

PIE in the Sky: The Proto-Indo-European Root of Zeus

When looking at the words used to signify ‘god’ in many of the Indo-European languages, it is impossible to deny the obvious link which exists across the language divisions, as seen in the Italic: L. *deus* and *dīvus*, Oscan *deivaí*, Volscian *deue*, Umbrian *deueia*; Phrygian *δεωϝ* (*κε*) *ζεμελωϝ*; Celtic: OI. *dia*, OW. *duiu-*, W. *duw*, OCorn. *duy*, Bret. *doué*; Baltic: Lithuanian *diēvas*, Lettic *diēvs* and Old Prussian *deiw(a)s*; Indo-Iranian: Sanskrit *devas*, Avest. *daēvō*; and in Icelandicic *tívar*, the only Germanic reflection of ‘god’ in this form. The same root can also be seen in words signifying a specific god in the Germanic languages: Icelandicic *Týr*, OHG. *Zīo*, Anglo-Saxon *Tīg*; Greek *Ζεύς*, L. *Iuppiter* and *Diespiter*.¹ This link is not seen in the Greek *θεός*, the etymology of which is uncertain and shall not be discussed in this essay. Even on initial inspection the Latin word for day, *diēs*, seems to belong to the same root, however, the semantics of this will be discussed later. Due to the clarity which accompanies this Indo-European notion, philologists have successfully arrived at a clear reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European root and, indeed, the paradigm, which can be easily understood when comparing the Greek, Latin and Sanskrit paradigms.

The variants of the *Ζεύς* paradigm from the different Greek dialects are shown in the table below:²

Nom.	<i>Ζεύς</i> / <i>Δεύς</i> / <i>Ζήν</i> / <i>Ζάς</i> / <i>Ζάν</i> / <i>Δίς</i>
Voc.	<i>Ζεῖ</i>
Acc.	<i>Ζῆν</i> / <i>Ζῆνα</i> / <i>Δῆν</i> / <i>Δῆνα</i> / <i>Ττῆνα</i> / <i>Τῆνα</i> / <i>Δι(Ϝ)α</i> / <i>Δια</i> / <i>Ζάνα</i> / <i>Ζέα</i> / <i>Ζεῖν</i>
Gen.	<i>Δι(Ϝ)ός</i> / <i>Διός</i> / <i>Ζηνός</i> / <i>Ττηνός</i> / <i>Ζανός</i> / <i>Ζαντός</i> / <i>Ζεός</i>

¹ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 9. We can assume that its use in names signified the highest god, however this was lost in *Týr* whose eminence was displaced by Odin, in the development of the Norse religion.

² Liddell & Scott (1843) *ad* *Ζεύς*.

Dat. *Δι(Ῥ)εῖ-φιλος / Διεῖ / Δι(Ῥ)ί / Δί / Δεῖ / Ζηνί / Ττηνί / Τηνί / Ζανί / Ζεῖ*

Loc. *Δι(Ῥ)ί*

The initial ζ is assimilated into δ in Boeotian (*Δεός*), Thessalian, Elean, Cretan (*Δῆνα*), Laconian (*Δεύς*) and Megarian; *Δεύς* also appears on a Rhodian vase.³ In Cretan and Elean the ζ can also be recognised as ττ to provide *Ττῆνα*, *Τῆνα*.⁴ The second half of the shortened diphthongs were sometimes lost, as in *Ζῆν*, and thus with a transfer to the consonant declension *Ζῆνα*, *Ζηνός* and *Ζηνί* were formed, as can be seen in East Ion., Coan, Ther., Cret., El. and Homeric, and also in the Cretan *Δῆνα*, *Τῆνα*.⁵ The dative can also be seen in the Att. *Διειτρέφης*, Cypr. *Διφείθεμις* and *Διφείφιλος*, and the Homeric *διίφιλος*.⁶ The use of α and ā in Ion. *Ζάς*, *Ζανός* remains unexplained.⁷

The Latin forms in which we can see the same root are as follows:⁸

Nom. *diūs / Iūpiter / Iūppiter / Diēs-piter / Jovis / Jovis pater / Diovis*

Voc. *Iū (piter) / Iūppiter / Diēs-piter*

Acc. *diem / Iouem*

Gen. *Diovis / Iouis*

Dat. *Iouī*

Loc. *Ioue*

Abl. *Ioue*

³ Buck (1998) 71.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Buck (1998) 34, 93.

⁶ Ibid. 93.

⁷ Ibid. Chantraine suggests that ‘les forms en ā venaient du sanctuaire de Zeus à Olympie où η devenait phonétiquement ā’. Chantraine (1968) 399.

⁸ Lewis & Short (1879) *ad Iupiter*.

However, for the present, let us confine our investigation to the following paradigms:

	Skt.	Gr.	Lat.
Nom.	<i>dyaus</i>	<i>Ζεύς</i>	<i>Diūs</i>
Voc.	<i>(dyaus)</i>	<i>Ζεῦ</i>	<i>Iū (pīter)</i>
Acc.	<i>dyām</i>	<i>Ζῆν</i>	<i>Diem</i>
Gen.	<i>divas</i>	<i>Δι(Ϝ)ός</i>	<i>Iouis</i>
Dat.	<i>divē</i>	<i>Δι(Ϝ)εῖ-φιλος</i>	<i>Iouī</i>
Loc.	<i>diví/dyávi</i>	<i>Δι(Ϝ)ί</i>	<i>Ioue</i>
Abl.	<i>divā</i>		<i>Ioue</i>

On initial inspection the declension endings –s, -, -m etc. suggest a consonant stem paradigm where the monosyllabic nominative, vocative and accusative in the full grade alternate with disyllabic oblique cases where the zero grade is in the stem and the full grade in the ending.

In removing these we are left with stems which can then be compared in order to arrive at the Proto-Indo-European stem. The first thing which is very noticeable is that all three languages similarly hold the initial dental *d* which can be seen throughout the Sanskrit paradigm, in the Greek oblique cases and in the Latin nominative and accusative, which points towards the PIE initial **d-*. The occurrence of the initial ζ in the Greek nominative, vocative and

accusative is easily explained by the common transformation of voiced apical and dorsal stops (thus δ), when followed by $*y$, into ζ .⁹ We can thus assume that the PIE nominative, vocative and accusative ‘god’ began with $*dy-$, which is visible in the Sanskrit *dyaus*, *dyaus*, *dyām*. Despite the initial dental in the OL. *Diovis*, we can see the loss of this d in the majority of the Latin paradigm. The post-consonantal $*y$ in the stem becomes the vowel i in Latin, as seen in *diūs*, *Iū* and *diem*, and thus the loss of the initial dental $*d$ in the Latin vocative, genitive, dative, locative and ablative can be explained in the transformation of $*dy$ into the consonantal i .¹⁰ Instead of *diūs* and *diem*, we should instead be presented with the monosyllabic $*iēs$ and $*iēm$.¹¹ The reason for this retention of $d-$ in *diēs* and *diem* is uncertain. According to Sievers’ Law (1878), ‘If, in Indic, /I/ or /U/ occurs before a vowel and itself carries no accent (not even the falling contonation of a post-acute syllable or of acute plus contraction), then – no matter what the accent position may be elsewhere in the word – this segment is realized as a consonant after a light syllable and as a vowel after a heavy syllable.’¹²

The PIE glides, or semivowels, $*y$ and $*w$, occurring with full grade vowels, therefore ablaut into $*i$ and $*u$ respectively.¹³ However, Edgerton’s revision of the law states: ‘after a heavy syllable Vedic post-consonantal y , v become iy , uv before a vowel’.¹⁴ This is lost in the Sanskrit due to a sound law.¹⁵ Lindeman’s Law suggests that Sievers’ Law only occurs in anlaut when the specific word’s short form is monosyllabic, thus proposing that $*dyēws$ was interchangeable with $*diyēws$.¹⁶ The remaining d in the Latin can therefore be explained by

⁹ Sihler (1995) 194. This δ has been retained in some dialects. See above for details.

¹⁰ Ibid., 188-9.

¹¹ Ibid., 339.

¹² Sievers (1878) 129 quoted in Collinge (1985) 159.

¹³ Sihler (1995) 175.

¹⁴ Edgerton (1934) 235 quoted in Collinge (1985) 160.

¹⁵ In the Vedic texts *dyāus* occurs but *diyāus* is also metrically acceptable. Sihler (1995) 175.

¹⁶ Beekes (1995) 136. Sihler (1995) 177.

the original form **diyēs*. However, there are some failings to this proposed law, and Sihler has suggested that it can be more easily explained as an analogical development from **diw-*.¹⁷

We can thus be quite certain that the PIE began **dy-*. The next similarity which can be seen in these paradigms is the diphthong present in the nominative and vocative: Sanskrit *dyāus*, *dyāus* and Greek *Ζεός*, *Ζεῦ*. The lengthened *ā* in the Sanskrit helps us to identify a long diphthong in the PIE root as Indo-Iranian clearly distinguishes between **au* and **āu*.¹⁸ The short *ε* in *Ζεός* can be explained by Osthoff's Law (1881) in which inlaut diphthongs are shortened before a tautosyllabic resonant (**l*, **m*, **n*, **r*, **y*, and, as here, **-w-*) and consonant (here **-s*).¹⁹ The Sanskrit *āu* can derive from the PIE **ēw*, **ōw* or **āw*, but by looking at the Greek *Ζεός*, we can safely assume that **ēw* forms part of the PIE root. We can easily identify the nominative ending **-s*, and it seems likely that preceding this is a **-w-*, which can be seen both in the diphthongs discussed above and in *-v-* present in the Sanskrit and Latin genitive, dative, locative and ablative, and the Greek *ϝ* in the genitive, dative and locative. After all, PIE **w* became the Latin consonantal *u* and the Greek *ϝ*.²⁰ The *ū* present in the Latin *diūs* and *Iū* is thus explained by PIE **ēw* > PItal. **ow* > OL. *ou* > L. *ū*.²¹ We can therefore arrive at the PIE nominative **dyéws*, and the vocative can consequentially be realised as **dyew* (the *e* being short as there is no final consonant with which to apply Osthoff's Law).

When we look at the Sanskrit paradigm, we can observe a post-dental *y* present in the nominative, vocative and accusative: *dyaus*, *dyaus*, *dyām*; but in the genitive, dative and

¹⁷ Sihler (1995) 339.

¹⁸ Ibid. 58.

¹⁹ Beekes (1995) 68, 141. Osthoff (1881) referred to in Collinge (1985) 127-31.

²⁰ The Greek letter ϝ, known as the *δίγαμμα*, disappeared very early on from Attic-Ionic with there being no evidence of it in the extant inscriptions of East Ionic, Lesbian, of Thera, Rhodes and Cos. However, before the fourth century it occurs initially in most dialects, with examples of it medially as well. Even when ϝ is retained in the dialect, it is lost before *o* and *ω*. Intervocally, it is rare. See Buck (1998) 46-57.

²¹ Sihler (1995) 56.

ablative this is realised as an *i*: *divas*, *divē*, *diva*. This can also be seen in the Greek $\Delta\iota(F)\acute{o}\varsigma$, $\Delta\iota(F)\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}$, $\Delta\iota(F)\acute{\iota}$. Another observation which can be made is that in the oblique cases the Skt. *v* and Gr. *F* immediately follow the glide *y*, but in the strong cases there is an intervening vowel which results in a diphthong. We can therefore surmise that the strong cases are based on a full grade root (**dyew-*) whereas the oblique cases ablaut into the zero grade root (**diw-/ *dyu-*) with a suffix of the case endings in the full grade.²² The noun can thus be termed hysterokinetic: the accent on the suffix in the strong cases is transferred to the ending in the oblique cases.²³

The loss of the diphthong in the accusative Sanskrit *dyām* and Greek $Z\eta\tilde{\eta}v$, yet the lengthened vowels of *ā* and *ῆ*, also point to the full grade stem **dyew-* in which the **w-*, which is retained when followed by a sibilant, is dropped before a continuant, as here before the accusative ending **-m*, as with **g^wōws*, **g^wōm*, and in compensation the **-e-* undergoes lengthening.²⁴ Thus, the accusative ***dyewm* became **dyēm*, and this lengthened **-ē-* was copied by analogy into the nominative to provide ** dyéws*.²⁵ We should therefore assume that, similiarly to $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\varsigma$, the original Greek nominative was $Z\eta\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$, but this converted to the familiar $Z\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ in accordance with Osthoff's Law, as discussed above, and supported by Jacobsohn (1910).²⁶ Collinge notes that although we could take Greek nouns ending in the nominative $-\epsilon\nu\varsigma$ as Osthoffian, and therefore $-\eta F-$ in the other cases, this is not realised in the oblique cases of the $Z\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ paradigm.²⁷

²² Ibid. 337. **diw-* occurs before a vowel, **dyu-* before a consonant.

²³ Fortson (2011) 120.

²⁴ Sihler (1995) 334-5.

²⁵ Ibid. 337.

²⁶ Jacobsohn (1910) 44 referred to in Collinge (1985) 129.

²⁷ Collinge (1985) 130.

From these observations it is possible then to take the root, paying attention to the full grade and zero grade occurrences, and add on the consonantal stem declension endings to arrive at a proposed Proto-Indo-European paradigm as follows:

	PIE	Skt.	Gr.	Lat.
Nom.	<i>dyéw-s</i>	<i>dyaus</i>	<i>Ζεύς</i>	<i>diūs</i>
Voc.	<i>dyew</i>	(<i>dyaus</i>)	<i>Ζεῦ</i>	<i>Iū</i>
Acc.	<i>dyé-m</i>	<i>dyām</i>	<i>Ζῆν</i>	<i>diem</i>
Gen.	<i>diw-ós</i>	<i>divas</i>	<i>Δι(φ)ός</i>	<i>Iouis</i>
Dat.	<i>diw-éy</i>	<i>divē</i>	<i>Δι(φ)εΐ-φίλος</i>	<i>Iouī</i>
Loc.	<i>dyéw-i</i>	<i>diví/dyávi</i>	<i>Δι(φ)ί</i>	<i>Ioue</i>
Abl.	<i>diw-ós</i>	<i>divā</i>		<i>Ioue</i>

From the Latin paradigm it is easy to see the formation of the character Jove in the genitive, dative, locative and ablative stems of *Iou-*. And, as in the Greek vocative it is common to see *Ζεῦ πάτερ*, and *dyáuh pitā́* in Sanskrit, so here in the Latin was *Iū* paired with *pater* to provide *Iūpiter* – literally ‘Sky Father’ - which in turn was expressively lengthened to give *Iūppiter*.²⁸ The Latin vocative *Iūppiter* was so commonly used in prayer that it was used also for the nominative and, by analogy, the accusative *Iouem* was created from the oblique cases to form the following paradigm:

²⁸ Szemerényi (1996), 181.

Nom.	<i>Iūppiter</i>
Voc.	<i>Iūppiter</i>
Acc.	<i>Iouem</i>
Gen.	<i>Iouis</i>
Dat.	<i>Iouī</i>
Loc.	<i>Ioue</i>
Abl.	<i>Ioue</i>

Similarly the original accusative *diem* (shortened from *diēm*) formed, by analogy, the nominative and vocative *diēs* and thus the genitive and dative *diēi* and ablative *diē*, to form the following paradigm *diēs*, ‘day’:²⁹

Nom.	<i>diēs</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Voc.	<i>diēs</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Acc.	<i>diem</i>	<i>diēs</i>
Gen.	<i>diēi</i>	<i>diērum</i>
Dat.	<i>diēi</i>	<i>diēbus</i>
Abl.	<i>diē</i>	<i>diēbus</i>

²⁹ Ibid.

The idea of ‘day’ can also be seen in Skt *dive-dive* ‘day by day’, Armenian *tiw* ‘bright day’ and with the extension *-n-* in Skt. *dīnam*, L. *n(o)undinum*, OI. *noenden* ‘nine-day period’, OCS. *dñĩ* and Lithuanian *diena* ‘day’.³⁰ The vocative of this new paradigm, similarly to *Zεῦ πάτερ* and *Iūppiter*, added *pater* to form *Diēs-piter*, an alternative form for *Iūppiter*.

We also see some alteration in the Greek. Instead of the accusative *Zῆν*, we might see the weak grade *Δία*, which occurs eleven times in Homer and was formed analogically, contracted from *Δί(φ)α*, from the oblique cases in a similar way to *ἄνδρα*.³¹ On top of this, in Homeric Greek the accusative *Zῆν-* was used as a stem to form, by analogy, the following paradigm:³²

Nom.	<i>Zεύς</i>
Voc.	<i>Zεῦ</i>
Acc.	<i>Zῆνα</i>
Gen.	<i>Zῆνος</i>
Dat.	<i>Zῆνί</i>

Benveniste expands our understanding of the **dyéw-* root by suggesting that all Proto-Indo-European roots display the structure **CeC* and that any root more complicated than this, such as **yeug-*, was extended.³³ He then goes on to distinguish between a suffix (**eC* or **C*) and an enlargement (**C*), and argues that the suffix **eC*, when added to the conventional **CeC* root, causes the syncope of the **e* in the root: **CeC-eC- > *CC-eC-*.³⁴ In this case, our simple root **DeY-*, when accompanied by the suffix **eW* results in the loss of the **e* from the

³⁰ West (2007) 167.

³¹ Sihler (1995) 338.

³² Ibid.

³³ Clackson (2007), 65-66.

³⁴ Ibid., 66.

*DeY: *DeY-eW- > *dy-ew-. Conversely, the addition of a *C suffix does not alter this and so we are left with *CeC-C-; thus the suffix *w when added to *dey- results in the following: *DeY-W > *dei-w. We are therefore provided with two full grades: *dyew- (which we have discussed above), and *deiw-. This is termed *schwebeablaut* (the fluctuation of the full grade vowel). Clackson, however, argues that ‘there is no reconstructed PIE formation which shows two full-grades in one root’ and therefore suggests that *deiw- was formed by adding an additional *-e-, for euphonic reasons, to the zero grade *diw-/ *dyu- to provide a new full grade.³⁵

The common Latin word for ‘god’, *deus*, derives from this new full grade, *deywós, which provides the PIE adjectival form. Before an *o* in Latin, *w is lost (unless in initial position), thus: *deywos > *dēos > L. *deus*.³⁶ This also occurred in the accusative to produce *dēom > L. *deum*. Yet, in the genitive singular and nominative plural where the *w was retained, we are left with *dēwī and *dēwē respectively.³⁷ As with *diēs* and *Iūpiter*, analogically two separate paradigms were formed, providing the distinction between *deus* ‘god’ (where the *w was lost) and *dīvus* ‘divine’ (where *w remained).³⁸

***Deus*, n. ‘god’**

Nom.	<i>Deus</i>	<i>deī / dī / diī</i> ³⁹
Voc.	<i>Deus</i>	<i>deī / dī / diī</i>
Acc.	<i>Deum</i>	<i>deōs</i>

³⁵ Ibid., 74.

³⁶ Sihler (1995) 178.

³⁷ Sihler (1995) 179.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The loss of *w* occurs between like vowels in Latin which meant that the nominative plural *dēwē > *dēē > L. *dī*. Ibid.

			Nom.	<i>dīvus</i>	<i>dīvī</i>
Gen.	<i>Deī</i>	<i>deōrum / deum</i>	Voc.	<i>dīve</i>	<i>dīvī</i>
Dat.	<i>Deō</i>	<i>deīs / dīs / diīs</i>	Acc.	<i>dīvum</i>	<i>dīvōs</i>
Abl.	<i>Deō</i>	<i>deīs / dīs / diīs</i>	Gen.	<i>dīvī</i>	<i>dīvōrum</i>
			Dat.	<i>dīvō</i>	<i>dīvīs</i>
West suggests that <i>*deiwó-</i> was a synonym for <i>*dyew-</i> due to the existence of the word ‘sky’			Abl.	<i>dīvō</i>	<i>dīvīs</i>

in Finnish and Estonian being presented respectively in *taivas* and *taevas*, as well as the respective Lithuanian and Latvian gods *Diēvas* and *Dievs*, which he argues parallel *Ζεύς*.⁴⁰

Having linked all of these words back to the root **dey-*, it is now possible to turn to its meaning, and thus its presence in the Greek idea of Zeus. Benveniste links this with the Skt. *dīdáyati* ‘shines’, G. *δέατο* ‘shone’, and therefore the PIE verbal root **deiH₂* made up of the **CeC-* root **dey-* with the suffix **-H₂*.⁴¹ Therefore, we can translate the Proto-Indo-European root for ‘Zeus’, **dyéws*, as ‘shining thing’. Combining this with our understanding that *diēs* also derives from the same root, we can add ‘day’ to this translation.

Although Zeus and Jupiter, or Diespiter, simply came to be used as the Greek and Roman names of the highest god, the general idea of ‘god’ was retained in the name formations, and the original Latin nominative *diūs* in *Vedius*, *Dius Fidius*, *Me-Diūs Fidius* and *Dium Fulgur*.

The Sanskrit *dyaus*, like *Iuppiter* and *Ζεῦ πάτερ*, can refer to *dyaus pita*, a god, yet its primary meaning is ‘sky’ which has been retained in the deified Greek and Roman versions. Poetically, Jupiter and Jove can be used in Latin to signify the sky, thus preserving the Indo-European meaning. It is not difficult to understand the association of Zeus with the sky, and it

⁴⁰ West (2007) 167.

⁴¹ Clackson (2007) 66.

is a notion which we find prevalent in Greek literature.⁴² According to Herodotus (1.131.2), the entire sky was called ‘Zeus’ by the Persians.⁴³ Zeus is, after all, a god of the weather, and the sky is the theatre of this. The link between ‘sky’ and the weather is seen in Gr. *εὐδῖος*, *εὐδία* – literally ‘good sky’, but used in the sense of ‘fine weather’, and in the ‘rain’ of CS. *důždĭ* and Russ. дождь.⁴⁴ Zeus is the god of both calm and rough weather: he creates thunder and lightning, clouds (*πατὴρ Διὸς ἐκ νεφελῶων*, *Il.* 2.146) and storms, rain (*Ζεὺς ὄμβριος*, *Ζεὺς ὕει*), clear skies (*Ζεὺς αἴθριος*) and gentle breezes (*Ζεὺς οὐριος*).⁴⁵ Rain is often termed *Διὸς ὄμβρος* in Homer (*Iliad* 5.91 and 11.493, for example). Similarly, the god Dyaus in the *Rigveda* is associated with rain, which is termed *Divó vṛṣṭí* (*RV* 2.27.15; 5.63.1; 5.83.6; 5.84.3; 6.13.1), like *Διὸς ὄμβρος*; and Dyaus is connected with *abhrám*, for instance: *yát te abhrásya vidyúto | Divó vársanti vṛṣṭáyah*, ‘when the rain-cloud’s lightnings (and) Dyaus’ rains rain down on you’ (*RV* 5.84.3).⁴⁶ Unlike with Zeus, however, who is the god of the sky and storms, the creation of storms is left to Indra.

Zeus and Jupiter are very much the sovereign gods, but West argues that the Indo-European Dyeus was just a divine entity, personifying the sky and day.⁴⁷ He furthers this argument by regarding the Indic god Dyaus, who in the *Rigveda* is only addressed as part of the Sky and Earth pair. On top of this, he seems to have no real power, as is held by Zeus and Jupiter in classical mythology, but is simply like the sky: he bears the thunder and the rain (*RV* 5.58.6; 10.44.8; 10.45.4; 10.67.5; 1.100.3; 5.17.3).⁴⁸

The divine superiority of this ‘Sky God’, is shown in the use of the epithet ‘great’: *μέγας* for Zeus in Homer, and *máh* for Dyaus in the *Rigveda*.⁴⁹ He is also termed

⁴² Aristoph. *Tagenistae frag.* 1. 1-5; Eur. *Cycl.* 211ff; Plout. *De Alex. Magn.* 1.9, 2.2.

⁴³ West (2007) 167.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ West (2007) 168.

⁴⁶ West (2007) 169.

⁴⁷ West (2007) 168.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ West (2007) 169.

‘omniscient’: Zeus is *εἰρόνοπα* (*Il.* 3.276, 19.258; Aesch. *Supp.* 139, *Cho.* 985, *Eum.* 1045), Dyaus and the Indic sky-god Varuna are termed *viśvávedas-* (*Atharvaveda* 1.32.4. *RV* 6.70.6; 8.42.1). As well as this, their all-seeing ‘eye’ is similarly the Sun (*Il.* 3.277, *Od.* 11.109, Aesch. *Prom.* 91, fr. 192.5, *RV* 7.35.8, 7.63.4, 1.50.2, 7.63.1, 1.50.6 etc.).⁵⁰ In distinction from Dyaus, Varuna was a god of justice, and it is uncertain which originated first. West does question whether Zeus ‘took over the supervision of justice from another celestial god...who faded out of sight’, however, as the ‘sky’, he is naturally the highest god with the position to oversee everything, and thus it makes sense that he existed first.⁵¹ The role of justice is also born by the Roman god *Dius Fidius* and Luwian *Tiwaz*.⁵² It is believed that the Nordic god Odin assumed the role of *Týr*, and consequently also oversees the world.⁵³

Dyáus ca nah pitā Pṛthivī ca mātā, ‘Heaven is our father and Earth our mother’, states *Atharvaveda* (Paipp. 5.21.1). Despite the Scythian belief of the marriage between Zeus and Earth (Herodotus 4.59), in Greek religion the general idea of Heaven and Earth as a couple is attributed to Ouranos and Gaia. West explains this by arguing that Ouranos received Zeus’ role as overarching father when the latter outgrew his simple role as the ‘Sky’.⁵⁴ Instead, Zeus is linked with Demeter, or in the cosmogony of Pherecydes of Syros, *Zas* with *Ge*.⁵⁵ We can also see the link between Jupiter and *Tellus Mater* in Macrobius 3.9.11 and Varro *De re rustica* 1.1.5.⁵⁶

The notion of ‘day’ is retained in the original nominative *diūs* in *dius*, *interdus*, *diū*, *interdiū* and *nudiūs tertius*. The same root can be seen in the personal names of Phrygian *Tiy-*, Thracian *Zi-*, *Diu-*, *Dias-*, Messapic *Zis* and *Dis*. Equally, as *diūs* represented in its early form the idea of ‘day’, so did *diēs* retain the idea of ‘sky’ or ‘god’ as seen in *Diēspiter*. It

⁵⁰ For more on the Sun as the ‘all-seeing’ see West (2007) 198-9.

⁵¹ West (2007) 172.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ West (2007) 173.

⁵⁴ West (2007) 181.

⁵⁵ West (2007) 182.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

seems likely, therefore, that these two notions were present in the original **dyéws*, and the more generic translation ‘shining thing’. However, Hopkins has tried to locate the primitive definition of **deiṷos* and **diēus*, and in doing so has suggested that the meaning ‘sky’ preponderates the ‘day’ connotation due to the Sanskrit *dyaus* being applicable to both the diurnal and nocturnal sky: *dyāvo na str̥bhiḥ* - ‘like the heavens with the stars’ (*RV* 1.62.8, and 2.34.2); and the alternatives *ahan*, *uṣas* and *vastu* for ‘day’.⁵⁷ Similarly, the meaning ‘sky’ is unequivocally seen in the Greek, with the idea of ‘day’ having been all but lost. Hopkins argues that *ἔνδιος* (from **en diṷi*), ‘at noon’, was a shortened version of *ἔνδιος ἥλιος*, thus supporting the translation ‘sky’ over ‘day’.⁵⁸

Turning to the adjective **diṷios*, the unanimous translation ‘of the sky’ in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin bolsters her hypothesis. Although the Sanskrit *divyas* originally meant ‘of the sky’, its inevitable assimilation occurred with ‘of heaven’ and thus simply ‘divine’.⁵⁹ The word *διός* developed in the Greek naturally from ‘of the sky’ to mean ‘of Zeus’, occurring 263 times in Homer in relation to the epic heroes, and in Aeschylus and Euripides *διός* is used to mean ‘of Zeus’, and ‘child of Zeus’.⁶⁰ We also see **diṷios* in *sub divo* (‘beneath the open sky’⁶¹), the neuter substantive *dium*, and the Latin *dius*, in which the *u* is lost and the *ii* then changed to *ī*. However in instances of its use, it does not hold the meaning ‘of the sky’, and so is more likely a translation of the Homeric *διός*, thus meaning ‘divine’.⁶² Hopkins points to, perhaps, the only archaic example of *dius* in Prudentius’ *Cathemerinon* 12.89-90, yet calls this ‘too much of an assumption’ and again sees it as Homeric borrowing.⁶³

⁵⁷ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 16-18.

⁵⁸ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 19-20.

⁵⁹ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 46.

⁶⁰ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 47-8.

⁶¹ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 60.

⁶² Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 67-8. We also have the adjective *iovius*, meaning ‘of Jupiter’.

⁶³ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 70-1.

Equally, the meaning of ‘sky’ is also seen in compounds involving **-diuo-*: Skt. *brhaddivas* ‘heavenly’, *tridivam* ‘the third heaven’ and *divakṣas* ‘heaven-dwelling’.⁶⁴ However, this develops to mean ‘day’ as seen in *subdivam*, *naktamdivam*, *rātrimdivam*, *ahardivam*, *subdiva-*.⁶⁵ The Greek development of **-diuo-* in *εὐδίοϛ* does not answer whether it first meant ‘sky’ or ‘day’ as both are possible in regards to weather terminology, and the meaning ‘day’ seems prevalent in *ὀγδόδιον* and *ἀπτόδιον*.⁶⁶ The ‘day’ meaning is also seen in the Latin *bīduum* etc. ‘a period of two days’.⁶⁷ The Celtic languages have preserved only the ‘day’ meaning in the following words: OI. *die*, W. *dydd*, Corn. *deth*, *dyth*, Bret. *deiz*, but Hopkins brushes this aside, stressing the chronological superiority of Sanskrit, Greek and Latin.⁶⁸

Hopkins thus concludes that since **diuios* in Sanskrit, Greek and Latin only refers to the sky, as an adjective derived from **diēus*, it is most probable that **diēus*, too, originally meant only ‘sky’, adding that Dyaus, Zeus and Jupiter are predominantly connected with not the bright sky, but the stormy sky, and thus tries to rid **dyews* of its ‘shining’ connotations.⁶⁹ Although the troublesome gods are obviously most remembered for their storm-brewing activities, as we have seen, they *are* also connected with benevolent weather, and to rid **dyews* of the meaning evident in its root **dey-* seems counterintuitive. After all, is not the idea of brightness visible in the phrase *Διὸϛ ἀργάϛ*?⁷⁰ Despite Hopkins’ efforts, the eminence of ‘sky’ over ‘day’ has not been substantiated, and it would be odd to not see the meaning ‘day’ when **dyews* both depicts the sky and ‘shining’.

One distinction which can be made, however, is that between the idea of ‘sky’/‘day’ and ‘god’, it is not impossible that the meaning ‘sky’ and ‘god’ developed symbiotically,

⁶⁴ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 72.

⁶⁵ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 72-3.

⁶⁶ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 73.

⁶⁷ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 74.

⁶⁸ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 25-26.

⁶⁹ Sturtevant Hopkins (1932) 45, 75-6.

⁷⁰ *Il.* 13.837. This idea is also present in Eur. *Hec.* 707, *I.A.* 1505, *Rhes.* 331, 355.

however, it is more likely that an observation of nature would be made and given a name before any religious significance was placed on it, which is also the view of Brugmann and Wackernagel.⁷¹ As already pointed out, the Greek adjective *διός* in early Homeric poetry simply meant ‘bright’ and was not constrained to the association with Zeus; Cook thus translates it as ‘of the bright sky’ and explains that it later came to mean ‘of the god Zeus’.⁷² At first **dyéws* may have just been used to distinguish between the sky and the earth, and then with the growth of religion, people of the sky and earth. This is seen in the ‘terrestrial’ meaning in the word for ‘man’: L. *homo*.⁷³ Cook thus explains the loss of the immediate association of ‘sky’ in the words *Ζεύς* and *Iūppiter*: ‘When the pre-anthropomorphic conception of Zeus had developed into the anthropomorphic, the natural tendency would be to forget the former in the latter.’⁷⁴

As we have seen, the sky was personified later on into gods known as ‘Sky-Father’ which we have noted in *dyāuḥ pitā́*, *Zēd páter*, *Iūppiter* and *Diespiter*, and this can also be seen in Marrucinian *Ioves patres* (gen.), Oscan *Dípatír*, Umbrian *Iupater* and *Iuve patre*, Illyrian *Deipaturos*, and the genitive *Dipoteres* found on a Sabellian amphora from the fifth-century.⁷⁵

By comparing the Indo-European words for ‘father’: G. *πατήρ*, L. *pater* and Skt. *pitā́*, OE *fæder*, OIr. *ath(a)ir*, we can arrive at the PIE reconstruction **pH₂tēr-*. As we can see, the bilabial stop **p* remains as *π* and *p* in Greek, Latin and Sanskrit. In the Germanic languages voiceless stops become voiceless spirants, i.e. **p > f*, **t > þ*, **k > χ*. However, according to Verner’s Law these voiceless stops become *b*, *d* and *g* respectively when positioned medially

⁷¹ Brugmann (1925) 17 and Wackernagel (1926) 116 referred to in Kerényi (1975) 10.

⁷² Cook (1914) 3-4.

⁷³ Benveniste (1973) 446.

⁷⁴ Cook (1914) 6.

⁷⁵ West (2007) 166-7.

and not preceded by an accent.⁷⁶ The laryngeal present here is $*H_2$ as $*H_2 > G. \alpha, L. a$ and Skt. i .⁷⁷ It is also syllabic due to its placement between obstruents.⁷⁸ The PIE $*pH_2t\bar{e}r-$ has been explained in two ways but it is difficult to arrive at any definitive conclusion. One explanation is that it is composed of the suffix $*-H_2t\bar{e}r-$, ‘kinsman’, in the \bar{e} -grade, which can equally be seen in $*m\acute{e}H_2t\bar{e}r$, mother, $*b^hr\acute{e}H_2t\bar{e}r$, brother and $*d^h\acute{u}gH_2t\bar{e}r$, daughter.⁷⁹ This then requires the root $*p-$, which, being simply a root of one consonant, goes against root theories.⁸⁰ Another explanation is that the suffix is $*-ter-$, an agent noun suffix, and that the root is therefore $*pH_2$, which might be linked to the Hittite $pahs-$, Skt. $p\bar{a}$, L. $p\bar{a}sc\bar{o}$, ‘protect’.⁸¹ The short e in *pater* can be explained by PIE $*-\bar{e}r > L. -\acute{e}r$.⁸² The change of *pater* to $-piter$ in *Iūppiter* occurs due to a change in Latin accentuation, as in Proto-Germanic and Proto-Celtic, in which the first syllable of the word was stressed causing the weakening of post-tonic vowels.⁸³ In this case PItal. $*e, *o, *a$ and $*u$ were realised as i before one consonant, and e before two or more.⁸⁴ The PIE for $Z\epsilon\delta\ \acute{\pi}\acute{\alpha}\tau\epsilon\rho, dy\acute{a}u\eta\ \acute{p}it\acute{a}$ and *Iūppiter* can therefore be reconstructed as $*dy\acute{e}ws\ pH_2t\bar{e}r$, literally ‘kinsman of the sky who protects’. This terminology was so powerful that Zeus was known as simply $\Pi\alpha\pi\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ or $\Pi\alpha\pi\pi\acute{\omega}\omicron\varsigma$, ‘father’ in Bithynia; this name of simply ‘father’ was also attributed to the Scythians by Herodotus (4.59.2).⁸⁵ The Norse god Odin was similarly termed *Alfǫðr*, ‘all-father’.⁸⁶ The Hittite *Siussummi*, meaning ‘Sun God’, although the link with ‘sun’ here is secondary, as argued by West, as the Hitt. *siwat-*, Luwian *Tīwat-*, and Palaic *Tīyat* come from the Proto-Anatolian

⁷⁶ Szemerényi (1996) 20.

⁷⁷ Sihler (1995) 99.

⁷⁸ Ibid. 98.

⁷⁹ Sihler (1995) 118.

⁸⁰ Clackson (2007) 70.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Sihler (1995) 79.

⁸³ Ibid. 59-60; 239.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 60.

⁸⁵ West (2007), 170.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 173.

**díwot*, meaning ‘day’, is also termed ‘father’.⁸⁷ The Hittite *attaš*, ‘father’, is seen in *attaš* ^dUTU-*uš* (presuming that ^dUTU-*uš* is read as *Sius*).⁸⁸ We can also see this in the Luwian *tatiš* ^dTiwaz and Palaic *Tiyaz...papaz*, all of which confirm the use of PIE **dyéws p_H₂tēr*.⁸⁹

As interesting as the etymology of the word *Ζεύς* is, it is important not to fall into the trap of being so concerned with the philological explanation of his name, as Hopkins has, that the fluidity and nonconformism of belief is ignored. Despite **dyéws p_H₂tēr* being the only god which we can identify with as much accuracy as possible in the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European, it is, of course, impossible to state all of this without some uncertainty, as it is to truly understand the notion of Zeus himself: *γᾶν ὅπ’ ἐμοὶ τίθεμαι: Ζεῦ, σὸ δ’ Ὀλυμπόν ἔχε*.⁹⁰

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Written for *Comparative Indo-European philology (CL-M25)*

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⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Plout. *De Alex. Magn.* 1.9.

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