

## Ancient Iranian Cosmogonies

### 1. Avestan: Vīdēvdād 19.35

Zarathuštra proclaimed my word: "I invoke the righteous creation, created by the Wise Lord. I invoke the earth, created by the Lord, the water, created by the Wise one, and the righteous plant. I invoke the Vourukaša Sea. I invoke the radiant sky. I invoke the endless lights, self-created.

vaxšəm mē asašat zaraθuštrō. Nizbayemi ahurō mazdā ašava dāmidātəm nizbayemi zaṃ ahuraδātəm āpəm mazdaδātəm urvarəṃ ašanonīm nizbayemi zrayō vourukašəm nizbayemi asmanəm xvanvantəm nizbayemi anayra raocā xvaδātā.

### 2. Pahlavi: Greater Bundahišn 1A.4

First created by him was the sky, which one calls "the first," for the purpose of holding-back. Second, he created water for smiting the demon "Thirst." Third, he created earth, (which is) all corporeality. Fourth, he created the Plant, in order to help the beneficent animal. Fifth, he created the Animal in order to help the righteous Man. Sixth, he created the Righteous Man for the destruction and inactivity of the Evil Spirit and all the demons. Then he created fire, and the brilliance of its ember, which comes from the endless light, is connected to its good form, according to the fire's desire. Then he created the wind, in the form of a man fifteen years of age, who bears and preserves water and plant and animal and righteous man and everything.

u-š nazdist asmān <ud> dād pad abāz dāršnīh hast kē fradōm gōwēd. dudigar āb dād pad zadan tišn drūz sidigar zamīg dād harwisp astōmandīh cahārōm urwar dād ō ayārīh ī gōspand hudāg pañjōm ō gōspand ayārīh ī mard ī ahlaw šašōm mard ī ahlaw dād ō zadārīh ud agārīh ī Gannāg Mēnōg ud hamist dēwān u-š pas ataxš dād xwarg u-š brāh az asar rōšnīh awiš paywast ēdōn kirb weh ciyōn ataxš kāmāg u-š pas wād brēhēnīd pad mard kirb gušn ī 15 sālag kē ēn āb ud urwar ud gōspand ud mard ī ahlaw harw tis-ē barēd dārēd.

### 3. Achaemenian: Darius, inscription at Naqš-ī Rostam §1

A great god is the Wise Lord, who created this earth, who created that sky, who created mankind, who created happiness for mankind, who made Darius king: one king over many, one commander over many.

baga vazrka Auramazdā, haya imām būmīm adā, haya avam asmānam adā, haya martiyam adā, haya šiyātīm adā martiyahyā, haya Dārayavaum xšāyaθiyam akunauš, aivam parūnām xšāyaθiyam, aivam parūnām framātāram.

### 4. Scythian: Herodotus 4.5

The Scythians say they are the youngest of all peoples and this is how it came to be so. A first man was born in this country, which was uninhabited. His name was Targitaos. The parents of this Targitaos, they say – saying things that aren't credible to me – were Zeus and the daughter of the river Borysthenes. This was the lineage from which Targitaos was born and of him were born three sons: Lipoxais, Arpoxais, and Kolaxais, the youngest. In the time of their reign, golden products fell from the sky: a plow and also a yoke, a Scythian sword, and a libation cup fell to Scythia. Seeing these first, the oldest went close, planning to take them, but as he approached, the gold burst into flame. When he had departed, the second son

approached the gold, and it flared up again. And when the flaming gold had repelled them, the fire was extinguished at the approach of the third and youngest son, and he carried it off as his own. The older brothers then accepted that the kingship be handed over to the youngest.

Ὡς δὲ Σκύθαι λέγουσι νεώτατον πάντων ἐθνέων εἶναι τὸ σφέτερον, τοῦτο δὲ γενέσθαι ὧδε. ἄνδρα γενέσθαι πρῶτον ἐν τῇ γῆ ταύτῃ ἐούσῃ ἐρήμῳ τῷ οὐνομα εἶναι Ταργιτάον· τοῦ δὲ Ταργιτάου τούτου τοὺς τοκέας λέγουσι εἶναι, ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐ πιστὰ λέγοντες, λέγουσι δ' ὧν, Δία τε καὶ Βορυσθένης τοῦ ποταμοῦ θυγατέρα. γένεος μὲν τοιούτου δὴ τινος γενέσθαι τὸν Ταργιτάον, τούτου δὲ γενέσθαι παῖδας τρεῖς, Λιπόξαϊν καὶ Ἀρπόξαϊν καὶ νεώτατον Κολάξαϊν. ἐπὶ τούτων ἀρχόντων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ φερόμενα χρύσεια ποιήματα, ἄροτρον τε καὶ ζυγὸν καὶ σάγαριν καὶ φιάλην, πεσεῖν ἐς τὴν Σκυθικήν· καὶ τῶν ἰδόντα πρῶτον τὸν πρεσβύτατον ἄσσον ἰέναι βουλόμενον αὐτὰ λαβεῖν, τὸν δὲ χρυσὸν ἐπιόντος καίεσθαι· ἀπαλλαχθέντος δὲ τούτου προσιέναι τὸν δεύτερον καὶ τὸν αὐτίς ταῦτα ποιέειν. Τοὺς μὲν δὴ καιόμενον τὸν χρυσὸν ἀπώσασται, τρίτῳ δὲ τῷ νεωτάτῳ ἐπελθόντι κατασβῆναι, καὶ μιν ἐκεῖνον κομίσει ἐς ἑωυτοῦ· καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἀδελφεοὺς πρὸς ταῦτα συγγόντας τὴν βασιληίην πᾶσαν παραδοῦναι τῷ νεωτάτῳ.