an “Aphrodite of the Twilight”, Ἄφροδιτας Ὄρθρου, in an inscription from Mytilene (Lesbos), which may be due either to her original functional equality with dawn or, more likely, to her later identification with the morning star (cf. fn. 1):

IG XII, 2 70
— — — τὰ ύπά τὰς βόλας[
— — — τὰ εἰσὶ πόλει πρὸς τῷ.
— — — τᾶν Ἑριβόιαν τὰν [...
— — — τὰς προαροσίας το[.3]
— — — σεν καὶ ἐθύρωσε[ν]
— — — τῶ Ζωννύσω τῷ
[— — — Ἄφροδιτας Ὄρθρου
[— — — καὶ Μαμακτήρω τῷ[.]

38 Hes. Th. 16 ἐλικοβλέφαρον τ’ Ἀφροδίτην, h. Ἀφρ. 19 ἐλικοβλέφαρον, P. fr. 123.5 Ἀφροδίτας ... ἐλικοβλέφαρον. In P. P. 4.172 said of Alcmene, Ἀλκμήνας θ’ ἐλικοβλέφαρον.
39 Cf. also Verdenius (1972: 231-32) who starts from ἐλίσσω ‘turn, roll, spiral’ → ‘with rolling eyes’ → ‘with flashing eyes’.
40 Dated by Hodot (1990: 276) as 2nd or 3rd c. AD.
From Alkman's *Parthenion* (fr. 1) we know of an Ὀρθρία and an Ἀώτις, probably names of one and the same goddess of unclear identity:

Aic. fr. 1. 60ff.

ταὶ Πεληάδες γὰρ ἄμιν
Ὀρθρίαι φάρος φερόσαις
νύκτα δὲ ἀμβροσίαν ἀπὸ σήριον
ἄστρον ἀυηρομένα μάχονται
For they, the Pleiades, rising through immortal night like the star Sirius fight with us while we offer a garment to Orthria,

Aic. fr. 1. 87ff.

... ἐγὼ[ν] δὲ ταῖς μὲν Ἀώτι μάλιστα
ἀνδάνην ἐρῶ· πόνων γὰρ
ἄμιν ἵππωρ ἔγγεντο
But most of all I want to please Aotis, for she has been our healer of sorrows.

The scene seems to be set in a ceremony just before dawn in which the girls offering a garment to Orthria are in competition with the Pleiades about who is more beautiful. If Aphrodite is the 'daughter of Ὀρθός' as in IG XII, 2 70, she might equally be called Ὀρθρία, like e.g. Κρόνιος from Κρόνος, and, derived from ὄρθος 'dawn', Ἀώτις. Since ὀρθός is the time just before daybreak, a designation of dawn as his daughter seems quite fitting.

According to Calame (1977: II.119ff.), though, Orthria is to be equated with Helena, who was revered as a goddess in Sparta (Hinge 2006: 290). If this interpretation is correct, one should note that Helena, as argued by Jamison (2001) and Janda (2005: 346-48), is one of the "descendants" of PIE *h₂eu̯s in Greek, probably the one who 'chooses' (: *u̯elh₁-) her husband (: Skt. *svayamvara-

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41 For a basic overview over the issues of this fragment cf. still Schwenn (1937).
43 Beside the form with spiritus asper, there is a dedication to Φελέναι in Laconian, cf. Laneses (2007). The form could thus go back to either *su- or *ṣu-, for asper from *ṣu cf. ἕκων 'willing, voluntarily' < *pek- (: Skt. uṣ-), cf. Schwyzer (1939: 226ff.). The difference in anlaut in Φελέναι and Ελένη has given rise to various interpretations, either assuming the existence of two different goddesses *seleneh₂ and *ṣeleneh₂.
'choosing for oneself' which is done by Śūryā the ‘sun-maiden’, epitome of the bride, i.e. Usas), cf. Eur. IA 68-71

δίδωσιν ἑλέσθαι θυγατρί μηνιστήρων ἕνα,
ὅποι πνοιὰ φέρουσιν Ἀφροδίτης φίλαι.
ἡ δ’ ἠλεθ’ ὡς σφεῖ τ’ ὁφελέν λαβεῖν,
Μενέλαον

(Her father Tyndareos) allowed his daughter to choose one of her suitors, wherever the lovely winds of Aphrodite might carry her. And she chose Menelaos – would she have never taken him!

ὀρθρία, used as an adjective, also occurs in Theognis’ enigmatic lines

861-64 Οἳ μὲ φίλοι προδιδοῦσι καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσί τι δοῦναι ἀνδρῶν φαινομένων: ἄλλ’ ἐγὼ αὐτομάτη ἑσπερίη τ’ ἔξειμι καὶ ὀρθρίη αὖθις ἔσειμι,
ἐγειρομένων φθόγγος ἀλεκτρυόνων

My friends forsake me and do not want to give anything, when men appear. But of my own accord I will go out in the evening and come back at dawn, when the cocks awaken and crow.

The numerous interpretations that have been given for this passage, summarized in Labarbe (1992), are unsatisfactory. While West’s account of it (1974: 160) seems reasonable in itself – a person in the position of a beggar, maybe the owner’s wife or daughter who has to leave when his friends arrive for a symposion –, one might speculate that this passage is a mocking description of dawn and the sun, forsaken by her ‘friends’, i.e. the moon and the stars who disappear when dawn and men appear, both going about their daily business. The sun will “go out”, leaving its chariot, i.e. set, and rise again “in the morning” (ὀρθρίη) at first cockcrow.
It seems unlikely to be coincidental that next to the ᾿Αφροδίταν Ὄρθρου we find Ἐριβοίαν in the same inscription. Taken by itself, the form seems to mean ‘having a lot [ἐρι-] of cows’. In Greek literature, Ἐριβοία is the stepmother of the Alcoides who held Ares captive (Il. 5.389f.) and the daughter of Alkathoos, wife of Telamon and mother of Ajax in

Πι. Ἰσθ. 6.45 λίσσομαι παῖδα θρασύν ἐξ Ἐριβοίας
S. Ἀι. 569 Τελαμώνι δεῖξε μητήρ τ’, Ἐριβοία λέγω
Bacch. 13.102 εὐειδέος τ’ Ἐριβοίας,

who is called Περίβοια in other passages (Χερ. Συν. 1.9.2 Περίβοιαν τὴν Ἀλκάθου, Plut. Θεσ. 29.1 Περίβοιαν τὴν Αἰαντὸς μητέρα), i.e. ‘having cows at both sides’, which in our interpretation would refer to dawn and dusk, or ‘having many cows’ with περί- in an elative sense (Kamptz 1982: 90).

A similar interpretation can be envisaged for Ἐριβοία, if the first element is taken in its etymological sense ‘at the top’ or ‘high’, as argued by Willi (1999), cf. Luw. šarri ‘above’ and the Lycian preverb hri ‘up’, which go back to the locative of a PIE root-noun *sēr ‘top’, cf. Hitt. šarā ‘upward’ and the Greek place name Pîos derived from a denominative adjective *sriyos and probably elliptical from *piōn ὅρος ‘high mountain’. PIE *seri ‘at the top’ would yield Gk. ἔρι- in a psilotic dialect such as that of the Homeric epics. The original meaning ‘high’ can still be seen in ἔριχαύχην said of horses ‘holding their necks high’ (‘having the neck in the height’),46 and probably also in ἔρὶ(γ)δουπος ‘having the thunder (δοῦπος) in the height’, ‘thundering in the height (of the sky)’ (cf. ὑψιβρεμέτης) (Willi 1999: 95). Parallel to this, Ἐριβοία could mean ‘having cows in the height (of the sky)’, which would be a fitting description of dawn, as we have seen.

Stripped of its cosmological context, the form of course means ‘rich in cattle’ (usually as a dowry). Both interpretations are present in Hesychius’ gloss

ἐριβοία: νῦς καὶ μεγάλως τιμωμένη

46 Cf. ὑψιαύχην (Πλ. Φδρ. 253d) for the same idea.
and while the latter is clearly the result of understanding the compound as \(\text{πολύβους} \) 'rich in cattle', it seems unlikely that the former is an invention by Hesychius himself, unless one assumes a folk-etymology connecting it with \(\text{ἔρεβος} \). If not, and if \(\text{ἐρίβοια} \) does indeed refer to dawn, the interpretamentum \(\nu\) would seem to make sense especially if one assumes the older meaning 'twilight' for \(\nu\) as in

\[
\text{Il. 7.433 } \text{ἦμος δ' οὔτ' ἀρ πω ἡώς, ἕτε δ' ἀμφιλύκη νύξ}
\]

when it was not yet dawn, but the night was still between dark and light (after Murray-Wyatt)

and in the formulaic phrase \(\nuκτός \text{ ἀμολγῷ} \) (Hom. 5x, h. Merc. 7) 'at the milk of the twilight', as pointed out recently by Watkins (2009): \(\text{Ἑρίβοια} \) the 'twilight' brings along her cows at dawn like the Vedic \(\text{Uṣās} \).

So far we have tacitly assumed that the second element of \(\text{ἐρίβοια} \) is the word for 'cow', and this has indeed been the usual interpretation put forward in the literature, also in the case of \(\text{Ἑρίβοια} \) (Il. 5.389) which contains a different first element \(\*\text{ἠερίβοια} \) 'early' (cf. \(\*\text{ἦρι} \) 'early, matutinal'). However, it has been questioned by Leukart (1994: 62 + fn. 47) who interprets \(-\text{αια} \) as a secondary feminine formation after cases like \(\*\text{εὔβους} : \text{Εὔβοια} \) and \(\*\text{Πόλυβος} : \text{Πολύβοια} \) built to a masc. short form \(\*\text{Ἀέρι-βος} \) which he sees in myc. \(\*\text{a-e-ri-qo-} \) and whose full form would be \(\*\text{a-e-ri-qo-ta} \) with a second element \(-\text{gwotas} / \text{coming in the morning} \). Against this, Hajnal (1992: 285-301) proposes to see a form of \(\*\text{ἀορ}'spear' in myc. \(\*\text{a-e-ri} \) (if the preform were \(\*\text{ai} \) one would expect a spelling \(\*\text{ai} \)), hence 'killing with the spear' (cf. Il. 21.21 \(\*\text{ἀορί θεινόμενων} \) 'killed by the spear'), which is therefore to be left out of the discussion. Leukart's rejection of 'cow' as second element is based on the semantic argument that the base form from which \(\*\text{Ḥerībō} \) would have to be derived, the compound \(\*\text{asctime} \) would not make sense ('sinnstörend'). But, as we have seen, 'the cows of dawn' are a well established notion both in Vedic and in Greek literature and therefore a name 'having the cows in the morning' matches the Vedic \(\text{Uṣās} \) bringing along the cows at the beginning of the day. The only
further assumption one has to make is that an adjective *ἀερίβους, which was not specified for gender, was remarked as feminine as it referred to the female ‘daughter of the sky’.50

Thus, if the Ἐρίβοια in IG XII, 2 70 is to be taken as a divine name next to an “Aphrodite of the twilight”, its most likely interpretation seems to be ‘rich in (dawn) cows’, which could subsequently be understood simply as ‘rich in cattle (as dowry)’.51

Summary

The numerous epithets applied to a large extent or exclusively to Aphrodite having formal and/or semantic matches in the Vedic tradition reaffirm the well-established idea that the Greek Aphrodite is, beside Eos and Helena, one of the descendants of PIE *h₂eusōs. Based on this notion, a number of epithets (ὀρθροῦ, ἕλιξ, ἑλικοβλέφαρος) and divine names (Ἐρίβοια) connected with dawn and the sun which are difficult to understand ex graeco ipso may find an explanation.

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N.B. compound adjectives with ἐρι- as first element are usually of only two endings (-ος m./f. : -ον n.), cf. ἐριβρόμος, -ον, P. P. 6.3 ἐριβρόμου γθοσ.

That an epithet of dawn can be used as a PN of a mythological character can also be seen in Ἡριγόνη, the name of Icarius’ daughter and of Aegistus’ and Clytaemnestra’s daughter, corresponding to Eos’ epithet ἠριγένεια (Hom.+) ‘early-born’, cf. Bechtel (1917: 195).


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KÖLLIGAN, Daniel

Aphrodite of the dawn: Indoeuropean heritage in Greek divine epithets...


RENOU → EVP.


KÖLLIGAN, D. Afrodis da aurora: herança indoeuropéia nos epítetos divinos e teônimos gregos.

**RESUMO:** § 1. Afrodis, originalmente um epíteto do PIE *h₂éu₂ós, incorporou inúmeros aspectos da deusa da aurora. À maneira da Uṣas védica, é a “filha do céu”, relacionada à calmaria do mar (γαλήνη) e à salvadora dos marinheiros, função exercida pelos pretendentes de Uṣas na mitologia védica. Seu nome pode derivar de *abʰro-diʰ₂-to- “brilhando a partir da névoa, ou espuma”. § 2.1 Os
epítetos de Afrodite derivados de nome de cor, ou que o incluem (χρυσής, χρυσοστέφανος, etc.), talvez se refiram ao caráter original da deusa como personificação da aurora. § 2.2 Sua relação com carruagens, como se vê, p. ex., em χρυσάνιος, talvez derive da associação da deusa com a carruagem do sol, o que poderia também ser o caso de χρυσόθρονος. § 2.3 O uso de λευκός em conexão com Afrodite pode ser comparado com o vérd. rocamiya-, que se diz de Uṣas. § 2.4 Seu epíteto Ἀργυννίς corresponde ao vérd. arjani-. § 2.5 Afrodite ῥοδής e ῥοδόχρους corresponde a Eos ῥοδόδακτυλος. § 3. A figura vérdica das “vacas da aurora” pode ser comparada com a das vacas de Hélio em Trinácia. Os epítetos épicos ἡλιξ e ἑλικοβλέφαρος talvez se refiram ao movimento celeste. § 4. A Afrodite Ὀρθροῦ da inscrição pode ser a aurora ou a estrela da manhã, como filha da alvorada, e pode equiparar-se ao Ὀρθρία do frg. 1 de Álcman e a um enigma de Teognís (vv. 861-4). O Ἐρίβοια atestado junto a Afrodite Ὀρθροῦ pode ser entendido como “rica em vacas da aurora”.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Afrodite e a Uṣas vérdica; deusa da aurora e estrela da manhã; epítetos divinos e teônimos.