

The Indra-Tullus comparison

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Dumézil several times explored the similarities between the Indian warrior god Indra and Tullus, the bellicose third king of Rome. Reexamining selected sources, this paper argues that the number of similarities justifies postulating an Indo-European proto-narrative.

Although I never met Edgar Polomé in person, I greatly valued the encouragement he gave me in connection with two papers (Allen 1996, 1999) published in collections he edited. Both were about Indo-European comparativism and built on the work of Dumézil, of which Edgar was such a significant supporter; and since one focused on Rome and the other on India, I now offer a paper linking the two.

1. Introduction

Dumézil often compared India and Rome, and my title alludes to one of his richest comparisons. Vedic and Hindu Indra was the warrior and king among the gods, while according to pseudo-history Tullus Hostilius was the third Roman king, succeeding Romulus and Numa. Comparing some of the god's deeds with those of the human king, Dumézil concluded that the similarities reflected shared ideological heritage rather than shared descent from a proto-narrative (1985:62).

The topic could be very large. The Roman story is given both by Livy and, at greater length and in Greek, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (henceforth DH). For the Sanskrit, working backwards, sources include Purāṇas, epics, Brāhmaṇas and the Rig Veda; but the Vedic material relates to Iranian, which points further back still, to the period of Indo-Iranian unity. Though what survives is only a fraction of what existed, simply to present all the primary material could be lengthy. As for the

secondary literature, one would like to trace Dumézil's treatment of the two figures from *Horace et les Curiaces* in 1942 via *Aspects de la fonction guerrière* in 1956 to *Heur et malheur du guerrier* in 1985. Dumézil cites other writing from the 19th century onwards, and of course publication continues.

To handle the topic within an article I must therefore be ruthless. I focus on the primary texts, above all on the *Mah_bh_rata* and Livy, and within the epic on the version of Indra's story told by *_alya* in Book 5, looking elsewhere only when the argument demands it. The central question is simply how similar are the Roman and Sanskrit stories.

What is the point of retreading ground already covered by Dumézil in greater depth? Firstly, I hope to facilitate access to a complex work not available in English: by limiting my scope, I offer a lead-in to the riches of the French. Secondly, a fresh look uncovers additional rapprochements and consequently suggests that the similarities *do* reflect common descent from a proto-narrative. Thirdly, the paper is part of a long-term effort to rethink Dumézil's work using the hypothesis of a fourth function. The decision to focus on the epic at the expense of the earlier Vedas can be justified on the grounds that the epic tells the story more fully and often preserves Indo-European heritage that bypasses the Vedas.

We must start with brief summaries of the two stories.¹

India.

2.1 Birth and death of Tri_iras

¹ My nomenclature is somewhat simplified. Horatius refers to the survivor of the Horatii triplets, not to their father, here called Horatius *père*. Fidenates covers the Veiians, their allies. Tvas,t,r, covers Praj_pati, Tri_iras covers Vi_var_pa ('Omniform'), Brahmahaty_Brahmavadhy_, and _ac_Indr_n_. 'Indra' replaces his various synonyms.

Tvas,t,r, begets Tri_iras ('Three-head') to spite Indra. Failing to arrest the monster's growing strength, Indra kills him with his bolt. The corpse still blazes, and Indra persuades a reluctant carpenter to sever the three heads with his axe. There emerge three birds.

2.2 *Birth and death of Namuci/Vr,tra*²

Tvas,t,r, is angry and produces Vr,tra by ritual means. Vr,tra at first defeats Indra, but the gods save their king and arrange a pact between the two enemies. Applying its letter but not its spirit, Indra kills Vr,tra with foam.

2.3 *Indra and Nahus,a*

Guilty now of killing a brahman (Tri_iras) and of cowardly/immoral behaviour towards Vr,tra, Indra hides far off in a fibre of a lotus growing in a lake. The cosmos suffers, and the gods appoint Nahus,a as king. Nahus,a tries to seduce Indra's wife. A purificatory horse sacrifice is performed for Indra and searches are mounted for him, the second by Agni, god of Fire. Nahus,a is induced to show hubris to brahmans and falls from power. Indra is restored and distributes to the gods their roles in the cosmic order.³

Rome.

Battle of triplets and crime of Horatius

When Tullus becomes king, a quarrel arises between Rome and its mother city Alba, ruled by Cluilius. The Alban army invades. Cluilius dies, but is replaced by the

² Distinct in the Vedas, these two demons are conflated in the epic. I mostly use the second name.

³ Mbh 5.9.3-5.18f (Critical Edition or CE), trans. van Buitenen 1978:202-217. I also refer to 'Krishna's version' of the story (CE 12.329.17-41, in prose, trans. Ganguli 1993:4.157-161), and Bh_s,ma's (12.272.7-273.63, trans. Ganguli 1993:3.305-310).

dictator Mettius Fufettius. The leaders agree to settle their quarrel by a fight between individuals rather than armies, and a treaty is made accordingly. The Curiatii triplets represent Alba, the Horatii Rome. Two Horatii are killed, but the third kills the Curiatii one by one. Returning to Rome in triumph, the surviving Horatius meets his sister Horatia, fiancée of one of the dead Curiatii, who mourns her lover rather than her brothers. Angry at being blamed rather than congratulated, Horatius kills her. He is tried for murder, but acquitted. Rites of purification are performed.

3.2 Death of Mettius

Mettius foments an invasion by the Fidenates, but pretends to obey the treaty. During the battle he treacherously withdraws, putting Rome at risk. However, with the aid of gods and some quick thinking, Tullus wins. The next day he exposes Mettius' treachery and has him dragged in two by horses. Alba is destroyed. Its inhabitants are evacuated and absorbed into Rome.

3.3 Rest of reign

After a further victory against the Sabines, portents are seen on Mount Alba, and rituals are held. Tullus falls sick with a plague and suddenly turns to religion. But a ritual mistake angers Jupiter, and the king dies in a fire lit by the god's thunderbolt.

Among many gross contrasts, the Sanskrit myth deals with gods and lacks any geographical or chronological setting, while the Latin regnal 'history' is mostly about men, relates closely to Roman topography, and was even given dates (BC 640-616!). Nevertheless, as we shall see, the stories are related. If Rome, unlike most non-

modern societies (Indo-European or other), almost lacks indigenous myth, it is because, as Dumézil realised, it recast the myth it inherited into the format of history. This suggests that the Sanskrit may be closer to the proto-IE situation, and that Rome has humanised, localised and historicised stories that were once straight myth.

The comparison will be conducted by abstracting narrative features (in italics). The rapprochements can be read in two ways: as synchronic analyses, to be judged in terms of accuracy and persuasiveness, and as diachronic proposals – like linguists’ starred forms – suggesting features that I take to have been present in the proto-narrative, albeit in less abstract form.

1. *Context is an enduring conflict between goodies and baddies.*⁴ The enmity between *devas* (gods) and *asuras* (demons, with many varieties) pervades Hindu mythology from the Br_hman,as onwards. Thus when (Krishna’s version) Tri_iras becomes priest of his mother’s people, the asuras, one can assume that he becomes an enemy of the gods. Throughout most of its pseudo-history Rome is at war with hostile neighbours. Here it is Albans, as well as Fidenates and Sabines, but elsewhere other ethnonyms appear as baddies.

2. *Goodies and baddies are related, baddies being older.* Asuras are often said to be elder brothers of the devas, both being offspring of Praj_pati. Albans and Romans both descend from Trojans, but the Albans, in the metropolis, are like fathers to the Romans in the colony (Livy 1.23.1)

3. *Ultimate cause of war is that both sides seek supremacy.* Tri_iras covets Indra’s sovereignty, and his growing power (achieved by austerities) motivates Indra’s desire to kill him. Tullus’s martial inclinations and some bilateral cattle raids

⁴ The colloquial terms, marginally ironic, seem more apt than ‘heroes’ and ‘villains’.

by rustics are relevant to the outbreak of war, but Mettius points out that the real cause is the desire of each side to rule the other, their *cupido imperii*.

4. *One side grows in power, other faces relative decline.* In India Tri_iras (the baddy) is gaining, Indra is threatened. In Italy Rome (the goody) is gaining, Alba is threatened.

5. *Before hostilities, goody leader offers entertainment to baddies.* Indra tries to distract Tri_iras by sending nymphs to seduce him. The attempt either fails completely (_alya), or merely serves to infuriate Tri_iras when the nymphs depart (Krishna). So as to get his own demand in first, Tullus arranges hospitality to delay the Alban envoys sent by Cluilius to demand satisfaction.

6. *Original baddy leader dies unexpectedly, perhaps by divine anger.* Urged by the asuras (Krishna's version), Tri_iras' mother persuades her son to give up the priesthood of the gods to serve the asuras under their chief Hiran,yaka_ipu. The previous incumbent Vasis,t,ha is angry at being dismissed and curses the chief, who is then unexpectedly killed by the god Vishnu in man-lion incarnation.

The Roman story starts with Tullus, the properly appointed king of Rome, opposed to Cluilius, the normal leader of the Albans. Cluilius dies unexpectedly overnight, and the first explanation that occurs to the Albans (DH) is that the gods were angry with him for starting an unnecessary and unjust war.

As effective leader of the baddies Tvas,t,r, replaces Hiranyaka_ipu as Mettius replaces Cluilius. In India, but not Rome, this 'replacement' motif occurs twice, for Tri_iras also replaces Vasis,t,ha.

7. *Goody-baddy conflict falls into two parts, A and B.* Indra versus Tri_iras (A) contrasts with Indra versus Vr,tra (B), just as the triplets' battle (A) contrasts with Rome versus Fidenae (B), which leads on to Mettius' death.

8. *Two parts causally linked by anger associated with Baddy leader.* Tvas,t,r, produces Vr,tra because he is angry at the death of his son in A. Mettius foments B because of the unpopularity (*invidia* 1.27.1) he has incurred among his people from the failure of his plan in A.

9. *Two parts nonetheless form single narrative unit.* None of Indra's many other enemies are particularly associated with Tvas,t,r,. None of Rome's are associated with a Mettius, and Alba can never again be an enemy. Livy clearly presents the whole conflict as a narrative unit (1.23.1f).

10. *Baddies less militaristic than goodies.* Tvas,t,r, is not a notably violent deity, and his son seeks power by austerities, not physical force. In contrast, Indra is par excellence a warrior. Mettius seeks a peaceful solution in A, declines Tullus's offer of single combat (DH), and never engages his forces in B. Tullus is consistently warlike (*ferox*).

11. *Baddy champions in A are somehow triadic.* Tri_iras has three heads and six eyes, the Curiatii are triplets.

12. *Mothers of these champions are also baddies.* Tri_iras' mother is a female asura. The mother of the Curiatii is an Alban (like her twin sister, mother of the Horatii – DH 3.13.4).

13. *Goody side also triadic, involving three brothers.* In the Vedic versions of this story, Indra is often associated with Trita ('Third'); and Trita sometimes has as brothers Ekata (from *eka* 'one') and Dvita ('Second'). This of course parallels the Horatii triplets.

14. *Among the three goody brothers one, maybe the third, is focal.* The literature here is considerable since Trita appears not only some forty times in the Rig Veda but also, in the cognate forms Thritha and Thra_taona in Avestan myth. The

name is coupled with *_ptya* (Sk) and *_thwya* (Av). In pre-epic sources it is often the assistant Trita, not Indra, who actually kills Tri_iras – *le troisième tue le triple*, in Dumézil’s words.

At Rome the surviving Horatius is not explicitly the third. However, the first-born of the triplets, the ‘eldest’ (*presbúatos*) and the spokesman, dies first (DH 3.17.1, 19.4), which may make the survivor implicitly the last-born.

15. *Triads are short on ordinary nomenclature.* Unsurprisingly, Tri_iras has no separate names for his different heads, but the numerical names of the *_ptyas* are scarcely ordinary ones. Livy once refers to Horatius (as also to his father) as Publius, while DH has Marcus (3.27.1, in B); but the other triplets lack names even though the story could use them (Horatia calls on her lover by name, *nomine*).⁵

16. *Killing of Baddy triad brings female into story.* Two females are relevant in the Sanskrit. The first is Brahmahaty_, a personified feminine abstract noun meaning ‘Brahman-killing’. The texts often do not mention her until after B, and Bh_s,ma’s version even makes her emerge from the body of the slain Vr,tra. But a more natural origin (5.10.42) is Tri_iras; the erstwhile priest of the gods is a far more brahman-like figure than Vr,tra or Namuci. As for her gender, it rests not only on grammar, but also on her appearance (see §18, 22).

Whereas the supernatural Brahmahaty_ was generated by the killing of the Baddy triad, the human Horatia clearly preexisted that event, but only now does she enter the story.

17. *Females too lack ordinary individual names.* Brahmahaty_ is a personified abstraction, Horatia merely the feminine of Horatius.

⁵ A late source calls the lover Attus (Münzer 1900:1830).

18. *Female looks distraught, particularly as regards hair and gaze.*

Brahmahaty_ is dishevelled, her gaze dreadful (*prak_rn,am_rdhaj_caiva ghoranetr_ca*, 273.11). Livy only says that Horatia lets down her hair (*solvit crines*) and tearfully calls on her dead lover. In the Greek, hearing what has happened, she abandons all decorum. Rushing out of the house (where an unmarried young lady ought to be engaged in domestic work), she runs to the city gates ‘like the maenads’, and abuses her brother, staring at him intensely (*atenési toîs ophthalmoîs*).

19. *Female emphasises sin of goody champion.* If Brahmahaty_ personifies the sin, Horatia (in DH) denounces it: Horatius has not only killed her fiancé and his own cousins, whom he once called brothers, but he rejoices at his deed. The sinfulness of the killing was already clear from the religious doubts of Tullus when Mettius first proposed the triplets as champions. But Horatia not only abuses the sinner: she makes him compound his sin by killing an even closer relative.

20. *Female is disposed of.* Brahmahaty_ is eliminated from the story by Indra’s horse sacrifice. Horatius pierces Horatia with his sword, and her stone tomb is built where she falls.

21. *Disposal of baddies involves dispersal.* Whatever happens to Tri_iras, his ‘offspring’ Brahmahaty_ is distributed around the cosmos – among trees, rivers, mountains, earth and women, or (there are several lists) fire, trees/herbs/grasses, nymphs and waters (Bh_s,ma). If the tombs of the two dead Horatii are towards Alba, those of the three Curiatii are spread out between there and Rome (*distantia locis*), while Horatia’s is close to the city gate (Porta Capena).

22. *Sexually desirable female laments.* In spite of the above similarities, Brahmahaty_ and Horatia ‘feel’ very different. Even apart from her hair and eyes Brahmahaty_, personifying an ugly sin, is unprepossessing:

Fierce, dread-inspiring, with terrible teeth, awful, hideous for ugliness, dark and tawny ... with a garland of skulls round her neck, emaciated, covered all over with blood, and clad in rags and tree bark (trans. Ganguli, modified).

In contrast, distraught though she may be, Horatia, qua fiancée, is doubtless attractive physically (as her brothers are explicitly – see § 68). But, as comparativists are forced to recognise, one tradition often conflates figures who are distinct in a cognate one, and the Sanskrit story contains a second female who *is* attractive. Here is her story at greater length.

When Indra disappears to his lake, his wife *_ac_* attracts the unwelcome advances of Nahus,a. Ordered to his palace, in her distress she seeks the help of the god Br,haspati, who reassures her that Indra will return. Nahus,a angrily repeats his demand, but the god refuses to hand over the asylum seeker, who weeps bitterly. However, on Br,haspati's advice, *_ac_* pleads for a delay, which Nahus,a grants. After the horse sacrifice and Brahmahaty_'s dispersal, Indra again disappears and *_ac_* laments. Guided to her husband by a supernatural being, she learns from Indra how to ensure Nahus,a's downfall: she must tell him to harness seers to his chariot. The plan works, and on returning to his throne Indra is reunited with her.

ac's grief is mentioned three times, Horatia's only once, but both stories include a sexually desirable female who laments.

23. *Lamenter caught between two males.* *_ac_* is torn between Indra and Nahus,a – let us call them 'the partner' and 'the persecutor'. Horatia is torn between her intended partner and her brother, killer both of the partner and of herself.

24. *Lamenter's partner cannot comfort her.* The partner is either far away (Indra), or dead (Curiatius).

25. *Lamenter emphatically loyal to partner.* As a faithful wife *_ac_* unwaveringly rejects Nahus,a. Horatia's loyalty goes entirely to her fiancé, not at all to her brother.

26. *Persecutor recently risen in social status.* Nahus,a has only recently become king of the gods. When Horatius kills the third Alban, the Romans exalt him (*ovantes ac gratulantes*). In a short time Fortune has turned him from an insignificant man to a great one, raising him to wonderful and unexpected distinction (*epipháneia*).

27. *Persecutor appropriates possessions/identity of partner.* Replacing Indra as king of the Gods, Nahus,a has taken over all Indra's property: as he says (12.329.31.2), 'Everything that Indra used to enjoy is before me' – except *_ac_*. When Horatia encounters her brother, he is wearing the *paludamentum* or military cloak that she herself wove. So if Nahus,a took Indra's property, Horatius took the fiancé's. Nahus,a even says "I am the Indra of the gods" (5.11.15), and by wearing the cloak Horatius almost *becomes* the fiancé.

28. *Persecutor angered by unexpected negativity of lamenter.* Nahus,a expects that *_ac_* will accept his advances, which explains his fury when she first seeks refuge with Br,haspati. Horatius is angry because he expects his sister to support her city and brothers (dead and alive), not lament her partner.

29. *Persecutor reproached by lamenter.* *_ac_* observes to Nahus,a that he should not assault another's wife. Horatia compares her brother's *psukh_* to that of a wild beast, and he explicitly refers to her reproaches (*oneidízein* 3.21.6).

30. *Persecutor unaware of secret dealings between lamenter and partner.* Nahus,a does not know of *_ac_*'s visit to Indra with Upa_ruti 'Oracular Whisper', or

of their plot. The whole atmosphere is secretive: *_ac_* evokes *Upa_ruti* by worshipping the goddess Night. When he sees his sister running to meet him, Horatius speculates on her motives, doubtless unaware that she has been hiding a secret love (*páthos apórr_ton*).

31. *Lamenter-partner relationship supported by 'facilitator'*. *Br,haspati* supports the *_ac_*-*Indra* relationship, promising that the two will shortly be reunited. *Horatius père* has promised his daughter to *Curiatius*.

32. *Facilitator's firm loyalty to goodies*. Presumably *Br,haspati*, family priest of the Gods, participated in the election of *Nahus,a*, but thereafter he steadfastly supports *Indra* and his wife. When *Nahus,a* demands the presence of *_ac_* and the gods and seers obediently transmit the message, *Br,haspati* resolutely refuses.

Horatius père shows equal firmness in defending the goodies. When his son is tried for murder before the people, it is the father's eloquence that has most effect in securing the acquittal (*Livy*); his support for his son goes so far that he refuses to assist in the burial of his daughter (*DH 3.21.8*).⁶

We must here note a major difference. The Sanskrit facilitator is supporting the lamenter and rejecting the persecutor, while (after her death) the Roman one is rejecting the lamenter and supporting the persecutor. But that is only half the picture, for at the same time, and more truly, *Horatius père* is supporting his son as champion of the goodies. In other words, just as *Horatia* combines features that in the Sanskrit are distributed between *Brahmahaty_* and *_ac_*, so *Horatius* combines features of *Tri_iras'* killer with those of *Nahus,a* the persecutor. The comparison is complicated by the Latin story having fewer distinct characters, but with more complex roles.

⁶ His speech at the trial shows a trifunctional pattern. His first argument is juridical (first function or F1): his daughter had been slain justly (*iure*) – otherwise, using paternal legal authority (*iure* again), he himself would have punished his son. His second argument is based on emotion, on domesticity, and

33. *Ritual needed to purify goody.* When *_ac_* obtains her delay and returns sadly to *Br,haspati*, the gods, led by *Agni*, go and ask *Vishnu* how *Indra* can be released from *Brahmahaty_*. *Vishnu* promises to purify him when he performs a horse sacrifice. After the legal acquittal of *Horatius*, rituals are held at public expense for the cleansing of his manifest homicide.

34. *Atonement ritual organised by facilitator.* The horse sacrifice is organised by the priestly *Br,haspati* (*Krishna's* version).⁷ To expiate his son's sin, *Horatius père* is told to perform rituals; these involve piacular sacrifices and the passage of the son under a yoke or beam.

35. *Narrative is origin myth for rituals.* This is clear not from the epic but from the Vedic ritual texts. The three accounts of the *Sautr_man_* ritual in the *_atapatha Br_hman,a* (*_B* 1.6.3.1ff., 5.5.4.1ff., 12.7.1.1ff.) all open with references to the *Indra-Tri_iras* conflict. Thus the second passage (which situates the ritual at the end of the royal inauguration) starts by listing the three sacrificial victims – a goat for the *A_vins*, a ewe for *Sarasvat_*, a bull for *Indra* – and then asks why the ritual is performed. It answers by telling another variant of the myth in which, after *Tri_iras'* death, the furious *Tvas,t,r*, holds a soma ritual to which *Indra* is not invited. Forcing an entry, *Indra* consumes the sacred fluid immoderately and is weakened by it. He is restored by the ritual – performed by the *A_vins* with help from *Sarasvat_*. Thus the ritual, named after *Indra Sutr_man* ('Good Guardian'), serves particularly for expiation or purification, as after immoderate consumption of soma by a priest (Eggeling 1963 Vol. I:165).

on numbers of offspring: a guilty verdict would mean loss of all his four children (probably F3). His third and longest argument concerns the military valour of his son (F2).

⁷*Br,haspati* is apparently addressed as *Brahm_* (e.g. 5.11.17), but I cannot here explore the relation between the two gods. We may need a §10a: *Goodies seek advice from facilitator before conflict A*. The gods go to *Brahm_* for advice on responding to the growing power of *Tri_iras* (*Krishna*), while the *Horatii* go to their father for advice on responding to the 'challenge' of the *Curiatii* (DH).

Following the crime of Horatius, the piacular sacrifices performed by his father are handed down in the *gens* Horatia. The ritual beam, the *sororium tigillum*, was maintained at public expense and survived in Livy's day (*hodie manet*).

36. *Atonement ritual involves paired altars*. East of the *_havan_*ya two fire altars are built, one to the north, one to the south (*_B* 5.5.4.21, 12.7.3.7f). They are contrastively associated with gods, milk and soma, and with ancestors, alcohol (*sur_*) and food. When Tullus orders the pontiffs to appease gods and spirits (*daimonas*) and purify Horatius with lustrations, they erect two altars – one to Juno (who cares for sisters), one to Janus Curiatius – and sacrifice on them (DH).

37. *Wooden object bridges altars*. As we saw, *Tri_iras'* death led to *Tvas,t,r,*'s soma sacrifice and Indra's collapse, which was cured by the ritual. During this ritual, the ruler is consecrated on a throne-seat of *udumbara* wood, connoting strength. The knee-high throne (*_sand_*) stands with two of its feet on the northern altar and two on the southern (*_B* 12.8.3.5f). In Rome (DH 3.22.8) the two original altars remain in situ and the ritual beam extends above them, fixed in two opposed walls.

38. *Morale of goodies fluctuates*. Implicitly, Indra starts off supreme. As *Tri_iras'* power grows, Indra becomes desperate, and admits his fear to the nymphs. When their seduction attempt fails, his morale seems to revive: he is determined and sagacious. However, after blasting *Tri_iras*, he is "set afire" by the latter's splendour and needs the aid of the humble woodcutter; he admits to being distraught and frightened. After the beheading, freed from his fever, he goes to heaven happy again. Similar ups and downs will continue in part B.

In Rome the fluctuations affect not so much Tullus as Horatius and the people. At first both sets of triplets are keen to fight (*feroces*). When the first two Horatii fall,

the watching Roman army is reduced to despair; when they see Horatius surrounded by the three Albans they fear the worst. But when he separates the three and encounters the second, they raise a cheer, and when he encounters the third he himself is elated (*ferox* again). The Roman rejoicing was all the greater for their earlier approach to despair. But having risen so rapidly, Horatius is now fated to fall (DH): as sister-killer he is at risk of capital punishment. Already at the start of the battle DH had commented on its dramatic turns of fortune (*peripéteia*).

39. *Goody leader/champion experiences abrupt role reversal.* Indra, leader of the goody devas, temporarily loses that role and becomes a powerless outsider, partner of an unfortunate female and corresponding (surprisingly) to the Curiatius lover. Horatius, triumphant champion of the goodies, temporarily loses that role and becomes persecutor of an unfortunate female and defendant in a public trial. Perhaps the abrupt role change, confusing as it is to the student, helps explain the confusion Livy mentions (1.24.1) whereby some of his sources reversed the triplet names, calling the baddy Albans Horatii.

40. *One year gap separates parts A and B.* After killing Tri_iras Indra seizes the guilt of murder with his hand, and bears it for one year (*Tait.Sam_hit_2.5.1*).⁸ After the rituals Tullus lets a year pass before he attacks the Fidenates (DH).

41. *Part B focuses on individual Baddy.* After Tri_iras' death Tvas,t,r, produces a successor, Vr,tra or Namuci, who is in no sense multiple. After the death of the Curiatii, it is the Fidenates, not the Albans, who oppose the Romans on the battlefield, but they only do so when manipulated by Mettius, who is the real villain. In Livy he alone of the Albans is killed by Tullus. In A Mettius behaved acceptably, following *recta consilia*; in B he becomes a vicious traitor (*pravis sc. consiliis*).

⁸ It is then distributed, without mention of a horse sacrifice, between earth, trees and women.

42. *Baddy initiates hostilities.* Tvas,t,r, creates Vr,tra by touching water and making offerings into the fire, and tells him first to grow and then to kill Indra. A battle soon ensues. Livy clearly ascribes the outbreak of war to the machinations of Mettius. DH starts by apparently ascribing it to Tullus, but later (3.23.3, 9) we see that Mettius gets the Fidenates to take the first step.

43. *Baddy leader pursues hostilities in B via surrogates.* Tvas,t,r, uses Vr,tra to oppose Indra. Mettius uses Fidenae to oppose Rome (cf. §10).

44. *Early advantage of baddies.* B begins with Vr,tra angrily swallowing Indra. The gods create the yawn, Vr,tra yawns, Indra escapes, and the battle restarts. Gaining strength from his father's austerities, Vr,tra forces Indra to retreat. Mettius and his forces are posted on one wing, from which he then withdraws uphill, giving Rome's enemy an advantage.

45. *Goodies frightened.* When they approach Vishnu for help, the gods and seers are terrified. With his flank suddenly unprotected, Tullus finds himself in a fearful situation, *in re trepida*.

46. *Goodies seek and receive divine help.* When the gods and seers praise Vishnu and seek his aid, the god duly responds. Tullus vows to establish twelve Salian priests, no doubt to Quirinus, as well as the shrine for the two gods Pallor and Pavor ('Panic').⁹

47. *Conflict B involves agreement.* Responding to the gods and seers, Vishnu suggests first making a pact with Vr,tra and then killing him. According to the pact, Vr,tra may not be killed by dry matter or wet, by day or night, etc.

The treaty between Tullus and Mettius is very different in many ways. It is made in A, before the battle of the triplets; it is about fighting (initially) and

supremacy (thereafter), only partly about mutual peace; and it is first proposed by the Baddies (DH), not by a god who supports the Goodies. Nevertheless it is a formal agreement between the two parties, and as relevant to B as to A.

48. *During B one side chafes under agreement.* Although the pact makes Vishnu happy, Indra is resentful and alert for ways to break it. After the triplets' defeat Mettius obeys the treaty and asks for orders from Tullus; but the Albans resent his earlier decision to entrust their fate to the triplets and, to stay in office, the dictator turns to guile.

In India it is the goody who is resentful, in Rome the baddy, and this reversal affects § 49. Perhaps Roman tradition has projected onto baddies dishonorable motifs that originally belonged to the goodies – the converse change in India seems less plausible.

49. *Agreement circumvented or broken.* Indra sees his opening when Vr,tra is on the sea shore one evening. It is neither night nor day, and sea foam is neither wet nor dry. He throws the mountain-like mass of froth together with his bolt, and Vishnu enters the foam and kills Vr,tra. While following the letter of the pact, Indra has ignored its spirit.

Under the terms of the treaty, Alba should recognise Rome's supremacy and support its interests. Instead, Mettius incites the Fidenates against Rome and undertakes to change sides during the battle.

50. *Hypocrisy of baddy.* When Tri_iras was priest of the gods, he served them publicly (pratyaks,a, the asuras privately (paroks,a). In B Mettius behaves publicly like a faithful subject of Tullus, bringing troops to fight Fidenae; but privately he has promised to betray Rome. In fact his dishonesty runs deeper still: he

⁹ Or for Cronos and Rhea (i.e. Saturn and Ops) according to DH, who locates the event in the war

reneges on his promise to the Fidenates. In comparison, the trickery of Tullus is venial: after the battle he summons Mettius to a ritual assembly, as if he regards the treaty as still in force, and only then exposes him.

51. *Unique death of baddy in B.* Vr,tra/Namuci is killed by foam. Mettius is torn apart by chariots – a unique punishment in Roman history, as Livy emphasises.

52. *Death involves bisection.* When Vr,tra was blasted with Indra’s bolt, he was ‘split’ or ‘torn asunder’ (*dr,r*, 12.274.57). Elsewhere (_B 1.6.3.16f), when he is struck (for the first time?), he lies shrunken like an empty leather bottle or skin bag. He asks not to be annihilated: “Only cut me in twain”. Indra does so, and of the two parts one is associated with soma and is made into the moon, while the other, associated with asuras, becomes people’s belly.

Mettius is torn in two because he divided his loyalty between Fidenae and Rome, between baddies and goodies.

53. *Pre-mortem terror of baddies.* Of old, Vr,tra owned the three superior Vedas. Vishnu stood beside Indra as he raised his thunderbolt to strike. In his fear, hoping to avoid the blow, Vr,tra gives up the Vedas one by one (_B 5.5.5.1-5). At the final assembly, Tullus exposes the traitor and asks if he can plead any defence (DH). When the unabashed Mettius calls on the Albans for help, Tullus threatens them with immediate death. The potential defenders cower in fear.

54. *Goodies need purification.* After killing Vr,tra, Indra suffers from his double burden of guilt (Krishna’s version) and withdraws from his throne to the distant lake, until cleansed by the horse sacrifice. Alternatively, after beheading Namuci, Indra needs to be purified by the Sautr_man,_ (_B 12.7.1.10ff). After

against the Sabines after Mettius’ death (3.24.4).

defeating the Fidenates, Tullus plans for the next day a sacrifice of purification (*lustrale*). It is not in fact described, unless the death of Mettius is seen as a sacrifice.

55. *Goody is away from home and close to water.* Indra has withdrawn to his distant lake. Coming from Rome, Tullus crosses the Anio River and camps close to its confluence with the Tiber.

56. *Destruction of baddies' base.* When Vr,tra hands over the Vedas (which become the sacrificial offering), Indra 'shatters, grasps, and tears out' Vr,tra's seat or retreat. Tullus orders the systematic demolition of Alba, except for its temples, and the orders are carried out by his legions.

57. *Transfer of loyalty from baddy to goody.* While Nahus,a still reigns, Agni guides Br,haspati and the gods to Indra, who gains strength from their praise. Four of them are urged by Indra to change sides from Nahus,a to himself and agree to do so. The Alban evacuees are absorbed into the population of Rome.

58. *Those transferring receive rewards and roles.* Some of the gods who visit Indra ask for and receive rewards. Agni too will henceforth receive offerings in recognition of his help.

At the assembly Tullus offers citizenship to the Alban commoners and senatorial rank to the nobles. New housing is provided together with allotment of public land and positions in the Roman army (DH). The Albans are not in a position to request rewards for their change of loyalty, but they receive them nonetheless.

59. *Unexpected demoralisation of goody.* One might expect that after killing both his enemies Indra would be triumphant. Instead, he hides in the waters writhing like a snake, or using a yogic skill he shrinks in size and enters the fibres of a lotus stalk (12.329.28).¹⁰

¹⁰ So as to be reborn from it like a baby?

After absorbing the Albans, Tullus runs a successful campaign against the Sabines, bringing the Roman state to a high point of success. But then, after some portents, Rome suffers from a plague which at last Tullus himself contracts. His warlike spirit is broken (*fracti spiritus feroces*), and shortly before his death he suddenly devotes himself to religion.¹¹

60. *Portents*. When Indra departs for his lake, nature goes awry and a severe drought ensues: “The entire world is beset by disasters.” Moreover (Krishna’s version), religion is threatened and the Vedas are about to vanish. Order is only restored when the new king Nahus,a is appointed. Tullus’s reign is not without such events: after the victory over the Sabines, all seems well until a worrying rain of stones falls on the Alban mountain.¹² A voice from its summit demands the holding of a ritual, which lasts nine days.

61. *Illness of goody leader*. In _alya’s version Indra suffers from fever. When Tri_iras is felled, his splendour ‘sets Indra on fire’, and Indra is twice said to lose his fever – once when Tri_iras is beheaded, once when Brahmahaty_ is dispersed.¹³ Compare the plague which afflicts Tullus.

62. *Involvement of fire*. When _ac_ returns the first time from Nahus,a to Br,haspati, the gods, headed by Agni (= Fire), consult Vishnu about restoring Indra. When she returns again after requesting the chariot of sages, Br,haspati agrees to find Indra. He makes offerings to the Fire, and Agni himself appears. Agni’s first search of the cosmos for Indra fails, but he admits not having entered the waters. Spurred on by Br,haspati’s praise, he goes again and succeeds. Returning, he apparently guides

¹¹ Tullus’s first act on accession was a land distribution (DH 3.1.4-5). After a reign mostly devoted to war, the final turning to religion suggests a trifunctional set of episodes (F3,2,1).

¹² Portents, including falling meteors (*ulk_h*), also occur just before the death of Vr,tra (12.273.3).

¹³ In Bh_s,ma’s version it is the *baddy* Vr,tra, who is afflicted by a fever caused by _iva.

the gods to Indra, who duly rewards him (§58). Agni is mentioned first among the gods who accompany Indra back to wife and throne.

When Tullus turns to religion he attempts an occult rite for Jupiter Elicius, but in doing so he angers the god, is struck by a thunderbolt, and together with his house is consumed by fire. Though fire is involved in both stories, its role is quite different, and arguably, qua victim of illness (cf. note 13) and bolt, Tullus is here closer to Vr,tra than to Indra (in one version Vr,tra actually enters Indra's body before being killed – 14.11.17).

63. *Vacancy for king and temporary appointment.* Indra's departure left the throne vacant and the cosmos responded adversely. Likewise the denizens of heaven: the gods are afraid, but none of them wants the post. They induce Nahus,a to accept it by granting him the power to extract splendour from those he sees. But his tenure proves temporary.

When Tullus dies, power reverts to the senators, who appoint the temporary *interrex*. The latter holds an assembly, which elects the new king, Ancus, grandson of Numa. If this rapprochement is justified, Nahus,a conflates features that Roman tradition distributes between Horatius the persecutor and the unnamed *interrex*.

64. *Definitive successor engineers vacancy.* Operating from his lake, Indra engineers the abuse of power which (automatically, as it seems) topples Nahus,a.¹⁴ According to many annalists (DH), Ancus assassinated Tullus and his family, then set light to the house and spread the rumour about the thunderbolt.

¹⁴ The sage Agastya comes to the lake and reports Nahus,a's fall, ascribing it to three sins. (i) Nahus,a despoiled the pure *brahman* that was uttered by the ancients and has been observed by the brahman seers – a religious sin (F1). (ii) He touched Agastya on the head with his foot – an act of symbolic violence (F2). (iii) He made the unassailable seers, the likes of Brahm_, beasts of burden to carry him about, using them as if they were domestic animals, who often represent F3 (?).

Having examined the two stories in some detail, we can now take a more abstract view.

65. *Goody leader analysable as second-functional.* As is well known, Dumézil puts in parallel three quartets, the ‘canonical’ Vedic gods, the early Roman kings, and the canonical Roman gods.

F1	Varun,a, Mitra	Romulus, Numa	Jupiter, Fides (or Dius Fidius)
F2	Indra	Tullus	Mars
F3	A_vins	Ancus	Quirinus

We need not here summarise the arguments for this view, support Dumézil’s reading of Ancus (sometimes judged controversial), or repeat the four-functional interpretations given in my previous papers. The latter approach readily endorses the second-function reading of both Indra and Tullus, while stressing that in other contexts Indra represents the valued aspect of the fourth function.

66. *Story associated with triple animal sacrifice.* As we saw (§35), the Sanskrit myth is the charter for Indra’s Sautr_man,_ ritual, and a comparable ritual is performed by the Horatii. But qua representative of the second function, Tullus is implicitly linked with Mars, the recipient of the *suovetaurilia* ritual. As its name suggests, this ritual involves the sacrifice of three animals – pig, sheep, bull, in ascending rank – and Dumézil (1947:117-158) convincingly compares the set with the goat, sheep, bull of the Sautr_man,_ . However, no *direct* evidence links Tullus with Mars or his ritual.

67. *Baddies more or less conform with four-function theory.* The fourth function pertains to what is other, outside or beyond, relative to the core functions, and has a positive and a negative aspect. Let us reflect on the following table.

<i>row</i>	<i>Indian baddies</i>	<i>Roman baddies</i>	<i>hypothetical function</i>
1	Hiran,yaka_ipu / Tvas,t,r,	Cluilius/Mettius A	F4+
2	Tri_iras head 1	Curiatius 1	F1
3	” ” 2	” 2	F2
4	” ” 3	” 3	F3
5	Vr,tra	Fidenates/Mettius B	F4-

In each baddy column the central homogeneous triad is bracketed by the two heterogeneous entries. Among the latter the leaders (F4+) outrank those they create, command or manipulate. In part A Mettius behaves reasonably well, and it is only in B that he comes to represent evil incarnate.¹⁵ Tvas,t,r, creating Vr,tra by ritual means parallels Mettius inciting the Fidenates, but both F4- entities in some sense preexist the story and survive it: Vr,tra is merely the current representative of the asuras and the Fidenates are merely the current generation from that Etruscan city. Nahus,a can be ignored since, although presumably a Baddy, he has no link with Tvas,t,r, or asuras.

The main question is whether the central triads conform to the three functions. Tri_iras' three faces resemble the sun, moon and fire (presumably differentially), but little can be made of this: it may explain why his splendour sets Indra afire, but it does not answer our question. More interestingly, as we learn when Tri_iras is first introduced, “With one mouth he studied the Vedas, with one he drank wine, and with one face he looked as though swallowing all of space.” Moreover, when the woodcutter cut off the heads, “From the mouth with which he had studied the Vedas and drunk the soma, heathcocks swiftly flew away. Partridges flew out of the mouth

which had made him look as if he were swallowing all of space... From the mouth of Tri_iras with which he used to drink liquor sparrows flew away” (van Buitenen 1978:202f.).

Vedic ritual texts add only a little (_B 1.6.3.2-5, 5.5.4.3-6, *Tait. Br.* 2.5.1). One mouth drinks soma, another alcohol and the third is for other food. The birds are as before, but the partridge is “exceedingly variegated: ghee drops indeed have, as it were, dropped on his wings in one place, and honey drops, as it were, in another; for suchlike was the food he consumed with that” (third mouth) (Eggeling 1963 Vol. III:130).

Vishnu’s epic version diverges a bit more. When Tri_iras is angered by the departure of the nymphs, “with one of his mouths he began to drink all the soma that Brahmans engaged in sacrifices poured on their sacred fires with due rites. With a second mouth he began to eat all food (...). With his third mouth he began to drink up the energy of all the deities with Indra at their head” (trans. Ganguli, but CE 12.329.4 has different readings).

Lists in Sanskrit typically follow descending rank order, so the first head mentioned is probably the highest-ranking; but it is also the head that regularly drinks soma, and once chants Vedas. Such brahmanic actions strongly suggest the first function.

The order of the remaining heads is variable, but let us take the alcohol-drinking one. Alcohol is unpropitious to brahmans (*A_vins*, _B 12.8.1.5), and usually prohibited to them, whereas it is more appropriate to warriors. Its religious inferiority to soma is constantly emphasised: thus, where soma is truth, prosperity and light, alcohol (*sur_*) is untruth, misery and darkness (_B 5.1.2.10). Moreover, it originated

¹⁵ The appearance of Mettius in both halves of the function may belong with the many other arguments

when Indra drank too much of Tvas,t,r,'s soma and collapsed, creations of various sorts flowing from his body parts. Raw liquor flowed from his penis, *sur_* (the matured spirit) from his hips (*_B* 12.7.1.7). So this is a non-Brahmanic drink, inferior to the Brahmanic one and created from the warrior god. The head which drinks it could well be second-functional.

The remaining head tends to stand apart as eater rather than drinker, just as the third function tends to stand apart from its two immediate superiors. Nourishment is included as such in the fullest definition of the third function (Dumézil 1958:19), but since nourishment must include drink, the argument is not compelling. Interestingly too, the speckling on the relevant bird, the partridge, resembles the luxurious foods ghee and honey, and, as Dumézil once suggested (1975:126), soma, *sur_* and honey-based mead (the drink of the *A_vins*) may have correlated with the functions. Though these points are only suggestive, the third head *may* be third-functional.¹⁶ If so, *Tri_iras* gets his brahmanhood from his first head, which outweighs the others.

From the extant texts, the *Curiatii* triplets cannot be interpreted as trifunctional, though of course they may once have conformed to that pattern (cf. Allen 2000).

68. *Goodies show five-element pattern comparable to baddies'*. For four elements this is obvious: Indra plus three *_ptya* brothers parallels Tullus plus Horatii triplets, and the two kings qualify as valued fourth-functional. But perhaps the fifth slot is also fillable – with Tvas,t,r, and *Mettius*. In most other mythic contexts Tvas,t,r, is treated as an ordinary and respectable deity, but his occupation as artisan reminds one of the devalued craftsmen who in the caste system represent F4- (Allen

for keeping them together and not recognising a fifth function.

¹⁶ The three birds issuing from *Tri_iras*' severed necks can be linked analytically to the high-crested cocks born from the blood of *Vr,tra* and thereafter regarded as unclean (12.273.58). The uncleanness (as of untouchables) fits well with *Vr,tra* as F4-.

1999:253ff). Similarly, as we saw, Mettius in A is presented as a respectable treaty partner who could be an ally against the real enemy of Fidenae, but at the same time, from a Roman point of view, he is throughout a devalued outsider.

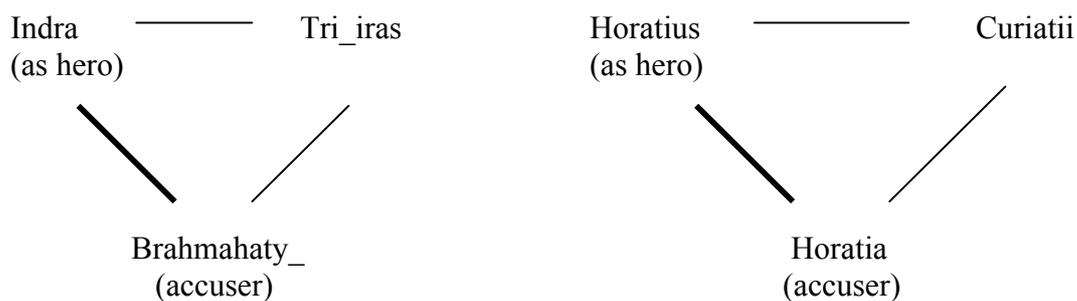
However, for complete comparability at least one of the core triads should conform with the three functions. I cannot here explore the *_ptyas* (or the *Trita-A_vin* relationship), but both sets of triplets are indeed described by DH in terms that cover the functions: they are noble and aristocratic by birth and in attitude (*psukh_s gennaiót_s*) – just about F1; good in battle and distinguished for their strength (*r_m_*) – F2; and particularly attractive physically (*kálllos*) – F3. However, these qualities are ascribed to the triplets in general, not allotted differentially; it is as if each one of *Tri_iras*' heads drank soma and wine and ate a lot. Secondly, when Mettius argues that three protagonists, not one, are needed to settle a contest between states, this *might* suggest that states are somehow triadic, but his own justification is that an argument has three elements, a beginning, middle and end (DH 3.12.3f). So although the goodies share a pattern in East and West, one cannot affirm that it is a *functional* pattern.

As we noted at the start, Dumézil attributed the similarities he detected between the stories of Indra and Tullus to their both being expressions of the Indo-European ideological heritage; more precisely, the stories expressed that portion of the heritage that focused on the second function.¹⁷ As for the narrative detail in which the ideas were expressed, the differences seemed to him too large to imply a common origin in proto-Indo-European myth: “Mettius n’a certainement jamais été un démon comme Namuci, non plus que les Curiaces un monstre tricéphale!” (1985:62). Here,

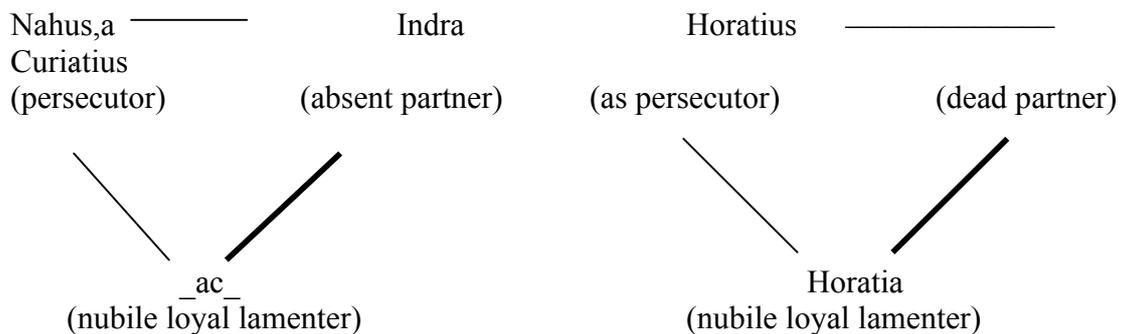
however, the great comparativist was too cautious. The differences are outweighed by the nearly seventy similarities identified above.

If one works through the list of titles of rapprochements, it is difficult to extract any simple formula to sum up the comparison as a whole. The single rapprochement that surprised me most was that linking the throne-seat of *udumbara* wood with the *sororium tigillum* (§37), but probably the most important ones for the argument as a whole are not individual details of that kind but rather strategic or structural rapprochements such as link either blocks of narrative (§7, linking A and B) or other roles (§31, the facilitator). In the absence of any simple formula, here is a diagram which sums up many of the complexities of the comparison.

(i)



(ii)



¹⁷ The story of Indra's three (trifunctional) sins is not relevant here since it is not paralleled in the story of Tullus. Tullus's three triumphs (DH) may form a trifunctional set (Briquel 1997), but the reading of the second as F2 is doubtful.

The two triangles under (i) relate to much that was covered in rapprochements 11-21, while the pair under (ii) relate similarly to 22-33. Comparable triangular structures must have been present in the proto-narrative.

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