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CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATUS OF NAME IN THE ṚGVEDA

The name, especially the proper one, occupies quite a special position in the Old Indian tradition. The theme of name is elaborated in many philosophical systems (the Vedas, Upanishads, Buddhism etc.), taking part in various oppositions: name – bearer of the name, name – form, name – dharma, and it is the name that has always a higher level in the hierarchy. The Old Indian tradition differs in this respect from the Indo-European cultural community.

A special monograph by J. Gonda deals with the Old Indian name (Gonda 1970), where vast material is collected, especially from the Vedas. But strict delimitations between various periods of the Old Indian tradition are missing in this book, and no attempts are made to trace the historical development of the notion of name. Meanwhile, it would be important to find out what kind of a system of ideas concerning name was in the beginning of this tradition the first stage of which is represented by the Ṛgveda (RV).

The aim of this paper is to analyze on a synchronic level by means of linguistic and philological methods how the name was functioning in the RV¹.

First a few words should be said about the general ideas of the Vedic Aryans concerning name. It was believed in the times of the RV that the connection between the name and its bearer was not a casual

1. More detailed about these methods see (Елизаренкова 1999, Введение).

one (Gonda 1970, 7 foll.). The name reveals the nature of its denotatum, be it a person or a thing. This is equally relevant for a proper name and a common noun – there were no differences between them, and both were designated by the same word *nāman-*. A denotatum could not exist without a name, the name was identified with its denotatum.

Name is regarded as such an inner independent substance that may be revealed, and may be not. The name of god was sacred, because it expressed his divine nature *devatvá*. All that was sacred was secret, one had to know how to find it, recognize and reveal, which was possible only for the wise Ṛṣis, although even they could lift the veil only partially.

The belief that the name is the essence of its bearer gave full-play for magical manipulations. It was considered that the pronunciation of a theophoric name possessed great creative power; it gave to the person who pronounced it the possibility to attach himself to the divine nature of the god, to take hold of this god, and to make him fulfil his wishes. This is one of the variants of the act which later on was called “declaration of truth” (*satyakriyā*).

Cosmogony makes the ancient kernel of the RV (Kuiper 1983, 176). As the name creates its bearer, name-giving belongs to the cosmogonic sphere, and is regarded as an act of creation of the universe and its elements. One cannot give a clear answer to the question who is the name-giving demiurge. There are many answers. In the late maṇḍala X the abstract god Viśvakarman (lit. “creator of everything”) is named as such a demiurge – X, 82. But in another hymn of the same maṇḍala it is said that these were the ancient poets – Ṛṣis who had created the Sacred Speech, giving names to the things, and this way the secret was revealed – X, 71. Many times it was mentioned in the RV that gods created their names with their deeds, that has brought themselves into correspondence with their names. A human being is unable to comprehend completely this secret. The truth reveals itself to a man only partly, as it is with the Sacred Speech in general.

The functioning of the substantive *nāman-* in the RV should be regarded in the light of these general ideas. This word is found in the RV 117 times. Its meanings are given in the following sequence in the big St.-Petersburg Dictionary: 1) distinctive feature, sign; form of

manifestation (Erscheinungsform), modus; 2) name, designation; 3) proper name; 4) clan name etc. (Böhtlingk-Roth 1865, 4, 112-114). It is clear from this list of meanings that the volume of *nāman*'s semantics is great, and that evidently it exceeds the usual semantic volume of this word in modern languages ².

The paradigm of the substantive *nāman*- consists of three cases: N. (28 times), Acc. (80) and Instr. (9) in the sg. and pl. (no du.). The sg. is more frequent, but it should be noticed that since *nāman*- is a substantive of the neuter gender, the sg. *nāma* is the form of neutralization of the opposition of number, and can function both as the sg. and the pl.

The N. of *nāman*- is characterized by the peculiarity that this case grammeme is found mostly in nominal sentences – 23 times out of 28. When *nāma* is a subject of a sentence, the predicate is usually expressed by an adjective, participle or numeral. E.g., II, 27, 15 and V, 37, 4: *subhāgo nāma pūṣyan* “(He) is called happy, flourishing” (lit. “[His] name – happy, flourishing”) or III, 20, 3: *āgne bhūr̥iṇi tāva jātavedo dēva svadhāvo mṛtāsya nāma* “O Agni, many are your names, of the immortal one, O Jātavedas, O god, possessing self-power”. The predicate can also be expressed by a substantive, e.g., III, 54,16: *nāsatyā me pitārā bandhup̄chāl saajātyām aśvīnoś cāru nāma* “Both the Nāsatyas (are) my fathers (who are) asked about kinship. Common birth with the Aśvins (is) a pleasing sign” or VI, 75, 8: *havīr asya nāma* “(A cart for) the sacrifice (is) its name”. In sentences of this type the substantive that occupies the first place is regarded as a predicate.

The N. *nāma*, *nāmāni* is also used as a subject of a sentence with the predicate expressed by the copula *as*- “to be”. E.g., V, 44, 2: *parō māyābhir ṛtā āsa nāma te* “Your name has (always) been beyond the reach of magic powers, in (the sphere of) the law” or X, 54, 4: *catvāri te asuryāni nāmā| ādābhyāni mahiṣāsya santi* “There exist four Asuric names which are not to be deceived of you, the bull”. The predicative N. of *nāman*- is also used with the verb *as*-, e.g., IV, 58, 1: *ūpāṃśúnā sām amṛtatvām ānaḥ| ghṛtāsya nāma gūhyam yād asti*

2. It should be noticed that in translation of the Vedic quotations the meaning of the word *nāman*- was always rendered as “name”, lest the element of interpretation should intervene in the translation.

“(Mingling) with Soma, it became (the liquor of) immortality which is the secret name of butter” (it – the honey wave).

A few times N. of *nāman-* is a subject with the predicate being expressed by a passive verb. E.g., aor. pass. in I, 57, 3: *yāsyā dhāma śrāvase nāmendriyāṃ | jyōtir ākāri harīto nāyase* “... whose nature, (whose) name Indra are made for glory, like the light, like the bay mares for running”; or a passive participle in I, 164, 3: *saptā svāsāro abhī sāṃ navante | yātra gāvāṃ nīhitā saptā nāma* “Seven sisters call out to the place where the seven names of the cows are hidden”³ (O’Flaherty, 1981, 76). It is clear from the contexts that the verbal forms express here a state.

Once the N. of *nāman-* takes part in a construction, where the verb is neither a copula, nor a passive form – II, 35, 11: *tād asyāṅīkam utā cāru nāma | -apīcyāṃ vardhate nāptur apām* “This face of him and the nice secret name Apām Napāt increase”. The name is evidently identified here with the physical form of the god (cp. one of the meanings of *nāman-* in the dictionary of Böhtlingk and Roth). For instance, it is many times mentioned in the hymns that Indra becomes stronger and increases from Soma and laudatory songs – cp. X, 94, 9: *... papivān somyām mādhv | indro vardhate prāthate vṛṣāyāte* “... having drunk the sweetness of Soma, Indra increases, extends and becomes excited”.

The use of the substantive *nāman-* in the N. shows that when this word means “name”, it is not regarded as a subject characterized by certain actions. It is a self-sufficing substance, existing by itself – it simply takes place.

The construction with the proper name is typical of *nāman-* in the N. Both members of this construction: nom. pr. and *nāman-*, are represented by the N. As to the construction itself, it may be only loosely connected with the syntax of the corresponding sentence, functioning as a kind of apposition in it or even as a parenthetical clause. E.g. – II, 20, 6: *sā hī śrutā indro nāma devā | ūrdhvō bhuvan mānuṣe dasmātamaḥ* “This very god, famous under the name of Indra, got up for the sake of man, (he,) the most wonderful” (lit. “this very god

3. A riddle with several solutions – see (Рыгвильд 1989, 645-646).

[N.], famous – the name [N.] Indra [N.] – got up”); III, 26, 7: *ájasro gharmó havír asmi náma* “The unexhaustible heat, sacrificial oblation, that’s what I am by name” (lit. “... heat [N.] ... oblation [N.] I am the name [N.]”). Renou translates it this way: “inépuisable chaleur, offrande, (voilà ce que) je suis quant au nom” (Renou EVP XII, 67), and in his comments he says that it was due to such constructions that the adverbial meaning of *náman-* “really” has developed, which is testified since the Atharvaveda (Renou EVP XII, 125). Some dictionaries (Böhtlingk and Roth, Grassmann) erroneously find this meaning of *náman-* in the language of the RV.

Common nouns can sometimes function as proper names in these constructions. Since it is believed that the name reveals the essence of its bearer, this usage is widely enough spread in the hymns. E.g., there are following lines in a hymn – laudation of medicinal herbs – X, 97, 9: *íṣkr̥tir náma vo mātá| -átho yūyám stha níṣkr̥tīḥ* “Your mother’s name is Reviver, and so you are the Restorers” (O’Flaherty, 1981, 285). The last line of this stanza explains: *yád āmáyati níṣ kr̥tha* “You restore whatever has been injured”. Or the melody ratham̐tara which R̥ṣi Vasiṣṭha has brought from the gods is characterized in a following way – X, 181, 1: *práthaś ca yásya sapráthaś ca náma* “Whose name is Spreading and Wide Spreading”. When, by the way, this construction makes a part of a relative clause it is included with the help of the relative pronoun *yá-* “which”.

E.g., X, 61, 14:

*bhár̥go ha námotá yásya devāḥ
svàr̥ ná yé triṣadhassthé niṣedúḥ|
agnír̥ ha námotá jātávedāḥ
śrudhí no hotar̥ ṛtásya hótādhruk̥||*

“Whose name is Splendour, and also Gods – (those) who are sitting on the triple place (of the sacrifice), like (the sun) in the sky, (whose) name (is) Agni, and also Jātavedas – listen to us, O hotar, as a free from treachery hotar of the sacrifice”.

The Acc. is a most frequent case grammeme in the paradigm of *náman-* (80 times). Its usual grammatical meaning is to designate the direct object of the transitive verbs. The lexical meaning of these verbs can help one to specify the semantic volume of the substantive *náman-*.

The verb *dhā-* “to put, set, establish, create” is most frequently used with the Acc. of *nāman-* (17 times). This is a “thetic” verb, belonging to the sphere of cosmogony. This verb is used with *nāman-* both in the active and middle voice. In the active voice *dhā-* has the meaning “to establish a name”, that is to create its denotatum, while the denotata are elements of the universe and the divine status. E.g., I, 155, 3: *dādhati putrō varam páram pitúr| nāma trítíyam ádhi rocané diváh* “The son establishes the proximate (and) the distant (name) of (his) father, he places the third name in the luminous sphere of the sky”. The three cosmic strides of Viṣṇu with which he creates the universe are meant here. The names are denominations of his three strides, and the third stride in the luminous sphere of the sky is the superior secret name of Viṣṇu. The son is Viṣṇu, the father is the sky. A similar motive is also found in connection with Soma-Pavamāna in IX, 75, 2: *dādhati putrāḥ pitrór apīcyam| nāma trítíyam| ádhi rocané diváh* “The son gives a secret name to (his) two parents, the third one (belongs) to the luminous sphere of the sky”. Using the word “names”, the poet means here the stages which Soma undergoes in the process of preparation of the amṛta. Soma is the son, the Sky and the Earth are his parents. Gods are creators of the universe in the given above examples, because it is them who give the names.

There exist two contexts in the RV, saying that it is the Ṛṣis who give names, but they give names to the gods, strengthening them in their divine status. V, 3,10: *bhūri nāma vādamāno dadhāti| pitá vaso yádi táj jośáyāse* “Eulogizing, (your) father is giving (you) many names, O Vasu, if you enjoy it”. Vasu is the god Agni, his father is the priest Ṛṣi who kindles and sustains the fire (in other contexts he may be called Agni’s son, because he needs the god’s care and protection). X, 49, 2: *mām dhur índraṃ nāma devátā | divás ca gmás cāpām ca jantávaḥ* “They reckoned me among the gods under the name of Indra, the children of the sky, and the earth and water”, which means the gods and the mortals. An interesting syntactic construction takes place here, where *dhā-* governs the Acc. cases – lit. “they established me as Indra-name among the gods”.

In all the other cases *dhā-* is in the middle voice, when used with *nāman-*. Typical is the situation, when a god performs a heroic deed or some action characteristic of him, and this way acquires his name,

in other words, brings his behavior to conformity with his name. E.g., VI, 48, 21: ... *tveṣám śávo dadhire nāma yajñīyam| marúto vṛtrahám śávo| jyéṣṭham vṛtrahám śávaḥ* “The Maruts acquired formidable strength, a name worthy of sacrifice, strength killing the enemies, best strength, killing the enemies”. Just this strength is the name of the Maruts worthy of sacrifice. IX, 92, 2: *áchā nṛcákṣā asarat pavítrel nāma dádhānaḥ kavír asya yónau* “He flowed forth in the sieve, (the god) with a look of a hero, acquiring his name, the poet, in his abode”. The Soma juice becomes beverage of gods, acquiring a special quality, that is its name, when it passes through the sieve, clarifying. I, 123, 4: *grhám-grham ahaná yāty áchā| divé-dive ádhi nāma dádhānā* “She goes from one house to the other, the voluptuous one (?), every day acquiring various names”. Renou’s comments on this passage are as following: “Every day Uṣas disposes of names ... , and that means that every day she creates new structures, assuming (as it is considered) endlessly new names” (Renou EVP III, 57).

The combination of the verb *man-* “to think” with the Acc. of *nāman-* means “to concentrate one’s thoughts upon a name”, which is the same as to exert influence upon the bearer of this name. It is found in the RV 8 times. Renou formulates the meaning of this combination as “invoquer mentalement” (Renou EVP IV, 118), while Gonda as “evoking, calling up” (Gonda 1970, 91). The subject of this action is always a R̥ṣi, and the name belongs to the god. In the RV this mental action was regarded as equal in its results to the sacrifice. E.g., I, 24, 1: *kásya nūnám katamásyāmítānām| mánāmahe cāru devásya nāma* “The precious name of what god are we now calling up, whom among the immortals?” (or “on the name of what god are we going to concentrate now to evoke it?”). In stanza 2 it is explained that one should concentrate on Agni’s name. VIII, 11, 5: *mártā ámartyasya tel bhūri nāma manāmahe* “Mortals, we evoke many names of you, the immortal one” (the names of Agni). The verb *man-* in this combination is always in the pl., because it refers to the devotees, appealing to a god (or to their ancestors Angirases, who had concentrated upon the secret name of the Sacred Speech, and due to that managed to set free the cows from the Vala cave – IV, 1, 16).

The verb *bhar-* “to carry, bear” in combination with the Acc. of *nāman-* means “to bear a name”, “to be called” (7 times). The bearer

of the name is usually a god, he can bear many names, and each of them should correspond to a certain trait of his character. E.g., I, 103, 4: *kīrtényam maghāvā nāma bībhrat| upaprayān dasyuhātyāya vajrīl yād dha sūnūh śrāvase nāma dadhé* “Bearing the name Generous, deserving to be praised, proceeding to the killing of Dasyu, the Thunderer acquired the name Son of glory”. This correspondence is the basis of “bearing a name”, and if the bearer of a name acts in a way that is characteristic of another god he must bear this god’s name. Cp., for instance, how Soma-Pavamāna is described, when he clarified, having passed through the sieve and mixed with water, and thus become amṛta, which inspires to perform heroic deeds – IX, 109, 14:

*bībharti cārv indrasya nāma
yéna viśvāni vṛtrā jaghāna||*

“He bears the dear name of Indra due to which he defeated all the resistances”.

It should be noticed that when there are many names, the superior of them is always secret, and not only the bearer himself should “bear” it stealthily, but even more so, his devotees should not pronounce openly this name. Cp., for instance, how the god Varuṇa instructed Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha in VII, 87, 4: *trīḥ saptā nāmāghnyā bībhartil vidvān padāsya gūhyā nā vocad* “The cow bears three times seven names. Who knows the sign (of the name), should pronounce them as concealed ones”. The cow here a symbol of the Sacred Speech.

There are contexts in the RV, where *nāma bhar-* can be treated as an action that takes place in space. E.g., in V, 30, 5 it is said about Indra that he was born as a superior one, *parāvāti śrútyam nāma bībhrat* “bearing far away his name worthy of fame”.

The combination of the verb *kar-* “to do, make” with the Acc. of *nāman-* has the meaning “to create a name” (4 times). *Nāma kar-* is rather close in its meaning to *nāma dhā-*. An important difference is that *nāma kar-* does not belong to cosmogony. This combination means that a god creates his name, his image by his deeds, but it does not mean that a god gives names to the elements of the universe, which is characteristic of *nāma dhā-* act. E.g., I, 108, 3: *cakrāthe hí sadhryāñ nāma bhadrām| sadhrīcīnā vṛtrahaṇā utá sthaḥ* “It is you

two who created for themselves together a happy name – and you both together became killers of Vṛtra” (to Indra and Agni). *Nāma kar-* has the same meaning also in the three remaining passages: III, 5, 6; I, 161, 5; VIII, 80, 9. Once the verb *kar-* in the passive is used as a predicate with the subject *nāma* in the N. (see I, 57, 3 on page 38). Here also it does not concern cosmogony – it deals with the problem how the name of god himself was created. One can say that *nāma kar-* is synonymous with *nāma dhā-* med. “to acquire a name”, but not with *nāma dhā-* act. “to give name”. It should be reminded that *kar-* in these constructions is used both in the active and medial voice.

The combination of *jan-* “to generate”, “to be born” with *nāman*, meaning “to generate a name (of a god)”, to call him to life, is found twice in the RV. Both times it is mythological personages who create names for themselves. IX, 86, 20: *tritāsya nāma janāyan mādhu kṣarad* “generating Trita’s name, he gives forth mead”. Soma is meant here in the ritual of preparation of the amṛta, when he passes through various stages. In his commentary Renou explains that the “name” in this context means personality. One gets the impression – Renou notes – that Trita is here a substitute for celestial Soma, something third, as it is said about the third stage of preparation of the beverage (Renou EVP IX, 97). Another context with *nāma jan-* is elementary: Gandharva creates for himself his favorite names like the Sun – X, 123, 7. Neither the one nor the other context can be called cosmogonic.

The word-combination *nāma vid-* (*vétti*) “to know the name” which occurs 5 times means the possibility to exercise power over the bearer of the name, whose characteristic features, origin and the like become known this way. E.g., X, 45, 2 about Agni: *vidmā te nāma paramām gūhā yād| vidmā tām útsaṃ yāta ājagántha* “We know your highest name which is in secret. We know the source, whence you have come”. The worshippers are the subject of action, the name belongs to the god. Once the sacrificial pole, representing the interests of the worshippers, functions as a subject – V, 5, 10. But a god, “knowing the names of cows”, that is the mysteries of the Sacred Speech, can also function as a subject – Varuṇa in VIII, 41, 5; Soma in IX, 87, 3; Agni in X, 169, 2 (Гришпер 1998, 33).

As the highest names are always secret, they should be found – *nāma vid-* (*vindāti*). This word-combination occurs twice in the RV. They are found by Soma – IX, 87, 3 and by the Gandharvas – X, 123, 4.

A group of verbs of speech and aural laudation govern the Acc. of *nāman-*. These are *hu-* “to call”, *gir-* “to invoke”, “to extol” (3 times each) and *brū-* “to speak”, *prá brū-* “to praise”, *vac-* “to say”, *prá vac-* “to proclaim”, *prá śams-* “to glorify”, *gā-* “to sing” (each one time). It was believed that the pronunciation of a theophoric name possessed an immense creative power (later on it was modeled by a wider notion of “pronunciation of truth”, *satyakriyā*). Hence, the large scope of this semantic field.

The subject who pronounces and eulogizes a god’s name is always his devotee: the poet Ṛṣi or a priest. Rather often the qualities of the bearer of the name are ascribed to the name itself. E.g., II, 33, 8: *grñmási tveṣám rudrasya nāma* “We are invoking the vehement name of Rudra” – while vehement is Rudra himself and not his name. IV, 58, 2: *vayám nāma prá bravāmā ghṛtasya-| asmín yajñé dhārayāmā nāmobhiḥ* “We will proclaim the name of butter; we will sustain it in this sacrifice by bowing low” (O’Flaherty 1981, 126). Butter is a mystical substance here. It is not only sacrificial butter which is poured out into the fire, but also a symbol of Soma, as well as of the Poetical Speech. The play with denotata is behind the word *nāman-* in this hymn. And it is Soma, who is to be sustained, as it is said in verse 2.

When the verb *par-* (*pípartī*) “to fill” governs the Acc. of *nāman-*, the meaning of the phrase is “to fill the name” (found twice). The idea is that the name as a supreme value exists by itself, and the deity should bring in correspondence his personality with his name by means of his actions. E.g., X, 73, 8: *tvám etāni papṛṣe ví nāma| Íśāna indra dadhiṣe gābhaustau* “You have filled all these names. You carry them, O Indra, in your hand as the one who is in power. X, 74, 6: *yád vāvāna purutāmam purāśā| ā vṛtrahéndro nāmāny aprāḥ* “As (this) superior from olden times has achieved very much, the slayer of Vṛtra, Indra filled (many) names”.

Such is the situation with theophoric names. If the names of enemies were concerned, they should be captured – *grabh-*, taken away – *muṣāy-*, wiped off – *áva kṣṇu-*. Because in the Old Indian model of the universe the name was identical with its bearer, the loss of name meant the loss of life. This idea is in full play in spells. E.g., I, 191, 13: *navānām navatīnām| viśásya rópuṣīnām| sárvasām agrabham nāma-* “I captured the names of all the ninety nine disturbers of poison”.

The Instr. case of *nāman-* is used in the RV 9 times (sg. – 2, pl. – 7). It is governed by verbs of various lexical meaning, and there are no fixed combinations with verbs of certain semantics. The grammatical meaning of the Instr. in these combinations is that of instrument, cause, sociative relation etc. Some of the contexts reveal the connection of the theophoric name with the ritual. E.g., V, 52, 10:

ápathayo vípathayó
'ntaspathā ánuopathāḥ|
etébhīr máhyaṃ nāmabhir
yajñám viṣṭarā ohatell

“Going near the way”, “going aside of the way”, “going inside of the way”, “going along the way” – under these names they grant the sacrifice to me, having spread far” (they – the Maruts).

Or VII, 57, 6: *utá stutáso marúto vyantul víśvebhīr nāmabhir náro havímsu* “And when they are praised, let (these) noble men, the Maruts, partake of the sacrificial oblations with all (their) names!”⁴ Name is again completely identified with its bearer in this ritual context.

In V, 43, 10 the poet addresses Agni who is mediator between the gods and human beings, carrying the sacrifices to the gods, that way: *ā nāmabhir marúto vakṣi víśvān| ā rūpébhīr jātavedo huvānáḥ* “Bring all the Maruts with (their) names, (bring them) here with (their) forms, O Jātavedas, when you are called’. Renou notices in this connection that the juxtaposition of *nāman-/ rūpá-* “name/ form” in one context reminds one of the idea of *nāmarūpa-* of the later language, and gives the following translation: “all of them with all their qualities” (Renou EVP IV, 68).

Going on with this theme, one should add that there is one more passage in the RV, where these two concepts are found – III, 38, 7:

4. This translation follows the interpretation of Renou (Renou EVP, X, 44). Geldner understands it in a different way: “Und nachdem sie mit allen Namen gepriesen sind, sollen die Herren Marut die Opferspenden gern in Empfang nehmen” (Geldner 1951, 2, 233), not taking into consideration the caesura which divides the verse.

*tād ín nv àsya vṛṣabhásya dhenór
 ā nāmabhir mamire sákmyaṃ góḥ|
 anyád-anyad asuryāṃ vásānā
 ní māvīno mamire rūpām asmin||*

“Here it is (the creation) of the bull and the cow (at the same time). They have measured with names the peculiar nature of the cow. Trying one after another the Asuric (qualities), (these) magicians have measured the form for him”.

This is a verse from a mystic cosmogonic hymn, where the primaeval Asura is identified with Indra. This primaeval god appears as an androgynous being. The Ṛṣis have created his appearance, giving him names by force of poetical vision. This way *nāman-* serves as an instrument, measuring, that is creating, the form.

The rest of the verbs, governing the Acc. of *nāman-* are few and not so important conceptually.

Epithets attributed to *nāman-* are numerous and diverse (they are about 40). All of them have a common peculiarity – they usually express a positive characteristic, which is but natural in the situation of laudation. The most frequent of them is *cāru-* “dear”, “precious” (8 times). Very close to it in its lexical meaning is *priyá-* “dear”, “beloved” (4 times). J. Gonda does not regard the two phrases: *cāru nāma* and *priyāṃ nāma* as synonymous, seeing a difference in the reference of the name. According to Gonda, *cāru-* is the name of a god for his worshipper who praises him during a ritual, while *priyá-* expresses some idea between “beloved, dear” and “one’s own” (Gonda 1970, 40-42).

No less frequent are the epithets *gúhya-* “hidden”, “secret” (18 times) and its synonym *apīcyā-* (4 times). It is well known that all that is sacred in the RV is secret, hidden from the eyes of human beings. The superior names which represent the very essence of their bearers are always secret. J. Gonda illustrates this statement in a most convincing way, analyzing the examples concerning Soma (Gonda 1970, 83), as, for instance, IX, 96, 16: *abhy àrṣa gúhyaṃ cāru nāma* “Stream to (your) dear secret name”. The meaning of it is that the “secret name” coincides with the superior secret stage of preparation of the amṛta, the ambrosial beverage offered to the gods to make them immortal, from the juice of the Soma plant. Clarifying, the juice flows

through the sieve, mixes with additions and becomes the amṛta. It is just to this superior secret stage, to the “secret name” that the Ṛṣi asks Soma to flow forth. This concept of the “secret name” makes comprehensible the usage of such epithets with *nāman-* as *paramā-* “highest”, “superior” and the opposition of epithets: *parā-* “distant” – *āvāra-* “proximate” (see I, 155, 3 on p. 40).

The identification of name with the personality of its bearer is also clear from the fact that a number of epithets of *nāman-* can be equally referred to both of them. Such are, for instance, *yajñīya-* “worthy of sacrifices”, *bhadrá-* “auspicious”, *ádābhya-* “not to be deceived” etc.

The epithets *amṛta-* “immortal” and *ámartya-* id. attributed to *nāman-* testify to the fact that *nāman-* in the RV was regarded as the highest value. E.g., I, 68, 4: *bhájanta víśve devatváṃ nāmaḥ ṛtám śápano amṛtam évaiḥ* “Everybody partook of the divine nature, of the immortal name, observing the cosmic law according to the custom” (an Agni-hymn). *Devatvá-*, *nāman-* and *ṛtá-* belong here, so to say, to the same level.

One deity can have many names, and each of them reflects a certain trait of his character. The phrase *bhūri nāma* “many names”, or as Pinault defines it more exactly “a profusion of names” (Pinault 1998, 117) acquires in some contexts the shape of concrete numerals: *saptá-* “7”, *tríḥ saptá* “three times seven”, *catvári* “4”, *catúrbiḥ navatím ca* “four times ninety”.

A number of epithets denote group names, as *asuryāṇi nāma* “the Asuric names” (X, 54, 4), *ādityéna nāmnā* “because of (their) Āditya name (X, 77, 8), *nāma mārutam* “the name belonging to the Maruts”. Sometimes such an epithet can denote the social appurtenance of people, cp. the statement of Indra about himself in X, 49, 3: *ná yó rará áryaṃ nāma dāsyave* “(me) who did not give the Aryan name to the Dāsyu”, which means the Aryans with their peculiar way of life.

The rôle of the epithets of the theophoric names is not limited in the hymns of the RV by the syntactic function of an adjectival attribute to a substantive. Conventional epithets of the gods can sometimes be used as their proper names. Usually each of these epithets expresses a characteristic feature of a god, but when they function as proper names, the semantic motivation of such a name can be completely

missing in the contexts. Cp., for instance, how the conventional epithet of Indra *maghāvan-* “generous” is used in IV, 17, 8: ... *índram ... yó ... dātā maghāni maghāvā surādhaḥ* “(I want to praise) Indra who gives generous rewards, the generous one with beautiful gifts” and in I, 103, 2: *áhann áhim ábhinad rauhiṇám vyl áhan vyāmsam maghāvā śácibhiḥ* “He killed the dragon, broke in pieces Rauhiṇa, he killed Vyāmsa, the Generous One, with his forces”.

There is no strict border-line in the RV between the proper and common nouns. It is noteworthy that the substantive *nāman-* combines these two meanings. A number of common nouns are used in the hymns also as proper names of various mythological personages. E.g., *agní-* m. “fire”; nom. pr. of a god; *bhága-* m. “dispenser” (epithet of a number of gods, especially of Savitar); nom. pr. of a god, Aditi’s son; *mitrá-* m. “friend”; nom. pr. of a god, Aditi’s son; *áditi-* f. “boundlessness”, nom. pr. of a goddess, mother of the Ādityas; *vṛtrá-* m. n. “enemy”, “obstacle”, nom. pr. of the dragon who has blocked the rivers etc. Some of the nom. ag., ending in *-tar-*, combine the same two meanings: *dhātár-* “establisher”, nom. pr. of a god; *savitár-* “stimulator”, nom. pr. of god etc. And in the late maṇḍala X abstract notions like *manyú-* “ardour”, “rage” and *śraddhā-* “faith” can also function as nom. pr. of deities (correspondingly X, 83-84 and X, 151). Play upon names, that is balancing between the meaning of a proper name and a common noun is always going on in the hymns of the RV. A good example of it is the beginning of the hymn to Mitra – III, 59, 1: *mitró jánān yātayati bruvāṇó* “Mitra, called (friend), places people in order”.

Such an ambiguity and ambivalence is characteristic of the world outlook of the R̥ṣis, and it is in complete correspondence with the suggestive style of the Saṃhitā. The efforts of the Western interpreters to make the text unambiguous in this respect could not be a success. So at one time it was suggested that the names of the Ādityas should be understood in all the contexts as personifications of abstract notions: Varuṇa as True Speech, Mitra as Contract, Bhaga as Share etc. (Thieme 1957), but this viewpoint was not accepted.

A special group of proper names of mythological personages is made by the names ending in *-patí-* “lord”, “master” which formally occupy an intermediate position between syntactic constructions and

compound words. The name of the god of prayer in the RV is *bráhmaṇas páti-* lit. “lord of prayer” (a syntactic combination of *páti-* with the G. case of *bráhmaṇ-* “prayer”) or *bṛhaspáti-* (a compound word of an archaic structure, where each of the members retained its accent, and the first one has also the inflexion of the Gen. case, while the substantive **bṛh-* is not found in the RV). These two names are easily interchanged, referring to the same denotatum. None of these theophoric names is used as a common noun.

Prajápati-, lit. “lord of the progeny”, does not play any prominent part in the RV, he becomes important later; as to the RV, this word denotes an independent deity only in maṇḍala X (Macdonell 1897, 118 and foll.). *Prajápati-* belongs to the regular type of compounds with one stress and the first member represented by a stem (and not an inflected form). The comparison of the contexts of maṇḍala X shows how the members of this compound word lose their independent lexical meaning, and it becomes a proper name of a deity without any semantic motivation. Cp., for instance, a line from the wedding hymn X, 85, 43: *á naḥ prajám janayatu prajápatir* “Let Prajapati, create progeny for as!” with a passage from the cosmogonic hymn X, 121, 10: *prájāpate ná tvád etāny anyó| víśvā jātāni pári tā babhūva* “O Prajapati, nobody, but you, has embraced all these creatures” – a hymn, where Prajapati is declared to be the creator of the universe. In more ancient parts of the text the word *prajápati-*, being used as a common noun, functions as an epithet of various gods, e.g., of Savitar in IV, 53, 2 about whom it is said that he is *divó dhartā bhúvanasya prajápatiḥ* “supporter of the sky, lord of (all) creatures in the word”.

Vástoṣpáti- lit. “lord of the dwelling”, “house-protector” belongs to the periphery of the pantheon. He is the protector of human dwelling and of the household, to whom only one hymn of the RV is addressed – VII, 54. His name has the same structure as *bṛhaspáti-*, and the meaning is oscillating between the proper name and common noun ⁵. The

5. It should be mentioned by the way, that the Western interpreters of the text are not sure whether this name should be treated as a compound *vástoṣpáti-* (Böhtlingk, Geldner, Renou) or as syntactic combination *vástoṣ páti-* (Aufrecht, Macdonell).

name of a still rarer protecting deity *kṣétrasya páti-* “lord of the field” (of the same structure as *bráhmanas páti-*) is a syntactic combination of two common nouns. It is closely connected with the description of the field and ploughing – IV, 57, 1-3.

Thus one can say that the names ending in *-pati-* demonstrate both by their structure and semantics the whole scale of transition of a common noun to a proper name.

A very sophisticated play on the proper name of the praised deity is going on in the laudatory hymns of the RV. First, attention was drawn to it by de Saussure in his “Anagrammes” (Starobinski 1964 and 1971). Analyzing the Agni-hymn which opens the RV, de Saussure has shown that the laudatory hymn is built according to quite different principles, than the usual text. The aim of the author of such a hymn was to use the name of the eulogized deity in any grammatical case in a metrically strong position, that is in the beginning of a verse or a *pāda*, while in the rest of the hymn this play was to be supported by the phonetic hints, echoes of the theophoric name.

As the aim of the hymn consisted in establishing contact with the god, in making him “hear” the hymn and as a reward for it to fulfil the wishes of its author (a circular exchange of gifts), the laudatory hymn can be treated as an act of communication with all the resulting consequences – that is as a text oriented towards the addressee and with a hypertrophied expressive function (Jakobson 1981, 18-51). God is the addressee, and the pronunciation of his name has a magic power.

The theophoric name constitutes an “expressive paradigm” in marked position of the verse, it is divided into syllables which echo in the text in various sequences, and the whole hymn sounds in the key of this name (Elizarenkova 1995, 123 and foll.). Here are some examples. A hymn to Uṣas, VII, 79, 1:

vy uṣā āvaḥ pathyà jánānām
 pāñca kṣitīr mānuṣīr bodháyantī
susaṃdṛgbhir uksābhir bhānām aśred
 vī sūryo ródasī cákṣasāvaḥ||

“Uṣas illuminated the ways of the people, awaking the five human habitations. (Driving her) bulls that are fair to see, she set forth the light. Sūrya opened with his glance the two worlds (from the darkness)”.

Semantization of the form takes place here without any etymological grounds. The play upon the words derived from the same root as the theonym may also happen. Such is the case of the Soma-hymns (*sóma-* is a substantive from the verbal root *su-* “to press”), where play is going on upon various derivatives of this root. E.g., XI, 107, 8: *sóma u šuvānáḥ sot̥fbhir* “Soma pressed by the pressing (priests)”. Or in the Savitar-hymns (*savitár-* is a nom. ag. from the verb *sū-* “to incite”, “to set in motion”) verbal and nominal forms from the root *sū-* are played upon. E.g., V, 82 verse 3: *sá hí rátnāni dāsúṣe| suvāti savitā bhágaḥ* “It is Savitar, (our) happiness, who should set in motion riches for the worshipper”; verse 4:

adyā no deva savitah
prajāvat sāvīḥ sáubhagam|
parā duṣvápnyam suva||

“Today, o god Savitar, incite for us good luck, consisting in offspring!
 Take away the bad dream!”

It is quite usual, like in the last verse, that casual semantization is combined with the etymological one.

One should also mention such an extreme case of expressive rendering of the eulogized deity, when the name itself is absent, but there are sound-hints at it, which gives the possibility to guess it. Formal refinement of this kind is characteristic of the hymn to the Sacred Speech – Vāc Āmbhṛṇī (that is Vāc, daughter of the Ṛṣi Āmbhṛṇa). It is built according to the principle of repetition of the syllables *ām/am* and *vā*, which make part of the name of the goddess (Elizarenkova 1995, 135), and this cannot but draw one’s attention.

There exists a number of compound words with *nāman-*, where this word functions as the first or the second member. Most interesting are combinations with nominal derivations of the root *dhā-* “to establish” – they have the same meanings as the corresponding syntactic constructions. These are *nāmadhā-* m. “name-giver” and *nāmadhéya-* n. “name-giving”. Both the words are found only once in the RV in the later part of it in cosmogonic contexts.

X, 82, 3:

*yó naḥ pitā janitā yó vidhātā
dhāmāni véda bhúvanāni víśvā
yó devānām nāmadhā éka evā
tām sampraśnām bhúvanā yanty anyā||*

“Our father, who created and set in order and knows all forms, all worlds, who all alone gave names to the gods, he is the one to whom all other creatures come to ask questions” (O’Flaherty 1981, 36).

Viśvakarman is meant here, a god who has created everything, a late abstract deity, to whom two hymns in the RV are addressed – X, 81 and 82. Besides twice *viśvākarman-* functions as an epithet of other gods: of Indra in VIII, 98, 2 and of Sūrya in X, 170, 4. Such a way of development: from a theophoric epithet to a theonym is typical of the RV.

It is said in the next verse of this hymn, X, 82, 4, that it was the ancient Ṛṣis, who created all the beings, which means that they were helpmates of Viśvakarman, and the last verse 7 runs as following: “You cannot find him who created these creatures; another has come between you” (O’Flaherty 1981, 36), and the translator mentions in a note that “another” (n. in the original) is more likely ignorance, and not another creator. Here, like in the famous cosmogonic hymn X, 129, the question of the possibility of cognition how the universe was created and the gods arose, is treated as unanswerable.

X, 71, 1:

*bṛhaspate prathamām vācō ágram
yát práirata nāmadhēyaṃ dādhanāḥ||
yád eṣām śrēṣṭham yád ariprám āsīt
preṇā tād eṣām níhitam gúhāvih||*

“Bṛhaspati! When they set in motion the first beginning of speech, giving names, their most pure and perfectly guarded secret was revealed through love” (O’Flaherty 1981, 61).

The famous “Cognition”-hymn (*jñāna*) is addressed to the god of prayer Bṛhaspati. It opens with the statement that the ancient Ṛṣis

(who are referred to as “they”) have created the Sacred Speech, giving names to things. The connection of *nāman-* with *dhā-* is demonstrated here twice: by the compound word, and by the syntactic construction – *nāmadhēyaṃ dādhanāḥ* lit. “establishing the establishment of names”. The combination of *nāman* with *dhā-* is the Indian variant which reflects the ancient Indo-European myth about name-giving (БІВАНОВ 1964, 85-94). The subject who performs this sacred act is expressed in the Indian mythology somewhat uncertain: it can be gods, and it can be the wise Ṛṣis, but the creation of the Sacred Speech in general, as well as the origin of the world which is connected with it is enveloped in mist.

Twice in the RV one can find in the same context the juxtaposition of two words: *nāman-* and *dhāman-*. The latter word is polysemantic, whose meaning is practically obliterate: “dwelling-place, abode; site of the fire and Soma; favorite thing; class, troop, band; law, rule; state, condition; form” etc. Here are these contexts. I, 57, 3 (see p. 38) and X, 45, 2: *vidmā te dhāma vibhṛtā purutrā | vidmā te nāma paramāṃ gūhā yād* “We know your abodes distributed in many places. We know your highest name which is in secret”. L. Renou is of the opinion that such a usage of *nāman-* and *dhāman-* represents a stage previous to the origin of the concept *nāmarūpā-* “the name and the form” which has played such a prominent part in various Indian philosophical systems that came later (Радхакришнан 1956, 156, 333). The compound word itself is absent in the RV, while the juxtaposition of *nāman-* and *rūpa-* in the same context exists (see, for instance, on pages 45-46 – III, 38,7 and on page 45 – V, 43, 10), and *nāman-* occupies a higher place in this hierarchy. Thus the primacy of name with respect to form, of word in general with respect to matter is recognized by the Indian tradition, beginning from the RV.

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