Abstract: In 1854 Martin Haug of Heidelberg suggested a root connection between the obscure German god *Irmin* and the minor Indic god *Aryaman*. Almost a century later (1952) Jan de Vries of Leiden agreed, with some reservations, and since then this theory has remained in dispute. In my study of this subject several arguments support the Haug – Vries hypothesis:

- **Phonetic compatibility** between OHG *Irmin*, ON *Iǫrmun*-, and Indic *Aryaman* (and between Nordic *Iarl* and Indic *Arya*). All are derivable from an IE root *H₁er-* ‘free man, clan member’.

- **Phonetic and semantic parallels**, such as between Old Swedish *iarl* and *jarmun*-, Old English *eorl* and *eormen*-, OIr *aire* and *Airem*; and OInd *ārya*-, *aryá*-, ā́ *rya*- and *Aryamán*-

- **Functional compatibility** between German *irmindiot* ‘the collective human race’, *Irminsül* ‘universalis columna’, OE *eormen-wyrt* ‘mallow’ (medicinal plant), etc., Indo-Iranian *A(i)ryaman* ‘god of marriage, hospitality, healing’, and the Irish hero *Airem*, all associated with Dumézil’s “first function.”

- **Patterning of personal names** like OHG *Irman-frīt, Irman-drūt*, etc., like other IE names compounded from names of deities, e.g. ON Ás-ráðr (áss ‘god’ + ráðr ‘help[ed]’ = OHG *Ans-rat*). OI *Aryama-rādha*- ‘favored by Aryaman’ has a precise parallel in OHG *Irmin-rat* ‘helped by Irmin’.

- **Cosmology**: An old German name for the Great Bear constellation was *Irmines-wagen* ‘Irmin’s wagon’, and, according to Grimm, the Milky Way galaxy was *Irmin(es)-strasse* ‘Irmin’s street’; cf. OI *Aryamṇah pānthāḥ* ‘path of Aryaman’ = Milky Way.

The argument that *Irmin* simply means ‘great, immense, elevated’ and is the sole remnant of the Indo-European middle participle in Germanic is implausible; the form *Irmines-* is clearly the genitive form of a name. The oldest sources and comparative mythology point to *Irmin / Iǫrmun* as some kind of divine or heroic entity closely connected with sovereignty, ancestry, and the collective life of the people (*irmindiot*). In the post-Christian literary traditions of the Germanic and Celtic peoples the original patterns were transformed and distorted.

---

1 This paper was written for the Tenth Annual International Conference on Comparative Mythology: Time and Myth: the Temporal and the Eternal; May 26-28, 2016; Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.
Abbreviations

Av  Avestan            OS  Old Saxon
Brg  Burgundian         OSw  Old Swedish
MP  Middle Persian      PC  Proto-Celtic
OE  Old English         PG  Proto-Germanic
OHG  Old High German    PIE  Proto-Indo-European
OI  Old Indic (= Vedic, Sanskrit)  PII  Proto-Indo-Iranian
OIr  Old Irish          PIr  Proto-Iranian
ON  Old Norse (usually = Old Icelandic)  VG  Visigothic
OP  Old Persian

0. Introduction

The aim of this study is to survey the discussion surrounding an obscure and problematic word (or name) attested sporadically in Germanic sources as Irmin, Irman, Eormen, Iarmun, Íormun, etc., and its etymological and thematic connections with the Germanic word earl (eorl, iarl, jarl), and with postulated Indo-Iranian cognates Aryaman (Airīaman) and aryā, Arya. I hope to show in my final remarks that a re-examination of these often elusive and mysterious Germanic terms, within a wide range of comparative linguistics and mythology, might result in a firmer understanding of the ancient Germanic (and Indo-European) mythological system and worldview, which scholars for the past few centuries have sought to piece together from the shreds of evidence left.

The point of departure on this philological excursion is the Poetic Edda, in which the disyllable Íormun- is found as an element in three different compound words or names. Return first to the tale of chaotic destruction in Vôluspá, str. 50: “Snýz íormungandr i ítummodi” the world-serpent writhes in a fit of giant-rage. Here the great snake usually known as miðgarðsormr is referred to in a compound name which unites the elements íormun and gandr, both, in themselves surrounded with mystery. Gandr means something like ‘magic wand’ or a magic implement or being of some sort. Old Icelandic Íormun- (Modern Jórmun-) is traditionally “a prefix in a few old mythical words, implying something huge, vast, superhuman.” The corresponding Old English prefix eormen- is similarly interpreted as ‘universal, immense, whole, general’. Accordingly, íormungandr is translated as ‘the Great Monster’ or, more prosaically, ‘den vældige stok’ (‘the mighty stick’). Apart from the Poetic Edda this term is found in the skald Bragi’s Ragnarsdrápa (ninth century), in a poetic narration of Thor’s ‘fishing’ for the world serpent in a violent struggle.

2 Cleasby & Vigfusson (1957), p. 188.
3 Ibid., p. 328: jörmun-.
4 Bosworth (1898): eormen-; Hall (1916).
The second such compound is iǫrmunggrund (f.), referring to the earth with the implication of great expanse.7 Thus in Grímnismál 20 of the Poetic Edda: “Huginn oc Muninn flíúga hverian dag iǫrmunggrund yfir” (“H. and M. fly over the great earth every day”). The poetic terms fits well in this intoxicating poem, and we find it also in the poem on the Karlevi runestone (probably Old Danish, ca. 1000), in the kenning untils iarmun kruntar, interpreted as ‘the earth of the sea king Ondill’, i.e. ‘the sea’.8 The term is also found in one of the skaldic poems of Sturla Póðarson, and the parallel OE eormengrund suggests its use in a common Germanic poetic tradition.9 A similar poetic term is preserved in the early skaldic poem Haustløng by Þjóðólfr hvinverski: iǫrmunþríotr, or ‘great enemy’, referring to the giant Hrungnir.10 One personal name with this element is found in the Poetic Edda, in five of the lays, and in the Ragnarsdrápa. This is Iǫrmunreccr, the legendary Gothic king attested also in the Latinized Gothic form Ermanaricus.11 Finally, the Icelandic þulur provide a few obscure references, most importantly Iǫrmunr as a cognomen of Óðinn.12

I. Interpretations and variants of iǫrmun-, Iǫrmunr, iarmun-, eormen-, Irmin, Irman, etc.

What are we to make of all these words? The general consensus has been to read a sense of great expanse, size or power in the form iǫrmun-, a sense which happens to fit each of the examples given above. (But see below about OE eormenwyr and eormenlēaf, which do not fit.) Some have sought in the form an early Germanic hero, or even god, who gradually lost importance. A very few have gone further and suggested a connection with the minor Indo-Iranian deity Aryaman and the Irish hero Airem. But before a detailed discussion of the divergent views I shall briefly summarize the Germanic attestations of Iǫrmun/Irmin from outside the Nordic area. Grimm,13 and a century later Vries,14 have comprehensively listed and discussed the various forms.

In Gothic the element appears in proper names, such as the fourth century king Ermanaricus (~ Hermannaricus, Ermenaricus, Ermeniricus).15 This is a common Germanic name (see Table 1):16

---

7 Ibid.
9 Bosworth (1898) eormengrund; Hall (1916).
14 Vries (1952).
15 Lehmann (1986), E4. Note that the H was a silent letter in Latinized forms such as Hirmin, Herminones, Hermengildus, Hermunduri, etc. “The aspirate given by the Romans to Herminones, as to Hermunduri, is strictly no part of the German word, but is also very commonly retained by Latin writers of the Mid. Ages in proper names compounded with Irmin. In the name of the historical Arminius Tacitus leaves it out” Grimm (1882) I, p. 351.
Table 1. Germanic personal names containing *Ermina- ~ *Ermana- ~ *Erma-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Germanic</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>East Germanic</th>
<th>West Germanic</th>
<th>North Germanic</th>
<th>Toporova (1996)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Ermana-rikaz</td>
<td>‘great ruler’ or ‘Irmin’s ruler’</td>
<td>Goth</td>
<td>OE Eormanricus, OS Emricus, OHG Irmanrīh</td>
<td>ON Írmonrec(c)r</td>
<td>p. 13, no. 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Erma-wulbaz</td>
<td>‘wolf of Irmin’</td>
<td>VG Ermulf</td>
<td>OHG Hermolf</td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 26, no. 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ermina-friduz</td>
<td>‘protected by Irmin’ or ‘Irmin’s peace’</td>
<td>VG Ermanfred</td>
<td>OHG Irmanfrīt, Irmenfrīd, Irminfrīd</td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 26, no. 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ermina-geldaz</td>
<td>‘worthy of (rewarded by) Irmin’</td>
<td>VG Hermengildus,</td>
<td>OHG Ermengild, Erminigild</td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 26, no. 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Erminaheldjō</td>
<td>‘battle of Irmin’</td>
<td>VG Herminichild</td>
<td>OHG Irmenhilt</td>
<td></td>
<td>p. 69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To these we can add the uncompounded name, attested as Ἰρμένιος (Strabo) / Arminius (Tacitus), name of the Cheruscan hero who defeated and annihilated a Roman army in the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest (ca. 9 CE),22 and Erminus, the legendary ancestor of several Germanic tribes (see Table 4).23 Grimm cites the ‘weak’ form Irmino, an abbot in Charlemagne’s time, and a female name Iarmin, attested in a deed.24 At the present time Irmin is still a common German name, for both males and females.25

Consistent with the idea of Irmin as chief god of the Saxons, most of the Irmin-names are attested in Saxon and High German territory: Irminolt, Irminold (*-waldz ‘power[ful]’), Irmingard, Irmgard (*-gardjō ‘fence[d], protected’), and short forms and diminutives Irma, Irmina, Irmela, and surnames such as

---

17 Not only “le roi puissant et omnipotent” but also “notre propre roi,” the early concept of a king of divine origin whose presence assures the smooth operation of everything in the realm: Vries (1952), pp. 24-5.
18 PG *wulfa- (m.) ‘wolf’ / *wulgi- ~ *wulbjō- (f.) ‘she-wolf’ (Kroonen 2013, p. 598).
19 PG *friðu- ‘friendship, peace’ > OHG fridu ‘peace; protection, security’ (Kroonen 2013, p. 156).
20 Herminichild, husband of Ingund, is mentioned by Grimm (1882) I, p. 3, who cites Gregory of Tours’ Historia Francorum.
22 Grimm (1835), pp. 211-12; Grimm (1882) I, p. 364. Giesebrecht (1837) proposed an interesting hypothesis that Arminius was the Latin cognomen of the hero known in Germanic epics as Siegfried/Sigrūdr; further developed later by Vigfusson & Powell (1886).
23 Note that the names with *armin- date earlier (1st century CE) than those with *ermin- (4th century and later).
24 Grimm (1882) I, p. 351.
25 E.g., ♀Irmin Kamp (born 1940), German sculptor; ♂Irmin Schmidt (born 1937), German musician and composer.
Ehrmanntraut (OHG Irmandrût, with *-brûdjo ‘power, force’). 26 Grimm, Otto and Zollinger cite Ermenmar, Irminmar, Ermemar, Ermenomar (*-mûriz ‘famous’); Irminhart (*-harduz ‘hard, firm’), Irmandegan (*-þegnaz ‘thane, freeman’); 27 Ermenger (*-gaiaz ‘lance, spear’); Ermelint (*-lendô ‘linden’); Irmanprech (*-berhtaz ‘bright’); Irminwîn, Ermoin, Armin (*-weniz ‘friend’); Irminleu (*-laibaz ‘heir, successor’); Irnindiu, Irnendio (*-þewaz ‘servant’); 28 Irminot (*-neutaz ‘companion’); Irmenswînt (*-swenbaz ‘strong’). 29 The last Thuringian king was named Irminfried (Irnrût: see Table 1) 30 and his tribe is most likely to be identified with the Latinized tribal name Hermunduri. 31

Place names that include the element are Ermschwerd (in Hesse: older Ermenes-werethe, 32 ca. 1000 CE) and Armenseul in Germany (Westphalia), Irminperg (Irminperhi) in Upper Austria, and Ermelo in Holland. 33 Apart from such isolated names one stands out in mythical annals due to an historic incident. When Charlemagne in 772 subdued Westphalia and the Saxons they destroyed the temple and grove of Irminþul, a great pillar or idol (but some historical annals differ in details of this account). 34 Åke Ström has described the Irminsul as a “shintai,” a spiritual repository, as in Shinto. 35 One annalist described it as ‘universalis columna, quasi sustinens omnia’ = Weltsâule, axis mundi. 36 The cognate term irminþul ~ irmansül is found in OHG glosses, bleached of its mythological meaning, translating pyramida or colossus. 37 Grimm cited a German name for the constellation Great Bear (Ursa Major): Irmîneswagen (see Appendix A). 38

A number of poetic compounds occur in the early West Germanic languages. We find the OHG irmîngot in the Hildebrandslied, apparently referring to the Christian supreme God. 39 The poet of the Old Saxon Heliand similarly used words such as irminhîod ‘the human race’. 40 Old English sources also have the cognate term

27 “The original meaning was ‘retainer’, i.e. an aristocrat dependant [sic] of a king or nobleman who gives service in return for patronage” (Kroonen 2013, p. 536).
28 PG *þewa- ‘servant’ (Kroonen 2013, p. 541). Toporova cites *þegwâz.
29 Grimm (1815), note 65; Otto (1889); Zollinger (1939).
30 Grimm (1882) I, p. 359.
32 -werd, -werethe = OHG werid ‘island’; cf. OE warð ‘shore, bank’, wearð id.: Noreen (1894), pp. 65, 87; Buck (1949), no. 1.27.
38 Grimm (1882) I, pp. 355-6; Grimm cites “Leibn. scr. 1, 9” (Leibniz [1707–1710] Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium); “Eccard, Fr. or. 1, 883” (Eckhart [1729]); “De orig. Germ. 397” (Eckhart [1750]).
40 Ibid.
eormenbēod, and eormencynn ‘mankind’, eormenstrīnd ‘race, generation’, eormenlāf, the dragon’s treasure in Beowulf. OE eormengrund ‘wide world’ has a Nordic cognate in ïормунgrund (see above). These terms, North Germanic and West Germanic, suggest a common Germanic tradition underlying the use of this element ïормун/Irmin, but in themselves reveal little of what the original meaning may have been. The conjecture by some, that this word underlies the national name German, would point to considerable importance of the term if this is true. The tribal names Herminones (used by Tacitus) and Hermunduri would seem to support this hypothesis.

Åke Ström has made the important observation that the compounds listed above have Old Norse typological parallels like tý-spakr ‘ur-weise / godly-wise’, tý-framr ‘weit nach vorn’, tý-hraustr ‘valiant as a god’, njarð-låss ‘starkes Schloss / a kind of charmed latch’, njarð-gjord ‘starker Gürtel / the close girdle, epithet of the girdle of Thor’, based on the god-names Týr and Njordr. Here the first elements have an intensifying function, similar to that in English god-awful ‘extremely unpleasant or disagreeable : abominable’ (Webster). Ström notes that some such terms continued to be used even after conversion to the Christian faith, just as some Germanic (and Romance) peoples retained at least some of the planetary weekday-names (based on names of gods) like Tuesday (mardi), Wednesday (mercredi), etc. But it seems that a few generations after conversion the terms like tý-spakr gradually went out of use, as memories of the old gods dimmed, while theonymic weekday-names persisted in many places.

II. History of the Irmin/Aryaman discussion

Grimm’s discussion from the early nineteenth century is still basic. Starting from Tacitus’ Herminones he enumerated a host of attested forms from the Germanic world, together with his learned speculations. As the crux of the question Grimm wrote:

Granted that irmansûl expressed word for word no more than ‘huge pillar’, yet to the people that worshipped it it must have been a divine image, standing for a particular God. ... either he was one of the three great divinities, Wôdan, Thonar, Tiu, or some being distinct from them.

On the basis of historical evidence Grimm concluded that “In Hirmin the Saxons appear to have worshipped a Wôdan imaged as a warrior.” (But see below about

41 Bosworth, p. 254; Hall (1916).
43 Å. Ström (1975), p. 81; Cleasby (1874), pp. 456, 647. See Buck (1949), pp. 1004-9, for day-names in IE languages.
44 “The compds. of this word [jörmun-] ... occur in old Scardin. poets only” (Cleasby 1874, p. 328). Such terms, based on jörmun-, tý-, njarð-, are not found, for example, in the modern Icelandic dictionary by Sigurðsson (1970).
Tiu.) He then speculated as to the existence of an ancestral hero *Irmino as distinct from Irmin the god.\textsuperscript{46} Grimm suggested traces of the god Irmin, and fall of the Irmensûl, remained in Saxon folklore:

In Saxon Hesse (on the Diemel), in the districts of Paderborn, Ravensberg and Münster, in the bishopric of Minden and the duchy of Westphalia, the people have kept alive the rhyme:

\textit{Hermen, sla dermen,}  
\textit{sla pipen, sla trummen,}  
\textit{de kaiser wil kummen}  
\textit{met hamer un stangen,}  
\textit{wil Hermen uphangen.}

Hermen is challenged, as it were, to strike up his war-music, to sound the catgut, pipe and drum; but the foe draws nigh with maces and staves, and will hang up Hermen ... . It is not impossible that in these rude words, which have travelled down the long tradition of centuries, are preserved the fragments of a lay that was first heard when Charles destroyed the Irmensûl.\textsuperscript{47}

Here, as elsewhere, we see the gradual merger of the mostly forgotten \textit{Irmin, Erman} with \textit{Her(r)mann} (< *Harja-mannaz ‘battle-man’).\textsuperscript{48} For the remainder of his long discussion of \textit{Irmin} Grimm attempted various conjectures surrounding the cosmological significance of \textit{Irmineswagen} and related terms, a point to which we shall return.

In 1854 another German, Martin Haug of Heidelberg, was possibly the first scholar to suggest a connection between the Germanic \textit{Irmin} and the Indic \textit{Aryaman}.\textsuperscript{49} It is well known that the Saxons worshipped another prominent god, \textit{Saxnôt}, who corresponded to Týr/Tiw/Ziu elsewhere.\textsuperscript{50} In the Saxon baptismal vow new believers promised to forsake \textit{Thunaer ende Uuôden ende Saxnôtê.}\textsuperscript{51}

Late in the nineteenth century, Karl Müllenhoff devoted much space to the study of \textit{Irmin}. He identified Irmin as a god whose cult centered on the Westphalian

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., p. 354.  
\textsuperscript{47} Grimm (1882) I, p. 355.  
\textsuperscript{48} “Man hat die Irmensäule von Hermes, Mars, Ares, Eres, Heermann (Kriegsmann) und Herman (Arminius) hergeleitet; etwas wahres scheint immer durch, allein es wurde blindlings ergriffen und nirgends bewiesen” (Grimm 1815, p. 47). E.g., in present-day New Ulm, Minnesota (U.S.A.), Arminius is celebrated as “Hermann the German.” \url{http://www.ci.new-ulm.mn.us/index.asp?SEC=96D3F644-BCE7-4EAF-8213-8FEAA372B8F9&Type=B_BASIC}  
\textsuperscript{50} Puhvel suggests that Saxnôt and Irmin may have constituted a pair, to the Saxons, parallel to Aryaman:Mitra (Puhvel 1987, pp. 193, 200).  
\textsuperscript{51} As cited by Å. Ström (1975), p. 83.
Eresberg (mons Martis) and is identical with Mars/Er/Tiwaz. However he objected to Haug’s conjecture linking Irmin to Aryaman, on the ground first that the middle syllable -ya- of Aryaman would not slip out easily in Germanic, and second, that the ending cognate with OI -man (nom. -mā) would be *-mo in OHG and OS. Because of the variations ermin-, erman-, ermun- Müllenhoff theorized that the last syllable was opened and vocalized only after the thematic vowel had been lost, and postulated a ground form *ërmnas, cognate with Greek ὀρμένος (aorist 2 middle participle of ὀρνύω, 'stir (up), urge, incite'), which would be the sole remnant of the Indo-European middle participle in Germanic. He derived this participle from the verb *er- ‘to set in motion, excite’, etc., thus the proper meaning of irmin being ‘excelsus, erhaben, elevated’. Most other etymologists since then have generally agreed with this solution. Others, following Thieme (1938), have held that Irmin is phonetically incompatible with Aryaman, since the latter is based on PIE *ali- ‘other’. These arguments seemed to silence the connection of Irmin with Aryaman for decades.

In a 1930 article Jan de Vries discussed the Gmc.*gin(wa)- and related it to I.ormungandr, up to that time commonly interpreted as ‘the great stick’. He argued that it was not fitting to liken the ringed serpent to a stiff stick, when both of the poetic passages where the word occurs depict a cosmic monster in vigorous motion. In Vries’ opinion the meaning had to be ‘the powerful magical being’, gandr having its original meaning of ‘magic wand’. Regarding i.ormun he expressed doubts about the translation ‘gewaltig, powerful’, noting that its occurrence in primarily religious names gives the first element a mythical coloring. In view of this Vries gave his expanded translation as ‘the monster in the form of a snake, inimical to both gods and men, which winds itself around the earth’. Thus Vries tacitly objected to the simple meaning of ‘elevated’, fixed by Müllenhoff, a point to which he would return two decades later.

In 1949 the comparative mythologist Georges Dumézil published one of his numerous studies of the Indo-European tripartite pantheon, entitled Le troisième souverain. This study treated the Indo-Iranian god Aryaman in depth, concluding that Aryaman was a patron of the community that designates itself as Arya- (i.e., the North Indians of caste who adhered to the Vedas and their rituals). As a collective representative of the human Arya- he served as a link between them and the divinities of the “first function,” specifically Mitra, in the Vedas associated with hospitality, gift-giving, marriage and all aspects of community solidarity.
noted that in the later Sanskrit literature Aryaman is known chiefly as king of a vaguely defined category of ancestors: the Fathers (Pītaraḥ). Though mentioned a hundred-odd times in the Rgveda, Aryaman is a minor deity there, and in later Hinduism he is even less prominent. Dumézil did not mention the Germanic Irmin, and in a footnote of an American edition of one of Dumézil’s books Littleton states that the French scholar has never accepted the equation of Irmin and Aryaman.\(^{58}\)

In 1952 Vries returned with an article devoted to the word/name Irmin. In this study catalogued the extant references to the word in Germanic sources. He objected to the equation with the Greek ὀρμένος, noting, as Müllenhoff did, that this would be the sole example of a middle participle in Germanic. He thought it highly unlikely that Germanic would develop the ablaut series *er-mana-/mina-/mina- for a verbal form which it did not otherwise use, and was extant only in Greek, Sanskrit and Avestan. His own etymology proposes a nominal formation from the same root with the suffix -meno-.\(^{59}\) Vries speculated that the word was very ancient and did not belong to the common fund of everyday speech, and that one could not rely on post-Christian sources to give the definitive pagan meaning of the word.\(^{60}\)

Vries contended that compounds of the type irmintheod rule out the concept of ‘great, universal’, since the tribal mentality could not conceive of such general concepts: it would rather be the duality of we (the people) versus them, as tribal self-designations around the world attest. Since Irminsul may be thought of as erected in the middle of midgardo, irmintheod connotes, to Vries, “the people” in all its extent as well as in all its intimacy. Ermanarik connotes not only “le roi puissant et omnipotent” but also “notre propre roi,” the early concept of a king of divine origin whose presence assures the smooth operation of everything in the realm.\(^{61}\) Finally Vries referred to Haug’s conjecture of a century earlier, linking Irmin to Aryaman. Müllenhoff’s rebuttal was based on the Neogrammarian strict adherence sound laws, but Vries cited cases such as (Indic) Parjanya- / (Baltic) Perkūnas where there was a close semantic correspondence but irregular phonetic correspondence. Similarly, he claimed, we have here to do with the resemblance of the sequence r-m-n as well as of usage and meaning. Vries concluded with the suggestion that Iormur (identified as Ōðinn in the þulur) reflected an absorption of the Dumézilian third sovereign (Aryaman) by the ascendant chief god.\(^{62}\) “If the reading is correct, it probably implies that he [Ōðinn] has usurped the place of another god, identical with the Irmin of the Saxons and the ancestor of the Erminiones, the great Germanic tribe.”\(^{63}\)

Vries returned with some of the same observations in his survey of Germanic religion. He identified Irmin with Týr and again suggested a connection with Aryaman and the Irish hero Eremon. Discussing the súl (pillar) as a symbol of

\(^{58}\) Dumézil (1973), p. xiv n.
\(^{59}\) Vries (1952), pp. 22-23.
\(^{60}\) Ibid., p. 23.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., pp. 24-5.
\(^{62}\) Ibid., pp. 26-7.
\(^{63}\) Turville-Petre (1964), p. 62.
Irmin’s original role as preserver of the world, Vries compared Indra’s propping up the sky with a wagon-axle (Ṛgveda) and the Altaic conception of the heavenly axis as a cosmic hitching post to which stars are hitched like horses. Such a primeval concept gibes with both the Old Norse askr yggdrasils and the Indic aśvattha- (‘horse place’) for the world tree. He went on to suggest that the Icelandic ǫndvegissúla, the high-seat pillar associated with the fortune of a family, could then be seen as a microcosmic correspondence to the macrocosmic Weltsäule.64

In 1962 Ernst Philippson joined in the fray, incorrectly scorning Dumézil for nominating Irmin to the post of third sovereign (an act for which Vries instead was responsible). Philippson suggested that this “invented god” be consigned to the chapter of Germanists’ fairytales, and advocated a philological method of “all induction, not deduction!”65 The etymological dictionaries likewise differ in their treatment of Irmin: for example Jóhannesson and Pokorny adhere to Müllenhoff’s etymology, while Vries refers back to his Cahiers article, quoted above.66

III. Arguments in favor of the original identity of Irmin/Iǫrmun-, Éremón, Aryaman/Airiiaman

In this section I shall cite a number of correspondences that favor a common origin for the Germanic Irmin/Iǫrmun-, the Indo-Iranian Aryaman/Airiiaman, and the Irish Éremón, some of which I have not seen in the published discussions. These are (III.A) phonological correspondences, (III.B) parallelism in forms and meanings of the God/hero name and the ethnic/caste name, (III.C) functional associations with Dumézil’s “first function” and its deities, (III.D) patterning of proper names containing names of deities, and (III.E) correspondences in cosmological terminology.

III.A. Phonetics

The common feature of the consonants r, m, and n is easily seen in the three names Irmin, Aryaman and Éremón, and this is the point at which some scholars have stopped, either accepting the correspondence at face value (which is not enough, in itself, to prove the equation), or going on, as Müllenhoff did, to try to disprove the comparison. Müllenhoff’s first objection was the syllable -ya-, present in OI but absent in the Germanic forms. But is it necessary to postulate a Proto-Germanic form with the extra syllable? The Germanic ethnic or caste term in Old Scandinavian (runic) erilaR or erilaz67 corresponds closely in meaning to the Indic ārya- ‘person of high caste’, yet the two terms are formed with different PIE suffixes, *-elo- and *-iyo-, respectively. Is it not likewise possible that the respective

65 Philippson (1962).
god-names could have been formed differently in the Indo-European dialects? Classic examples, such as English navel, Latin umbilicus, Greek ὀμφαλός and Sanskrit nābhi, indicate the existence of cognates which cannot be reduced to a single prototype.

Müllenhoff’s second objection was that OI Ἀργαμά (nominative) should correspond phonetically to a Germanic *Er(ya)mō. It must be pointed out, however, that most of the Germanic attestations do not involve the nominative case, but rather compounds such as Ἰρμόν-grund formed from the nominal base, or with the genitive, as in Irmines-wagen, Ermenes-werethe (cf. OI Ἀργαμάς, genitive). It is then possible for a new nominative such as (the late attested) Ἰρμόντος to be formed by analogy. The Germanic types Hermun-duri and Ἰρμόν-grund show the ablaut gradation corresponding exactly to the OI compound Ἀργαμά-deva-, in which Germanic un and OI a are the regular reflexes of the Indo-European zero-grade *ṇ.

In sum, I suggest the following developments of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) *H₁*er- ‘member of one’s own clan’, with natural semantic developments (see B) > ‘free man, person’, etc. (see Table 2).

Table 2. Parallel formation of Germanic *arya-, *er-ila-, *Er-mina-; Celtic *arıako-s, *Aría-mon; Indo-Iranian *arı-, ārī-ka-, *Aría-man-:

| Germanic     | PG *arya- ‘noble’; *er-ila-/er-ula-/er-la- ‘leader (of clan)’; PG *er-mana-/*er-mina-/*er-muna-/*ar-mina- ‘Irmin / Armin(ius)’ (god / hero) | Old Runic arjostez (Tune inscription, 400 CE) ‘most noble’ < PG *arjōsta-ez; Runic erilaR ‘a social class of leaders’ (later: ‘magicians, runemasters’); ON iarl, jarl, ierl ‘free man, nobleman, (king’s) henchman’; OS earl ‘man, nobleman’; OHG erl- (in names); OE eorl ‘noble man’ > Eng. earl.
| PG *Irmin- | ON Ἰρμόν [cognomen of Óðinn]; Ἰρμόν- [component of kennings], Old Danish (Runic) irman; OE eormen-; OHG irmin-, irman-; (Greek) Ἀρμένιος, Ἀρμῆνιος, (Latin) Armenius, Arminius: proper name of the king of the Cherusci. |

68 Burrow (1955), p. 11.
69 Antonsen (1975), pp. 44-45.
71 The Germanic alternation *er-/*ar- is quite regular from the point of view of IE ablaut, in laryngeal perspective *H₁*er-/*H₁*ar-.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Celtic</th>
<th>PC *ariak-s</th>
<th>OIr aire ‘noble, chief’, [gen.] airech; Gaulish Arilus, Arillus [man’s name: cf. PG *er-il-a-]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC *ari-</td>
<td>Gaulish Ariomanus, Arimanus [man’s name], (Galatian) Ariamnes [name of a chief: acc. Ἀριάμνην]; OIr Airīm, [gen.] Airemon, Ėremon: ‘one of the mythical ancestors of the Irish people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(&lt; PIE *H₄rjo-); *arjo-va-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*arjo-ma-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>(Thessalian) ērēac [érēas] ‘children’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatolian</td>
<td>Hittite āra- ‘belonging (or: proper) to one’s own social group, communally accepted or acceptable, congruent with social order’; nouns: arā- ‘member of one’s group, peer, comrade, partner, fellow, friend’, arāwa- ‘free (from)’; Lycian arā ‘as a due’ (= Hittite āra- ‘right, proper concern, due’; Indo-Iranian *āra- ‘fitting, right, proper’), arawa ‘free’, arus ‘citizens’, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PIIr *arīa-man-</td>
<td>OI aryamān- (nom. aryamā) ‘hospitalable friend, patron, member of one’s own cultural community, fellow citizen;’ [Aryamān-] ‘Name of an Āditya, patron deity of hospitality and marriage’; Av Airīraman- ~ airīyaman- ‘a friend, a comrade, a man belonging to the upper castes of Aryan society’; MP (Pehlevi) ērmān; MP (Turfan) ṭ_yrm’n ‘friend’; Classical Persian ērmān ‘guest’; Khotanese Saka armāna ‘kindness’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76 Puhvel (1984), 1/2, pp. 116–121; Kloekhorst (2008), p. 198. “Hittite āra- ‘right, properly’ & arā- ‘friend’, arāwa- ‘free’... are derivable not only from *H₄rwr= (so Kloekhorst with respect to Greek ἀριστος), but also from (a) *H₄rw- or (b) *H₄r(H)-, cf. ad (a) Hittite arra- ‘arse, anus’, Greek ὄρρος id., Old High German ars id. < *H₄r-tu-<, where *H₄r- is proven by Old Irish ērr ‘tail, end’ < *H₄e₄-rsₐ₄ (Kloekhorst 2008, 199), and ad (b) Hittite ariye<-a- ‘to consult an oracle, determine by oracle’ < *H₄r₄-H₄-ɾ-e/t-< vs. Greek ἔρρω ‘I ask’ (Kloekhorst 2008, 202) [V. Blažek, p.c.].
77 Puhvel (1984), 1/2, p. 120.
III.B. Phonetic and semantic parallels

The tie that obviously exists between OI aryä- ‘person of caste’ and the god Aryaman has already been noted, the latter being, in Dumézil’s words the “patron of the community that designates itself as Aryä.”80 Dumézil sees a similar tie between the Irish aire, aireach ‘free-man, noble’ and the name of the ancestral hero Airem.81 Similarly in Germanic we find the terms erilaR ~ irilaR (Runic) and the English earl, etc., with connotations of nobility or elitism, which I would suggest are closely tied to the name Irmin. Note the phonological parallelism of Old Swedish iarl and iarmun-, Old English eorl and eormen-, and the Latinized tribal names Heruli and Hermun-duri. These examples cited from Indic, Celtic and Germanic indicate differences in suffix formation, but also striking parallels between a caste or ethnic term on the one hand and the name of a god or hero on the other.

Table 3.a. Germanic personal names containing *Arja-, *Ari-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin transcription</th>
<th>Gothic form</th>
<th>Proto-Germanic</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ariaricus</td>
<td>*Arja-reiks</td>
<td>*Arja-rikaz</td>
<td>noble king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariarith</td>
<td>*Arja-reps</td>
<td>*Arja-reþaz</td>
<td>noble counsel(or)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arigernus</td>
<td>*Ari-gairns</td>
<td>*Arja-gernaz</td>
<td>zealous noble (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arimundus</td>
<td>*Ari-munds</td>
<td>*Arja-munduz</td>
<td>noble hand (protection)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some early Germanic personal names (in Latin transcription) show a different form, *arja-, *ari-, which seems even more compatible with OI árya-, etc., according to Schönfeld (see Table 3.a).82

On the other hand, we must beware that such names are not instead (1) of Celtic (Gaulish) origin, or (2) containing PG *harja- ‘army, troop, host’: (1) the contacts between Germans and Celts were often quite intimate two or three millennia ago; for example, the PG word *rīkaz (among others) is itself of Celtic origin; thus the similar names Ariogaisus, Ariovistus, Ariovindus, Ariomanus, applied to Goths and other Germans, are probably rather of Celtic origin; (2) h was a silent letter in post-Classical Latin (as mentioned earlier in regard to Irmin ~ Hirmin ~ Hermann), so that the above names can be interpreted as *Harja-rikaz ‘king of the troops’ or ‘mighty in battle’, etc.83

81 Dumézil (1941).
82 Schönfeld (1911), pp. 25-29.
83 Thus by Toporova (1996), who interprets all of these names as compounds of *harja-: see p. 16, no. 65; p. 28, no. 92; p. 29, nos. 94 & 95. These interpretations are supported by cognates with initial /h/ such as OS Herrich, OE Hererēð, OHG Haricarn, and ON Hermundr respectively.
Toporova, accepting the cognition of PG *Erla- and OI Arya-, cites an example in which both elements are cognate, in her view, in Germanic and Indo-Aryan: OHG Erleventius ‘protecting the ruler’ (< PG *Erla-warjaz) = OI Aryavarman ‘protection of the Arya’ (PIE *uær- ‘to close, cover, guard, save’). Other personal names derived from *erla- include Langobardic Erlingr, ON Erlingr (“dimin. of jarl, an earl”); Old Swedish, Old Danish Erland, Erland, ON Erlandr, Erlander.

In Old English the compounds of eorl were quite abundant, e.g. eorl-cund ‘noble’ (cf. OI Āryajāta [proper name], since OI jāta- = PG *kunja- < PIE *gjēto-), eorl-dōm ‘earldom, rank of an earl’ (ON jarl-dōmr), eorl-gebyrd ‘noble birth’, eorl-isc ‘of noble rank’, eorl-líc ‘chivalrous, manly’, eorl-mægen ‘band of noble warriors’, eorl-ríht ‘earl’s right’, eorl-scipe ‘manliness, courage’, etc. Likewise in Old Icelandic: jarla-skáld ‘poet of earls’, jarls-efti ‘a young earl, earl’s heir’, jarls-maðr ‘an earl’s man, follower’, jarls-ríki ‘an earldom’, jarls-sæti ‘an earl’s seat’, jarl-borinn ‘earl-born’, etc.

While the association of PG *er-ila- / *er-ula- / *er-la- ‘free man > noble’ with OI Ārya- ‘noble’ seems very attractive, especially semantically, and has been supported by several scholars, including Vries (1962), Haugen (1976), and Toporova (1996), it should be mentioned that alternative origins of the PG words have been proposed. Antonsen suggested Lithuanian erėlis ‘eagle’, Prussian arelis, Old Slavic orěb id., but the semantic connection and phonetic development are difficult. After considering several alternatives, Mees settles on PIE *H,er- / (o-grade) *H,or-

Table 3.b. Germanic personal names containing *Erla-:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proto-Germanic</th>
<th>meaning</th>
<th>East Germanic</th>
<th>West Germanic</th>
<th>North Germanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Erla-baldaż</td>
<td>‘bold ruler’</td>
<td>VG Arlabaldus</td>
<td>OHG Erlabald</td>
<td>ON Jarbaldr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Erla-friduz</td>
<td>‘noble (man) (having) protection’</td>
<td>VG Arlefredus</td>
<td>OHG Erlafrid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Erla-wulbaz</td>
<td>‘noble (man) wolf’</td>
<td>Brg Arlulfus</td>
<td>OS Erlolfus</td>
<td>OHG Erlulf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Erla-weniz</td>
<td>‘noble friend’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>OHG Erlwino</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

85 ‘благородного (человека) защиту (имеющий)’ (Toporova).
87 Formed in a parallel way: VG Alwarus, ON Alvör, OHG Aloara < “Ala-warjaz ‘all-protecting’; ON Ásvör, OS Ansuverus, OHG Ansuverus < “Ansu-warjaz ‘tutelary of the Aesir’ (Toporova 1996, p. 10, no. 6; p. 39, no. 50; p. 190, no. 3; Pokorny 1959, I, 280).
91 Vries (1962), Haugen (1976), Toporova (1996); Hellquist (1948) is noncommittal about the IE origin of jarl.
“swell’, ‘extend’, ‘excite’, and even ‘right’, ‘proper’ (thus ‘pure, genuine’).”

Derivatives of this root include ON íaða (jara) ‘battle’, ern ‘able, energetic’, OE erno ‘battle, duel’, English earnest; Av arvänu- ‘battle’, OI sam-ārā- ‘fight, contest’, rṇōti ‘arises, moves, reaches, attacks’, etc. Mees proposes that PIE *H₁er-(e)l- probably had a meaning ‘great one, able one, proper one’, i.e. ‘noble, lord’. This *H₁er-2 is homophonous with our *H₁er-1 ‘member of one’s own clan’ (see above, section B and Table 2), but with a distinct meaning (semantic range), thus the two roots would be originally unconnected homonyms. Mees derives both PG *er(i)laz (ON íarl, etc.) and *ermun- (ON íormun-, etc.) from *H₁er-2, while here we derive both from *H₁er-1. Only the latter solution is consistent with the equations íarl = arya and íormun- = aryaman-, as proposed in Table 2.

Therefore it is suggested here that there are other factors, mainly functional correspondences (section C and Table 4) and cosmology (see section E), that support the hypothesis of common origin of íormun- and aryaman-. For example, OE eormen-leāf ‘mallow’ makes no sense as ‘great / immense / elevated herb’, and the genitive forms in the OS place name Ermenes-verter (see above) and the cosmological terms Irmines-wagen and *Eormenes-strāt are parallel with the genitive of OI Aryamṇāḥ pānthāḥ, i.e., formed from a (proper) noun, in our hypothesis here, namely the god *Ermīna- (~ *Ermana- / *Ermana-), a cognomen of *Tīwaz that apparently replaced the primary name of the Germanic sky and war god in some regions (Saxony, Thuringia).

### III.C. Functional correspondences

In Dumézil’s tripartite scheme of Indo-European mythology the “first function” involves sovereignty, law, contract, magic and religion.95 Within this Aryaman protects the Aryan nation and assures its duration and cohesion; gifts and hospitality.96 In the Vedas Aryaman is associated with marriage (as an alliance between families) and gift-giving, both aspects of the contractual function.97 To this day Vedic prayers invoking Aryaman are used in Hindu marriage rites:

\[
\text{ghṛbhνami te saubhaghatvāya hastaṃ mayā patyā jaradaśṭirvathāsah} / \\
\text{bhagho aryamā savitā purandhirmahyaṃ tvādurghāḥrapatyāya devāḥ} // \\
\text{Rgveda X.85.36}
\]

“I take thy hand in mine for happy fortune that thou mayst reach old age with me thy husband.

---

95 Summarized by Littleton (1966), pp. 7-9.
97 Atharva-Veda 14.1: aryamānaṃ yajāmahe subándhum pativėdanaṃ / ‘we sacrifice to Aryaman, god of good alliances, who finds a husband’ (Dumézil 1977: 97).
Gods, Aryaman, Bhaga, Savitar, Purandhi, have given thee to be my household’s mistress.”

ā naḥ praḥaṃ hanayatu praḥapatiṣṭarṣāya samanaktvayāmā /
adurmaṅghaliḥ patilokamā viṣa śaṃ no bhavadvipade śaṃ catuspade //
Ṛgveda X.85.43.

“So may Prajapati bring children forth to us; may Aryaman adorn us till old age come nigh.
Not inauspicious enter thou thy husband’s house: bring blessing to our bipeds and our quadrupeds.” (Translations by Griffiths, 1896).

Table 4. Functional correspondences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>God / Hero</th>
<th>Social cohesion</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Ancestry, progeny</th>
<th>Healing, sustenance</th>
<th>Free movement, roads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indic</td>
<td>Aryaman</td>
<td>protection of Aryan nation, its duration and cohesion; gifts and hospitality</td>
<td>marriage as alliances between families</td>
<td>king of the Fathers (Pitārah); purujāta- ‘having great progeny’</td>
<td>? aryaman- = ‘the arka plant’</td>
<td>free movement on roads; Aryamanāḥ pānthāḥ ‘Milky Way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>Airīiaman (Sraoṣa)</td>
<td>(Sraoṣa) is lord of Ėrān vēž; protects community of the pious (of Mazdeism)</td>
<td>Airīiaman connected with marriage rituals</td>
<td>(Sraoṣa) leads the soul to a tribunal of judges (that includes Sraoṣa)</td>
<td>Airīiaman invented gaomaēza ritual of healing, and others</td>
<td>(Sraoṣa) assures free circulation (of cosmos and supernatural beings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celtic</td>
<td>Ėremón</td>
<td>arranged hereditary succession for the Irish</td>
<td>provided wives to his allies</td>
<td>numerous progeny includes the kings of Ulster</td>
<td>protection from poisoned arrows</td>
<td>builder of causeways and royal roads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one of the Ādityas, Aryaman is closely associated with Mitra (contract) and Varuṇa (magico-religious), the first function deities that parallel the Nordic Týr and Óðinn. He is described in the Ṛgveda as purujātā- ‘having great progeny’, which together with the form of his name suggests close connection with the collective life of the ārya- community, whose cohesion is a direct result of the contract function. Another function of Aryaman is the free circulation of roads, with epithets such as ātūrtapanthā ‘whose path cannot be cut’ and pururātha ‘having many chariots’.99 Aryaman was also “a god of rain and of fertility who is essentially helpful to man,”100 but the extension of this function to healing is more evident in Iranian Airiiaman and Celtic Éremón (see below). A connection with healing might help us make sense of the gloss of aryaman as ‘the arka plant’, i.e. Calatropis gigantea,101 which has medicinal uses, among others:

An acrid milky juice flows from every part of the shrub when wounded, and this the natives apply to medicinal purposes in many different ways, besides preparations of the plant itself in epilepsy, paralysis, bites of poisonous animals, and as a vermifuge.102

In Germanic, see below about OE eormenléaf, eormenwyrt. In the later epic literature Aryaman is known primarily as king of the Fathers (Pitāraḥ) or collective ancestry, with the epithet purujātā- ‘having great progeny’.103 As such, his path, accessed by the proper ritual, souls to the gods (see section E. Cosmology):

*yad āhur aryamṇāḥ panthāḥ ity eṣa vāva devayānāḥ panthāḥ /  
pra devayānāṃ panthānam āpnuvanti ya etad upayanti //  
Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa XXV.12.3-4

“The path called Aryaman’s path is the path leading to the gods. They who undertake this (rite) reach the path leading to the gods.” (Translations by Griffiths, 1896).104

In Iranian traditions some of the same functions of Indic Aryaman are associated with Av Airiiaman, Middle Persian ērmān ‘friend’ and Classical Persian ērmān ‘guest’ (see Table 2).105 The healing function is not prominent in Indic traditions, but in Old Iranian Airiiaman was associated with rituals of healing, and invented the gaomaēza, ritual.106 (See below for a Celtic parallel). In Zoroastrianism it seems

100 Carnoy (1918), p. 295. “It is only reasonable to regard [Airiiaman’s] functions of healer in Iran as a secondary but very natural development out of these elements [god of rain and of fertility who is essentially helpful to man].”
102 Drury (1873), p. 100.
104 http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/1_veda/2_bra/pncvbr2u.htm
that many of the traits of Airiiaman were transferred to Sraoša (‘obedience’). As Indic Aryaman assures the free circulation of roads, Sraoša assures free circulation of the cosmos and supernatural beings. In the afterlife Sraoša leads the soul to a tribunal of judges that includes Sraoša.

Both Uhlenbeck (1898) and Dumézil (1941) have suggested an Irish legendary hero Airem (Érémón, Érimón) as a possible cognate to Aryaman. The Old Irish Lebor Gabála Érenn (Book of the Taking of Ireland) states that the sons of Míl, Éber and Éremón, came into Ireland to avenge the death of their great uncle Íth. They were among 36 chieftains who conducted the Gaels into Ireland to fight the Tuatha Dé Danann (aborigines). It is also related that Éber and Éremón contended for kingship of the land, with the result that they were given the South and North, respectively. The numerous progeny of Éremón is said to include the kings of Ulster. Here we have a legendary figure who is closely tied to the collective life of the nation, with the ideals of kinship and revenge (contract), and, like Aryaman, with the functions of ancestry and great progeny. Éremón was a “... builder of causeways and royal roads ... arranged a protection against poisoned enemy arrows ... provided wives to his allies and arranged for hereditary succession in favor of the Irish, his own people ...” His numerous progeny (cf. Aryaman’s purujātā-) includes the kings of Ulster. Is it possible that here, as elsewhere, a divine figure has descended to the mortal, heroic realm? In this case, the monks who wrote the old tales were motivated to demote the old gods to a heroic level.

The functions of the obscure Germanic Irmin/Iormun- are difficult to trace at this late date. Nevertheless, in many of the terms containing the name we can glimpse a sense of the collective or contractual function associated with Aryaman. The Irminsül, for example, was recognized as a “universalis columna,” the Weltsäule that connected the Nine Worlds, and the same sense is apparent in terms such as irmintheod ‘the collective human race’. As noted above, Irmin or Iormunr is usually identified with the first function gods, Týr and Óðinn. In the tribal names Herminones and Hermunduri we again see a connotation of the collective, or possibly descent from a legendary ancestor. Erminus (with variants Ermenus, Ermenes, and Erminas).
Ermenius, etc.) is cited in a medieval “Table of Nations” as an ancestor of the Goths, Vandals, Gepids, and Saxons, thus, like Aryaman and Éremón, of ‘great progeny’ (purujātā-).\textsuperscript{116} Cf. OE eormenstrýnd ‘progenies’.\textsuperscript{117} In regard to the healing function (especially prominent in Iranian Airiianman and Irish Éremón), OE eorman-lēaf, eorman-uyrt ‘mallow’, which makes no sense as ‘great (immense) leaf’ or ‘great (immense) wort (herb)’, could perhaps be understood as ‘Irmin’s herb’, associated with a god of healing.\textsuperscript{118}

The correlations shown in Table 4 are not always perfect, as would be expected after millennia of separate development. Especially in Germanic, the least peripheral of the traditions, some functions are more weakly attested than in Celtic and Indo-Iranian; for example, I have found no strong evidence of the marriage function in Germanic.

### III.D. Personal names

German names derived from element irmin-/irman- have been mentioned above (Table 1), and these were especially common in Old High German, combined with elements such as -degan ‘servant, warrior’ (ON þegn), -deo ‘servant’ (ON -þér), -frit ‘peace, defense’, -drút ‘strength’ (ON þrúðr).\textsuperscript{119} The same elements are sometimes in combination with the divine name (Frankish Ansedeus, ON Ragnþrúðr),\textsuperscript{120} but also with battle terms or other elements. If the irmin- names have a divine referent we would expect to find similar personal names in Sanskrit, and such names did indeed occur, e.g.: Aryama-datta- ‘given by Aryaman’ and Aryama-rādha- ‘favored by Aryaman’.\textsuperscript{121} The letter name element, rādha-, is also frequent in Germanic, so that Aryama-rādha- in Indic is formed in the same way as OHG Anserāda, Ansrat and ON Ásráð (from *ansaz > áss ‘god’), and in fact Aryama-rādha- has a precise parallel in OHG Irmin-rat [woman’s name] ‘helped by Irmin’.\textsuperscript{122} In the light of this evidence it seems more likely that the irmin- names originally bore the sense of a god Irmin rather than the meaning ‘great, immense’ that was traditionally favored.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] “Frater eorum Erminus genuit Gothos, Walagotus, Wandalus, Gepedes et Saxones.” This work apparently represented “efforts to integrate Roman and Frankish history in the first half of the seventh century” (Reimitz 2015, pp. 216–17); cf. Mommsen & Müllenhoff (1863), pp. 532-4: “die fränkische Völkertafel” is found in at least 6 manuscripts; cf. Vries (1956), I, p. 486.
\item[117] Grimm (1882) I, p. 118; ‘permagna generatio’ (Bosworth 1898).
\item[118] “Marshmallow—Emollient, demulcent, pain-soothing and lubricating” (Meyer 1934, p. 134). Scientific name is Althaea officinalis, in which Althaea is derived from Greek ἄλθεαι ‘to get cured or healed’.
\item[119] Grimm (1882), p. 351.
\item[120] Vries (1962), p. 609; þér (3); p. 624; þrúðr.
\item[121] Monier-Williams (1899): aryaman. For example, one Aryamarādha Gobhila was one of the teachers of Vansia of the Sāma-veda, according to Müller (1860), p. 443.
\item[122] Toporova (1996), p. 39, no. 48; Zollinger (1939). A particular Irminrat was a female founder of the Lorsch Abbey in Hesse in 806 CE: “In Christi nomine sub die III. kalendas Aprilis, anno XXXVIII, Karoli imperatoris. Ego Irminrat dono ad sanctum Nazarium etc in pago Myynchhowe in Rumphenheim et in Bellingen et in Ewicheim VI hubas et mancipia XL, etc.” (Reimer 1891, p. 8).
\end{footnotes}
III.E. Cosmology

In the OI Taittrīya Brāhmaṇa and Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa the Milky Way galaxy is called Aryamāṇ ṣ pāṇthāḥ, that is, the ‘path of Aryaman’, apparently because of the role of that god as king of the ancestral Fathers. The Ṛgveda connects the ancestors with the constellations in the verse, “Like a dark steed adorned with pearl, the Fathers have decorated heaven with constellations” (X.68.11); cf. the ancient Germanic belief: “anima non perire; sed post mortem iis diuinītibus uniri & astris inseri / souls do not perish; but after death they are united with the divinities and mingled with the stars” (see Appendix A). In Hindu astrology Aryaman presides over one of the 28 nakṣatras (lunar mansions, or asterisms, into which the sky is divided) named aryamākhya or aryamadeva.

Of the old Germanic cosmology we seem to be left with only a few tantalizing remnants. Grimm cited Irmineswagen as an old German name for the Big Dipper or Great Bear. The likening to a wagon is widespread, as we know from some other names for the same constellation: e.g. Swedish Karlavagnen (OE carles wān, etc., most likely a reference to Þórr karl), and Middle Dutch Woenswaghen (i.e., Óðinn’s). To interpret Irmines- as a genitive of a God’s name (cf. OI Aryamṇás) is supported by the god’s names in the Swedish and Dutch terms. Descending from the heavens we find such other cosmological terms as Irminsül, the world pillar, and Ærmungandr, the world serpent. There is abundant evidence from comparative mythology that the concept of a world tree or pillar supporting the sky was widespread in primitive consciousness. I have already alluded to the hitching post concept reflected in OI aṣvattha- and ON askr yggdrasils. Many peoples believe that the dead ascended the tree or pillar to take a place in heaven as stars, as hinted in the Ṛgveda (see Appendix A).

Furthermore, the combination of serpent and tree is an ancient archetype and motif, best known to us in the West as the story of Eden (the Tree of Life and the serpent Satan) and the caduceus, symbol of medicine. The typical belief, reported from a tribe in the Philippines, is that the world rests on a great post which a large serpent is endeavoring to take away. When the snake shakes the post, the earth quakes. We know of a similar concept from the Poetic Edda, namely the serpent which gnaws at the world tree (Grimm 35). There is no reason for separating this serpent, Nīðhōgg, from the World Serpent known variously in the Poetic Edda as mīðgarōsormr, Ærmungandr, or simply as naðr or ormr: all have sprung from the primeval archetype.

123 Monier-Williams (1899): aryaman.
125 Grimm (1882) I, p. 356. See Appendix A.
126 Hellquist (1948) I, p. 447; later, in some languages, associated with Karl der grosse (Charlemagne).
128 Philpot (1897).
Grimm, in his discussion of *Irmin*, devoted much space to this cosmological riddle. He was especially intrigued by certain Old English passages which refer to the old names of four great highways traversing England, among which were Watlingestrete and Ermingestrete (< *Eormenes-stræt*, per Grimm), the latter running from south to north. Other English sources refer to the Milky Way galaxy as *Watlingestrete*; the implication is that the earthly roads were named after the corresponding celestial paths. Finally Grimm exclaims, almost despairingly, “if this would but tell us of an *Irmines wec* [‘Irmin’s way’], all would come right.” Grimm indicated no awareness of the Indic *Aryamnāh pānthāh*, a term which supplies the ‘Irmin’s way’ he urgently sought, though from another neck of the Indo-European woods. This correspondence, together with the other parallels listed above in sections (A) through (E), helps make a case for the ultimate identity of the obscure Indic Aryaman and even more elusive Germanic Irmin.

### IV. Conclusions

Like Vries, I find the conventional derivation of Germanic *irmin-/irman-/iarmun-/iরমন*-(PG *ermina-/ *ermana-/ *ermuna-)* from an aorist middle participle of a verb related to Gk ὤρνομι ‘stir (up), urge, incite’ and OE ōrn ‘to arise, move, reach, attack’ highly implausible. First, it seems unlikely that Germanic would preserve the ablaut series *er-mana-/mina-/muna-* for a verbal form which it did not otherwise use, and was extant only in Greek, Sanskrit and Avestan; second, the conventional semantic gloss ‘excelsus, erhaben, elevated’ or ‘gross / great’ fits only *Irmin-sül*, (and a few other compounds, like *iরমন-gandr*) and is in no wise consistent with OE eormen-wyrt or eormen-leaf, a designation of the lowly mallow plant, while Grimm’s explanation as *eormenes leaf* ‘Irmin’s leaf’ makes more sense, in view of the healing functions of Aryaman/Irmin (see Table 4).

The etymology proposed here consists of a nominal formation with the suffix -*meno*-(or athematic *-*men-*), but unlike Vries, not with the root *h*er- ‘to set in motion’, but with a homonym *h*er- ‘member of one’s own clan’. In Proto-
Germanic the formation of the name of the god was simply root + suffix (*er-mina-/
* -mana- / *-muna-), while in Celtic and Indo- Iranian a suffix *-iɔ- (= *-yo-)
termed between *h-er- and *-meno-. Celtic and Indo- Iranian also agreed in the
formation of the human designation as *h-er-iɔ-, while Germanic preferred instead
* h-er-eio-s > *er-ilaz (~ *er-laz),138 parallel in formation with e.g. OSw (Runic)
karlR, ON karl ‘man, churl, old man’, OE ceorl ~ cearl (> churl), Dutch kerel ‘guy,
fellow’, OHG karal id., (Latin) Carolus (< *Kar-ulaz), etc., with an agent-noun
construction like Latin bibulus, créfulus, etc.139 Such variations in suffix “choice”
are very common in Indo-European, e.g. English nave (< PG *naböi) / navel (< PG
*nablan-); Latin umbilicus (< PIE *H3mbʰ-e/ol-); Greek όμφαλος; OI nábhya- n.
’nave (of wheel)’, nabhī- f. ‘navel; nave’; cf. Latin nōvos, Greek νέφθων, Old Church
Slavic nůvs, OI náva- ‘new’, vs. OI návyā-, Lithuanian naijas, Gaulish Novio-,
Greek (Ionic) νειος, Gothic niuþis (with *-iɔ-), etc.140

So how did the phonetic and morphological forms of the Irmin-words/names, and
their meanings, become so distorted and transformed over time? Grimm alluded to
one of the morphological changes:

If Sæteresdæg has got rubbed down to Saturday, Saterdach ..., so may Eritac
point to a former Erestac ..., Eormenléaf to Eormenes láef, Irmansul to
Irmanessul; we also met with Donnerbühel for Donnersbühel ..., Woenlet
for Woenslet, and we say Frankfurt for Frankenfurt [Oxford for Oxenaford,
&c.]. The more the sense of the name faded out, the more readily did the
genitive form drop away ; the OHG. godes hûs is more literal, the Goth.
guþhûs more abstract, yet both are used ...141

Gurevich has remarked on the gradual obsolescence of words like iörmun-, while
they often persist in poetic language:

Preserved as a part of some traditional compounds inherited from the past,
the substantival epithet in the Old Norse poetic language lost its former
productivity and became a rudimentary element with an obscure sense.
Examples of such substantival elements with a lost meaning are well known.
One may recall jörmun- and fimbul- (cp. jörmungandr and fimbulvetr);

137 Probably = *ʔer-, with ablaut variants *ʔor- (> Hittite ar- [see Table 2]) /*ʔr- (> Celtic *ar-). I am
grateful to V. Blázk for advice on this reconstruction. Cf. Proto-Indo-European *ʔer-/*ʔor-/*ʔr-‘associated, related’ (Bomhard 2015, pp. 730-31: see Appendix B).
138 Some have thought also *er-ulaz > ‘Eρωνλον, Heruli, “a mysterious people, who may not have been
a tribe at all, but a vikinglike band of warriors dedicated to the arts of war” (Haugen 1976, pp. 107,
123-4); cf. Mees (2003), with a different etymology.
139 Noreen (1894), pp. 49, 86, 194; Buck (1949), no. 2.21; Dumézil (1973), pp. 118-125; Mees (2003),
p. 44. In the Rigshula the three sons of Heimdall are juxtaposed as Jarl ‘noble’, Karl ‘freeholder’, and
Prøll ‘thrall, slave’ (< *prähliraR).
141 Grimm (1882) I, p. 352.
probably the words went out of use very early and have survived only as first parts of a few mythological compounds.\footnote{142 Gurevich (1992), p. 48.}

Besides the usual processes of phonetic, morphological, and semantic change, we can point to two major factors, (a) the tendency of innovations to spread from a geographic center, with archaisms preserved in peripheral regions, and (b) the misinterpretations, both deliberate and unintentional, by history writers and philologists, ancient and modern.

(a): Puhvel notes that “Celtic mythology seems to have perpetuated, at the far end of the Indo-European continuum, a match [in Nūadu-Eremon] for the Mitra-Aryaman structure at the other extremity — a notable instance of ‘archaism of the fringe’”\footnote{143 Puhvel (1987), p. 182. It is well-known that mythological, and linguistic, archaisms tend to persist on the geographical peripheries of language families, and, at chronologically deeper levels, worldwide (Witzel 2012: 52, 57, 195–6).} Thus, the attestations of the Iarl, Iǫrmun-; Aire, Eremon; Arya-, Aryaman- family of names and words are most abundant at the geographic extremes, Ireland, Iran and India, somewhat fainter in Germania, and only sporadic in other IE regions (see Table 4).\footnote{144 Note that the settlement of Germanic peoples in Iceland took place centuries after the settlement of Celtic speakers in Ireland.}
Nevertheless, as fragmentary as the Germanic evidence is, we can tentatively postulate a comprehensive model of the Proto-Germanic mythological world view (Figure 1), in which several aspects of Irmin/Iðrmun- can be integrated: OS Irminsul (representing the Weltachse, World Tree, Yggdrasil); OHG Irmineswagen (‘Irmin’s wagon’ = the Great Bear constellation), which travels on a hypothetical *Irmines wec (= OI Aryamnáḥ pántháḥ); ON Æðrmungrund (the earth, ‘Irmin’s ground’ = OE eornengrund), upon which live OHG irmendiot = OS Æðminthiod = OE eornmenþēod ‘the collective human race’; and Æðrmungandr (‘Irmin’s wand’ = World Serpent, midgardśormr, Æðhöggr). Here we see rather sporadic attestation: some of the original terminology was preserved only in the North (Æðrmungandr), some remained in both ON and OE (Æðmungrund = eornengrund), while some is only attested in the South (Irminsul, Irmineswagen).

(b): At this conference Wim van Binsbergen discussed the challenges we face in interpreting the scraps of mythology left to us from decades or centuries ago. “Unpacking” myths from earlier sources may give them another layer of meaning, foreign to the original bearers of the myths; thus we run the risk of creating artefacts of text-based scholarship. I think this is what happened in the case of Germanic Irmin/Iðrmun, and the supposed glosses ‘huge, great, swollen’ may just be such “artefacts of scholarship,” and not necessarily the original meaning.

The relative paucity of information on these entities which has come down to us, caused by the factors discussed above, need not reflect a corresponding lack in their importance to the cultures which they were known. It is more likely that Aryaman/Irmin and the related cosmological terminology constituted such a basic everyday part of pre-Christian life that no one took extraordinary pains to document it. Both in India and Germania the entity in question is closely related to some kind of ancestral cult, so that an observation of Folke Ström is relevant here:

The literary sources in the Nordic countries are remarkably scanty in terms of unambiguous information about the ancestor-cult, since it is difficult to distinguish between this [ancestor-cult] and the worship of beings other than the deceased.\textsuperscript{146}

In other words, literature, with its penchant for the exceptional and the dramatic, seldom touched on the everyday life in which the ancestor cult was expressed. This, together with the zeal of the Church to eradicate all traces of heathen belief, may account for the lack of information we now are left with regarding Irmin and his cosmological correlates.

We must therefore distinguish between the pre-Christian metaphysical concept of Irmin/Iðrmun and the post-Christian, literary meaning of the same. The oldest

\textsuperscript{145} E.g., Mees (2003), p. 49.

\textsuperscript{146} “De litterära källorna i Norden är påfallande torftiga i fråga om otvetydiga uppgifter om [föräderskulten], då det är vanskligt att skilja mellan denna och dyrkan av andra väsen än de hädangångarna” (F. Ström 1960, p. 121).
sources, and comparative mythology, point to some kind of divine (or secondarily, heroic) entity closely connected with the sovereign deity and ancestry or the collective life of the people. The post-Christian literary tradition, whether German, English or Nordic, drew upon the pagan tradition that transformed it radically, just as all of society and worldview was transformed. Thus, the interpretations of ‘great, expanse, mighty’, and so on, are quite correct as far as the medieval literary tradition is concerned. But the piecing together of the pre-Christian entity from the scraps left to us leads to quite a different conclusion.

* * * * * *

**Acknowledgments:** I am grateful to my mentors at the University of Minnesota, Kaaren Grimstad and Nils Hasselmo, for their guidance on this topic (1977), and to Edgar C. Polomé for his correspondence with me about these ideas (1985-86). More recently I am thankful to Václav Blažek, Yuri Kleiner, and Michael Witzel for valuable suggestions and corrections.
References


Eckhart, Johann Georg von. 1729, Commentarii de rebus Franciae orientalis et episcopatus Wirceburgensis. Würzburg.


Mommsen, Theodor, & Karl Müllenhoff. 1863, Verzeichniss der römischen Provinzen aufgesetzt um 297. Berlin: Königlichen akademie der wissenschaften.


Müllenhoff, Karl. 1900, Deutsche Altertumskunde. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandel.


O’Rahilly, Thomas Francis. 1957, Early Irish history and mythology. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.


Philpot, J.H. 1897, The Sacred Tree; or, the tree in religion and myth. London: Macmillan.


Rastorgueva, Vera, & Džoi Ðel’man, 2000. Etimologičeskij slovar’ iranskix jazykov. [Etymological dictionary of Iranian languages.] Moscow, Vostočnaja literatura, RAN.


Uhlenbeck, C.C. 1898-9, Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch der altindischen Sprache. Amsterdam: Müller.


Appendix A:
Early (18th century) references to Irmineswagen.

Eckhart (1729), Commentarii de rebus Franciae orientalis et episcopatus Wirceburgensis, page 883:

Crediderunt etiam ethnici maiores nostri Irminum in Coelum translatum in Arcto residere; unde Arctum Irmineswagen appellantur, quod Helvetii in Herrenwagen corrupere. 
Our pagan ancestors also believed that Irmin, translated into into heaven, dwelt in Arctos [the Great Bear constellation]; hence they named Arctos Irmins Wagon, which the Swiss corrupted as Herrenwagen ['Lord’s wagon'].

Eckhart (1750), De Origine Germanorum, page 397:

Haec enim veterum fides erat, vt putarent, animas non perire; sed post mortem iis diuinitatibus uniri & astris inseri, quorumconiunctionem rebus aut bene aut male gestis meruissent. Sic via quoque lactea Irminstrate, & plaustrum siue sidus Vrsae maioris der Irmineswagen ab Arminio vocatum est.

Truly, the ancient belief was, and so they thought, that souls do not perish; but after death they are united with the divinities and mingled with the stars, which union is deserved by their deeds, whether well or ill. Thus the Milky Way [is called] Irminstrate, and the constellation Ursa major is called der Irmineswagen, after Arminius.

*   *   *

Appendix B:
Deep (Nostratic) background of PIE *H,er- ‘member of one’s own clan’

“The latter ancient [Indo-European, Uralic, Caucasian] populations and many others are now perceived by some as having spoken Nostratic languages. ... The existence of their ancestor, Proto-Nostratic, at more than 12,000 years ago, may be regarded as highly likely. Therefore, some of our linguistic reconstructions in individual language families, such as Indo-European, may now be further backdated by many thousands of years, and the (few) religious items reconstructed so far for Nostratic allow us a first glimpse into the mythology of those distant Stone Age times” (E.J.M. Witzel).147

“There is also an external argument for reconstruction of *H,er- [see Table 2], corresponding regularly to Afroasiatic *ʔ-, in which there are promising cognates

just with initial */ʔ*- according to the Nostratic Dictionary by Aron Dolgopol'sky [2008]" (V. Blažek).148

“Moscow School” Model of Nostratic
(Tower of Babel Project / Evolution of Human Language Project)149

Proto-IE

Proto-Altaic
*ārī (~ *ēra) ‘man’: Proto-Turkic: *ēr ‘man’ > Old Turkish, Turkish, Yakut, Tuva er, Tatar, Bashkir ir, Uighur ār, Chuvash ar ‘man’, etc.; Proto-Mongolian: *ere ‘male, man’ > Written Mongolian, Ordos ere, Kalmuck ere, Mogol errā id., etc.

Proto-Uralic
*arV (*arwa) ‘relative on mother’s side; (younger) brother of mother’: Khanty (Ostyak): oḷi (V Vj.), ortī (O), ṡwortī (Kaz.) ‘Neffe, Sohn des Bruders (od. der Schwester), jüngerer Bruder der Mutter etc.’, olisakon (Vj.) ‘Mutterbruder und Kind seiner älteren Schwester zusammen’, olisat ‘Mutterbruder und Kinder seiner älteren Schwester zusammen’, jīlı (V j.), āā (Trj.), ər ‘ne (Kaz.) ‘Tochter der älteren Schwester (des Vaters), Tochter des älteren Bruders des Mannes etc.’, ar sōx (O) ‘Kind der älteren Schwester, Kind der Schwester des Vaters’, ortiwey (Kaz.) ‘Mann der Tochter der älteren Schwester etc.’; Mansi (Vogul): oār (LM), ār (N) ‘mütterlicherseits verwandt’, or ‘сородичи по материнской линии, предки по матери’, jänor őr-nor (K) ‘родительская досада’; Hungarian: ara ‘Braut; (altung.) Bruder der Mutter od. der Schwester; Schwiegertochter’.

Proto-Dravidian
*ēr- (*ēd-) ‘male’: Brahui arē (pl. arisk) ‘male individual, person, husband’; Tamil ēru ‘bull, male of certain animals (pig, deer, buffalo, sambar, tiger, lion)’, ērrai, (lex.) ēṭṭai ‘male of any animal remarkable for physical strength’; Malayalam ēru ‘bullock’, ēran ‘bull’; Kota ēr, Toda ēr ‘male buffalo, bull’, etc.

Proto-Afro-Asiatic
Rendile arrari ‘clan’; Sidamo aroo ‘husband’, Darasa (Gedeo) aroło, Hadiya (Gudella) arólo id.; Omotic: Anfillo aroo ‘husband’ (< Cushitic?).

**Dolgopolsky Model of Nostratic**

[120] Proto-Nostratic *ʔarV [ = *ʔarV]*\(^{151}\) ‘member of the clan’ >

**Hamito-Semitic:**


**Indo-European:**

Narrow Indo-European *arva- [ *xaro- ~ *xario-* ‘member of the tribe’;\(^{153}\) Old Indian *aryah ‘master of the house’, ar’yaḥ ‘(hospitable) lord’, ār(i)ya- ‘an Aryan person’, Avestan airyo, Old Persian ariya- ‘Median, Aryan person’;\(^{154}\) Old Irish aire ‘free person’ (> ‘chief, prince’).

? Uralic:

Ugric *arV [ = *arV] or *arua ‘relative belonging to one’s mother’s clan’, ‘mother’s (younger) brother’ > Old Hungarian ara ‘brother’, (early 18th c.) ara ‘Schwiegertochter’, Hungarian ara ‘bride’ (attested from 1792; a lexical innovation in the framework of the Hungarian ‘language renewal’); Ob-Ugric: Kazım Ostyak [Khanty] wór-ti ‘mother’s younger brother, his male

---

\(^{150}\) Dolgopolsky (1998), p. 95. Some additions from the later (2008) version of the etymology are shown in brackets [ ]. Some additions were also provided by V. Blažek (p.c.).

\(^{151}\) I.e., *V is a vowel of uncertain quality, the evidence does not allow a precise vowel reconstruction.

\(^{152}\) Aistleitner (1963); Black, et al. (2000); Lete (2003).


\(^{154}\) Dolgopolsky also notes the borrowing of Indo-Iranian *arya- > Finno-Ugric (or Finno-Permian) *orya ‘slave’ > Finnish orja, Estonian ori ‘slave, bondsman’, etc., reflecting the social situation during language contacts on the central Eurasian steppes. Cf. Burrow (1949), pp. 23-27. An analogous situation is seen in the Yeniseian region: Kott arin-git ~ harangat ~ haranget ‘slave’, Assyán xarangat ‘servant’, vs. Arin ar(a), which is simply the ethnonym ‘Arin’. Other Sino-Caucasian cognates, such as Burushaski hol ‘army, troops’ (with anomalous /l/), Lak qral id. (Archi ari ‘army’, borrowed from Old Lak), Abaza rɔ ‘army, troops’, Basque herri ‘people, nation, country’, point to the original meaning (‘our own’) people, including its warriors. Sino-Caucasian *ʔwu ‘hi is considered a probable remote cognate of Nostratic *ʔarV ‘member of the clan’, according to TOB/EHL: http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/main.cgi?root=config&morpho=0
descendants, his son’, Northern (Obdorsk) Ostyak or-ti, or-di ‘mother’s brother’; Middle Lozva Vogul [Mansi] oår, Northern Vogul à:r ‘mother’s relative’, [Kondin Vogul őr in yäynor örnor ‘parents’, consisting of yäy ‘father’, nor ‘revenge’].

**Bomhard Model of Nostratic**

637. **Proto-Nostratic** (n.)

*ʔar-a* ‘associated or related person or thing; associate, companion, friend; kinsman, relative’; (adj.) ‘associated, related’:

A. **Proto-Afrasian**

*ʔar-* ‘(n.) associated or related person or thing; associate, companion, friend; kinsman; (adj.) associated, related’. Semitic: Ugaritic ʾar-y ‘kinsman’; Egyptian ʾir-y, ʾir-i ‘one who belongs to someone or something, one who is in charge, keeper; friend, associate, companion’; Coptic (Bohairic) ʾer ‘friend’; Proto-Southern Cushitic *ʔar-* ‘kind, associated or related thing’ > Iraqw ado ‘way, manner’; Asa ʾarato ‘twins’; Maʾa mʔáro ‘neighbor; kind, associated or related thing’ ...

B. **Proto-Indo-European**

*ʔer-/ʔor-/ʔr-* ‘associated, related’. Sanskrit ʾar-ī-h ‘devoted, trustworthy, loyal’, aryamā́ ‘companion, host; the god of hospitality’; Avestan Airiianan- ‘friend, guest’; Hittite (nom. sg.) araš ‘member of one’s own social group, peer, comrade, partner, fellow, friend’.

---

55 Bomhard (2015), pp. 730-31. In this summary some simplifications and minor edits have been made, and references omitted.