The Smith, the Cow, and the Stars
Excursions in English and Comparative Mythology

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Résumé : Un certain nombre de sources médiévales en langues germaniques (y compris le vieil anglais, le vieux norrois et le moyen haut allemand) donnent des éléments de ce qui semble être un cycle de légendes multigénérationnelles impliquant une femme aquatique (appelée Wachilt en allemand), son fils un géant (appelé Wade en anglais), le fils de celui-ci, un forgeron magique (Wieland en allemand, Wayland en anglais, Galand en vieux français), et le fils du forgeron, un guerrier (Wittige en allemand). En Angleterre, en particulier, des histoires de ce cycle continuent d'être racontées en relation avec certains monuments antiques : le tumulus néolithique des Berkshire Downs connu sous le nom de Wayland's Smithy, le site d'exploits miraculeux impliquant des fers à cheval ; la voie « romaine » Watling Street, nom aussi utilisé pour la Voie lactée, ici interprété comme route du fils de Wade ; et la chaussée de Wade dans le Yorkshire, construite par Wade pour que sa femme Bell n'aie les pieds boueux lorsqu'elle va traire sa vache géante. Tous ces éléments ont des éléments qui semblent refléter des modèles plus larges de mythes, en particulier dans les traditions de langue celtique : ici aussi, il existe des liens entre une super-vache magique, un forgeron surnaturel et la Voie lactée. Cet article, inspiré en particulier d'une promenade avec Nick Allen à Wayland's Smithy, cherche à établir ces parallèles et ces connexions et, en présentant des éléments venant d'autres traditions de langue indo-européenne, propose ce qui pourrait être un fragment de géocosmomythopoétique indo-européenne commune.
Mots-clés : forgeron, mythologie, Angleterre, celtique, Voie lactée.

Abstract : A number of medieval sources in Germanic languages (including Old English, Old Norse, and Middle High German) give pieces of what appears to be a multigenerational cycle of legends involving a water-woman (called Wachilt in German), her son a giant (called Wade in English), his son a magical blacksmith (Wieland in German, Wayland in English, Galand in Old French), and the smith's son, a warrior (Wittige in German). In England, in particular, stories from this cycle continue to be told in relation to some ancient monuments: the Neolithic barrow on the Berkshire Downs known as Wayland's Smithy, the site of miraculous feats of horseshoeing; the "Roman Road" Watling Street, a name also used for the Milky Way, here interpreted as the street of Wade's son; and Wade's Causeway in Yorkshire, built by Wade so his wife Bell wouldn't get her feet muddy when she went to milk her giant cow. All of these have elements that seem to reflect wider patterns of myth, particularly in Celtic-language traditions: here too there are connections among a magic super-cow, a supernatural smith, and the Milky Way. This paper, inspired particularly by a walk with Nick Allen to Wayland's Smithy, seeks to lay out these parallels and connections and, adducing comparable patterns from some other Indo-European traditions, proposes what might be a piece of common Indo-European geocosmomythopoetics.
Keywords : blacksmith, mythology, England, Celtic, Milky Way.

Out of the old fields, as men sayth,
Commeth all this new corn, fro yere to yere:
And out of old books, in good fayth,
Commeth all this new science that men lere.

Thomas Speght, title page of *The Workes of our Antient and Learned English Poet,* Geffrey Chaucer, 1598

Une dissertation sur un conte populaire pourra paraître, au premier abord, une chose futile. Cependant…
G.B. Depping, Préface to Depping and Michel 1833, p. v.

A walk along the Ridgeway

In July of 2012, some members of my family and I had the pleasure of taking a walk with Nick Allen. This was my second such excursion (the first was to the top of Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh), and, as other friends have remembered, these walks with Nick, a serious hiker and mountaineer, were always a joy. We met Nick for lunch at his college at Oxford, then drove to the vicinity of the Uffington White Horse, parked, and set out along the Ridgeway, skirting the Berkshire Downs, for a couple of kilometers. The goal was Wayland's Smithy, a Neolithic barrow-grave associated with the mythical blacksmith Wayland, located in the parish of Ashbury.[1]

My own interest in Wayland[2] was one node in a rhizome of associations. For some decades, and in a desultory way, I had been pursuing apparent parallels among stories of bovines, particularly in traditions of the Indo-European language family.[3] Some of these traditions include tales of a hyperbolic cow—a superabundant and/or gigantic and/or incredibly beautiful and/or intensely coveted cow;[4] of the terrible consequences of stealing such a cow; and/or

1. For other localities named after Wayland, see Philippson, 1929, p. 72-73.

2. There is a considerable literature on Wayland and his German, Scandinavian, and Romance cognates. Maurus 1902 is a survey of sources. Besides the primary sources, see Depping, 1822, 1823; Depping and Michel, 1833; T. Wright, 1847; Grimm, 1875 (1882), p. 376-383; Rydberg, 1886 (2010), 1889 (2010); Ellis Davidson, 1958; Grimstad, 1983; Maillefer, 1997; Boyer, 2003; Beckmann, 2004. Nedoma, 1988, presents both the textual and the iconographic material. A number of German plays, and an unfinished opera of Richard Wagner's, tell the story of Wieland der Schmied. One of Wagner's grandsons was named Wieland.

3. On Indo-European cow mythology, see Lincoln, 1976, 1981; Leavitt, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2007; McDonald, 2004, 2006, 2014, 2015; Merceron, 2020.

4. Leavitt, 2007.

of cattle as the stakes in cosmic struggles. And in some of these stories, the remarkable cow is linked, directly or indirectly, to a smith.

Parallels among cow tales are many and striking, and some of them make intuitive sense. Domesticated bovines and milk products were central to the economies of most early Indo-European-speaking societies,[5] and, it would appear, to that of the speakers of Proto-Indo-European,[6] and have remained central in some to the present day. Some themes may be expected to be found in any cattle-complex society, and so also in these. But in following these tracks, I have repeatedly come across connections that make less intuitive sense and so are better candidates for being understood as concordances indicating a common origin. One of these is that repeatedly, the story of the cow involves a maker, a smith and/or builder, the cow's creator or legitimate owner or close relation or associate of the owner—or, indeed, of the villain who steals the cow; in some cases, the story of a divine smith features an apparently incidental cow. This is a rather odd concatenation that comes up over and over again. Another such connection is that, again, the cow, and sometimes the smith or a close relation of his,[7] is linked to a celestial phenomenon, usually the Milky Way.

I have continued to follow some of these linkages since the walk. My goal here, in fond remembrance of that summer afternoon's ramble, is simply to lay out the material suggesting old associations among these themes. Readers of *New Comparative Mythology* will probably be familiar with the principles of historical linguistics[8] and its extension, by Dumézil and others, to comparative mythology and poetics.[9] But I will give one methodological note here. The age of attestation of a document does not necessarily equal its closeness to an earlier form. In linguistics, a famous case is that of Lithuanian, recorded only since the sixteenth century but preserving many archaic Indo-European features. In mythological and other material, relatively recent documents, written or transcribed from singers and storytellers, sometimes contain elements we would predict—or retrodict—to have been present in very early forms, and which we can only imagine to have been maintained in oral tradition.

In Nick Allen's words:

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5. E.g., Srinivasan, 1979; Lucas, 1989; Kelly, 2000; Foltz, 2010.

6. Adams and Mallory, 1997, p. 365; 2005; Mallory and Adams, 2006, p. 153, 265.

7. While there have been, and today are, female blacksmiths (see, for instance, https://workingtheflame.com/female-blacksmiths-in-history/), not to mention gold- and silversmiths, and while goddesses and female saints sometimes patronize smithwork, the legendary figures I am discussing here, with one exception, are invariably male. The exception is the Irish goddess Brigit, "the woman of smithcraft" (see below).

8. E.g., Meillet, 1925; Hoenigswald, 1960.

9. Littleton, 1983; Watkins, 1995; Colarusso, 1998; West, 2007.

> Other things being equal, one assumes that form and contents go together, so that an earlier text contains ideas current at an earlier period and a later text from the same tradition contains ideas that, in so far as they differ from the earlier ones, were developed later. But once comparison enters the picture, other things are seldom equal. When a later text contains an idea or theme that is strikingly similar to one in another branch of the same tradition, then the common origin explanation needs consideration *even if the idea is absent from the earlier texts*. The earlier absence can be explained in several ways... But whatever the explanation, ideas can bypass earlier texts to surface in later ones.[10]

So while the presence of an element in an early text is proof of its presence in the ideology of that time and place, its absence from any text is not proof of its absence from the society. There are many reasons it may have been present but not recorded, to emerge in the available records hundreds, or indeed thousands, of years later.

Some of what is offered here is speculative, and some of it requires special pleading. It was, in fact, an overenthusiastic connection of gods and heroes with bovines that provoked Georges Dumézil to remark: "il n'y a pas de limites à de tels glissements".[11] Here I have kept a number of these *glissements* in, even if I have not been able to firm them up as much as would otherwise have been desired, as if sharing them with a friend on a walk.

I will briefly present the figure of Wayland the smith and stories around him and his relations. Here and throughout, I will looking not only at stories of the smith/builders themselves, but also at those that are part of their "cycle",[12] i.e., their immediate antecedents and successors, which in the Indo-European cases is usually a figure in the same lineage, father, mother, or son; then sketch what appears to be a fairly coherent figure of the smith in Indo-European traditions and his connection to cows; and finish with a brief discussion of links to the Milky Way and a longer argument on whether Wayland can be connected to it. Our itinerary will start in England, move out into comparative studies, and then return.

Wayland's Bones

Wayland's Smithy, historically in Berkshire, now in Oxfordshire with the redrawing of boundaries, is a Neolithic burial site, a long barrow first established around 3600 BCE, so several centuries before the first levels of Stonehenge and contemporaneous with the beginnings of agriculture in Britain.

The earliest written notice of the formation, a charter of King Eadred from 955 CE (Sawyer number 564), already identifies it as Wayland's Smithy (*þæt wide*

10. Allen, 2005, p. 61-62.
11. Dumézil, 1952 [1973], p. 101, n. 35.
12. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, 1955.

geat be eastan Welandes smiððan). Two prehistoric iron bars, called "currency bars", were found there in a 1921 excavation, leading to suggestions that these might have been payment for a smith.[13]

Wayland's Smithy is mentioned in reports by what we might call field antiquarians from the sixteenth century on. The legend still attached to it is first documented in Francis Wise's *Letter to Dr Mead on the Antiquities of Berkshire:*[14]

> Whether this remarkable piece of Antiquity ever bore the name of the person here buried, is not now to be learned. All the account which the country people are able to give of it is 'At this place lived formerly an invisible Smith, and if a traveller's Horse had lost a Shoe upon the road, he had no more to do than to bring the Horse to this place with a piece of money, and leaving both there for some little time, he might come again and find the money gone, but the Horse new shod.' The stones standing upon the *Rudge-way* as it is called; (which was the situation, that they chose for burial monuments) I suppose, gave occasion to the whole being called WAYLAND-SMITH: which is the name it was always known by to the country people.

The most famous use of the legend is in Sir Walter Scott's 1821 novel *Kenilworth*.[15] The Smithy is in one of the most mythologically focused territories of England, along the prehistoric route the Ridgeway and in the Valley of the White Horse, marked, since no one knows when, by the great figure of a horse cut into the chalk.

Wayland or Weland (the spelling of the name varies, but it is usually easy to recognize)[16] is one of the best-known figures in Germanic mythology, appearing in Old English, Norse, German, French, Flemish, and other sources. His name "most often appears as an appellative based on his role as the exemplary smith, an icon of smithdom".[17] That he has been known in England since Anglo-Saxon times is clear from some lines in the ninth-century Old English translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy* attributed to King Alfred himself. Boethius, in an *Ubi sunt?* passage about great figures of the past who are now no more,

13. Grinsell, 1939b, p. 137; Ellis Davidson, 1958.

14. 1738, p. 37.

15. In his alternative sort-of-England, Terry Pratchett has a barrow with a similar legend. It says that if you leave a coin and a horse overnight, in the morning both will be gone, "people there having more of a sense of humour": Pratchett and Simpson, 2008, p. 189.

16. Given the multiplicity of forms of the names of Wayland himself, his father, and his son, when it is not a question of citing a particular source I will be using the most common current English forms: Wayland, Wade, and Widia.

17. Osborn, 2019, p. 169.

asks (II, metrum 7), *Ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent* 'Where now lie the bones of faithful Fabricius?' The reference is to the third century BCE Roman general Gaius Fabricius, known for his honesty and probity. Presumably because the name Fabricius comes from the word *faber* 'smith', the Old English translation expands this line, replacing Fabricius with the presumably famous smith Weland, and renders it (my translation, checking a number of available translations):[18]

> Where are now wise Weland's bones,
> of the goldsmith who was most famous?
> I said of wise Weland's bones,
> for none may of earth-dwellers
> his craft lose that Christ has lent him...
> Who now knows wise Weland's bones
> in what mound lie on the earth?

That Wayland was the exemplary forger of arms is clear from other Old English sources, most notably *Beowulf*, where (ll. 450-455) he is credited with making the hero's armor (*Welandes geweorc*), and *Waldere* (Fragment 1, ll. 2-3), which praises the sword he has made (*Welande[s] worc*).

But Wayland also figures in his own set of narratives. As far as I have been able to tell, they are first referred to in words (as opposed to images; see below), in the Old English poem *Deor*, probably composed at the beginning of the tenth century (ll. 1-13, translation as above):

> Weland himself by worms[19] experienced wrack,
> the strong-minded noble endured troubles;
> he had for his companions sorrow and longing,
> wintercold wrack. He often found misery
> since on him Niðhad laid fetters,
> supple sinew-bonds on the better man.
> That was overcome, so may this be.
>
> Beadohild was not for her brothers' death
> so sore as for her own situation,
> that she had realized
> that she was pregnant; she could never
> think resolutely of how that should be.
> That was overcome, so may this be.

18. Unacknowledged translations are my own.

19. Marijane Osborn (2019) proposes that *be wurman* has nothing to do with worms or snakes or dragons, but refers to the city of Worms in the Rhineland.

These lines presuppose a story that would be laid out at greater length in German and Scandinavian literatures—in fact, Wayland's tale seems to have circulated throughout the early Germanic ecumene. The Old Norse *Vǫlundarkviða*, part of the *Poetic Edda*, which can be dated to the tenth or eleventh century,[20] tells the following tale, of which I give a very brief summary. Vǫlundr (= Wayland), Egil, and Slagfiðr were three brothers who met and married three Swanmaidens/Valkyries. After nine years, the women departed. Two of the brothers went to look for them, but Vǫlundr stayed home thinking his wife would return. King Niðuðr (= Niðhad in *Deor*), hearing of Vǫlundr's skill, captured him and, on the advice of his wife, hamstrung him so that he could not escape and set him to work. Vǫlundr murdered the king's sons, made jewelry from their eyes and drinking cups from their skulls, and raped Niðuðr's daughter Boðhilda (= Beadohild). After first extracting a promise from Niðuðr not to harm Boðhilda, now pregnant with Vǫlundr's child, Vǫlundr tells all he has done and flies away on wings he has constructed—an ending that convinced Ferdinand de Saussure that the whole story was borrowed from the Greek tale of Daidalos.[21]

The most highly elaborated telling of the story, although without the Swan Maidens, is found in several sections of the Norse *Þiðrekssaga*, nominally the saga of Dietrich of Bern, in fact a great compilation of Germanic legends, dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century. The prologue to the text says it is based on German stories;[22] it is, in fact, part of a whole cycle of tales[23] clustered around the historical figure of Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths (Old Norse Þiðrekr, Swedish Didrik, German Dietrich; d. 526 CE).[24]

The relevant chapters of *Þiðrekssaga* make up a multigenerational tale of the Vilkina clan,[25] of which I will give only what seem to me the pertinent bits. King Villcinus—a name that Jacob Grimm[26] read as a transcription of the Latin

20. McKinnell, 1990; Ármann, 2006, p. 227-228; cf. the text, translation, and discussion in Dronke, 1997, p. 243-328. It is not only (apparently) one of the oldest parts of the *Poetic Edda*, but (certainly) one of the most studied. In Ármann Jakobsson's words (2006, p. 227) "few Eddic poems have suffered less from scholarly neglect."

21. Saussure, 1903-10 [1993].

22. Bertelsen, 1906, p. 1, 2.

23. Sandbach, 1906.

24. *Þiðrekssaga* has been translated into German (Erichsen, 1924), English (Haymes, 1988), and French (Lecouteux, 2001). A synopsis of the material on Wayland in *Þiðrekssaga* will be found in Lecouteux and Lecouteux, 2013. Torun Zachrisson (2017) argues that the differences in the *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðrekssaga* stories of Wayland can be linked to the very different social structures and concerns in, respectively, central and southern Sweden.

25. Bertelsen, 1906, p. 44 ff., 73-131; H. Larsen, 1920.

26. Grimm, 1835, p. 121 n.; 1875 [1882], p. 376.

Volcanus[27]—married a mermaid and gave birth to Vaðe (English Wade), who was a giant. Vaðe apprenticed his own son, here called Velent (= Wayland), first to the smith Mimir, then to two dwarves of the mountain. Velent learned fast, and the dwarves became jealous of his skill. When Vaðe came back at the appointed time to get his son, he was killed in an avalanche. His failure to appear would have meant Velent's death, but instead Velent killed the dwarves and took their tools and gold. He then made himself a boat out of a treetrunk; in it he sailed down the sound to the sea, where he was found by a ship of King Niðung (= Niðhad) of Jutland. Velent went into service with the King, first defeating (and killing) a rival smith, then accomplishing the apparently impossible feat of recovering the king's "victory stone" on the eve of battle. The king's seneschal demanded that the smith give him the stone; Velent killed him and was sent into exile. He then sought to poison the king and his daughter, but was hamstrung and put to work in the forge. He lured the king's two sons (in this case two of three) and daughter into his forge, killing the sons as in the *Vǫlundarkviða*; but this time his relationship with the princess is consensual. His brother Egil the Archer came to visit; at Velent's request, he collected feathers so Velent could make himself a pair of wings. Velent announced his doings to the shattered king and flew away. The king ordered Egil to shoot Velent, but Velent had tied on a blood-filled bladder, and it is this that Egil hit. In Velent's absence, the princess bore him a son, the hero Viðga (German Witige or Wittich, English Wuðga or Widia). King Niðung died and was replaced by his remaining son, who was well-disposed toward Velent and married him to his sister. Velent, wife, and son then returned to his home. In the following section,[28] Viðga encounters Þiðrek and becomes one of his most important followers. He appears throughout the rest of the saga, at one point shifting his allegiance to Þiðrek's enemy Ermenrikr (Norse Jormenrikkr, German Ermanrich, English Eormenric).

Wayland's role as wondersmith remained important in later medieval literatures. In particular, in the form Galand he was the great blacksmith of the French chronicles and *Chansons de Geste*, who, among other exploits, forged Charlemagne's sword Joyeuse.[29] In Romance-language romances and chronicles, Galand is exclusively the mastersmith: the other elements of his story have disappeared.[30]

But the earliest evidence for the importance—and perhaps for the coherence—of Wayland's story is not textual, but iconographic. The front panel of the

27. A reading disputed by Müllenhoff, 1848, p. 66.

28. Bertelsen, 1906, p. 132-173.

29. Weston, 1929, p. 841. Beckman (2004, P. 10-17) lists Galand's appearances. Of the 203 *Chansons de geste* extant, Galand appears in 22 (Lecouteux, 2014, p. 156).

30. Beckmann, 2004, p. 17-18.

seventh- or eighth-century Franks Casket, probably from Northumbria, is carved with what certainly appear to be key elements of the story of Wayland: a figure with hammer and anvil and a twisted leg is holding a pair of tongs in one hand and offering a drink to a lady with the other; below the anvil lies a headless body, and in the tongs is a skull. To the right of this scene, a male figure catches birds, reminding one of the role of Velent's brother Egil in the *Þiðrekssaga*.[31] On the lid, a man and woman seem to face an army; the name AEGIL is inscribed in runes.

The Ardre VIII picture stone from Gotland in Sweden, dated to the seventh or eighth century, also shows what seem to be elements of the Wayland story: a forge, a woman, what look like dead bodies, and a figure flying.[32]

Hilda Ellis Davidson sums up the traditions regarding Wayland:

> When Weland appears in both courtly heroic poetry and in local folk beliefs, it leads us to believe that at one time men's interest in him and his kind was both wide and deep, leaving long memories behind. King Alfred posed the question of where his bones lay, and now it becomes clearer why he did so. He may well have known the old grave on White Horse Hill, near the scene of one of his own battles, or other such sites associated with Weland, and been puzzled by the connection between a stone tomb and this most cunning of smiths.[33]

Wayland, Wade, and Widia

With the *Þiðrekssaga* we have in place four generations of Wayland's family, out of which three figures—Wayland himself, his father the giant Wade, and his son the knight Widia—are important in medieval textual and modern oral sources.

Wayland's father Wade or Wate is one of the great complex figures of medieval epic and romance.[34] In Walter Map's late-twelfth-century *De Nugis curialium*[35] he appears under the name Gado (a predictable Latinization) as a loyal and highly accomplished follower of Offa of Mercia, slayer of monsters (*portentes*), great navigator, and defender of England against a Roman invasion. In Middle High German epics, notably *Kudrun* from around 1240, the "griesly old warrior Wate" is both faithful retainer and master of navigation by sea.[36] In the thirteenth-

31. Souers, 1943; Dronke, 1997, p. 270.

32. Buisson, 1976.

33. Ellis Davidson, 1958, p. 159.

34. The literature on Wade is nearly as weighty as that on Wayland. See especially Michel, 1837; Müllenhoff, 1848; Wentersdorf, 1966; Peeters, 1972b; McConnell, 1978. There is helpful information in a history of the Wade family, Wade, 1900.

35. II, 17; Chambers, 1912, p. 99-100; Wentersdorf, 1966, p. 277; Peeters, 1972a.

36. Chambers, 1912, p. 95, 102; Wentersdorf, 1966, p. 276-277.

century epic *Dietrichs Flucht*, he is said to have been killed by Dietrich's vassal Dietliep (ll. 6671-6798). And the late-fourteenth-century proto-Yiddish epic *Dukus Horant* (ll. 14 ff.) presents Wate as one of three giants from the forest who is also from Greece and is also a wonderfully brave nobleman.[37]

We have no extended English narratives about Wade. But judging by allusions to him that appear to presuppose general knowledge, he seems to have been one of the best-known legendary figures in medieval England. The Middle English romance *Bevis of Hampton*, dating from around 1300, lists him along with Sir Lancelot and Guy of Warwick as one of the heroes who has slain a dragon (ll. 2603-5). In the *Alliterative Morte Arthur*, c. 1400, a widow warns King Arthur that it would be useless for him to attack a certain giant, even "ware thou wyghttere than Wade" (l. 964; Brock 1865: 29). Similarly, in the Caxton edition of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, printed in 1485, the maiden Linet tells Beaumains (who is really Sir Gareth), "For were thou as wyȝte as euer was Wade or Launcelot, Trystram, or the good knyghte syr Lamaryk, thou shalt not passe" (Book 7, chapter 9). But in Malory's Winchester Manuscript, on which the Caxton edition seems to be based, Wade is not included in this list. As the editor puts it, "The comparison was sufficiently common at the time for *C[axton]* to have added it of his own accord".[38]

A Latin "sermon on humility" from around 1300 quotes a series of rather obscure Middle English lines on elves and serpents and "nickers" that are attributed to Wade. This would appear to be the only remaining piece of the "tale of Wade".[39]

But the most tantalizing and frustrating allusions are found in the works of Chaucer, who refers to Wade twice as to one whose stories are universally known. In *Troilus and Criseyde*, written in the mid-1380s, Pandare and Criseyde are amusing each other: "He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade" (l. 614). While Criseyde is told the tale, we are not. Even worse is a reference in the Merchant's Tale, when January explains that he avoids old widows because "They konne so muchel craft on Wades boot" (l. 212). "Wade's boat" clearly involves trickery, with sexual overtones. But that is all we can surmise—except that Wade was a traveler on water. In an infamous note to this line in his 1598 edition of Chaucer's works, Thomas Speght writes: "Concerning *Wade* and his bote called Guingelot, as also his strange exploits in the same, because the matter is long and fabulous, I passe it over" (annotation to Folio 28, page 1).[40] On this, Chaucer's eighteenth-century editor Thomas Tyrwhitt drily

37. Ganz et al., 1964, p. 133.

38. Vinaver, 1947, III, 1426.

39. Wentersdorf, 1966, p. 110-111; Peeters, 1972b, p. 27-28.

40. "It has often been called the most exasperating note even written on Chaucer" (Robinson, 1957, p. 714). On Speght's note and it reception, see Trigg, 2008.

remarks, "*Tantamne rem tam negligenter*? Mr. Speght probably did not foresee, that Posterity would be as much obliged to him for a little of this *fabulous matter* concerning *Wade* and his *bote*, as for the gravest of his annotations".[41] But already in the 1630s, Sir Francis Kynaston had written, "Chaucer meanes a ridiculous romance as if he had told a story of Robin Hood, for in his time there was a foolish fabulous Legend of one Wade & his boate Guingelot wherein he did... many strange things & had many wonderfull adventures".[42]

In English folk traditions, Wade is a builder of roads and castles, in particular the now-ruined Mulgrave Castle near Whitby in Yorkshire. The antiquarian John Leland reports for the year 1545 that near "Mougrave (Mulgrave) Castelle certen stones communely callid Waddes Grave, whom the people there say to have bene a gigant and owner of Mougreve".[43] R.W. Chambers pointed to the importance of this apparent survival;[44] in Ellis Davidson's words, "It is perhaps significant that Wade like Weland is established in English folk tradition as a giant, a supernatural being connected with stone ruins".[45]

Stories of Wayland's son Widia (= Viðga) are equally widespread and well known. He is named, as Wudga, in the Old English poem *Widsith* (ll. 124, 130),[46] perhaps dating from the sixth century, as a follower of King Eormenric; *Waldere* (Fragment 2, ll. 4-10),[47] probably from around 1000 CE, tells that Widia, Niðhad's kin, had rescued Đéodríc from monsters. Under the name Wittich or Witege, he is a major figure in Middle High German epics as the follower, then enemy of Dietrich, as we have seen in *Þiðrekssaga*. In Swedish and Danish folk ballads, Vidrik Verlandsson or Villandsson, i.e., Widia son of Wayland, is a hero and giant-slayer;[48] his grave is marked by a menhir in Västra Götaland in Sweden.[49]

41. Tyrwhitt, 1775, p. 284.

42. Waldron, 1796, p. xvi.

43. Leland, 1545 (1907), p. 59; see also Young, 1817, p. 665.

44. Chambers, 1912, p. 97-98.

45. Ellis Davidson, 1958, p. 150. Wade's name seems to come from Proto-Germanic **wadana* 'to wade', to move through a resisting medium. This etymology, proposed by Karl Müllenhoff (1848), has been generally accepted (McConnell, 1977, p. 572). The name would, then, ultimately be derived from the Indo-European root **u̯eh₂dh-* 'to go, to traverse'. Some however, have wanted to link the name to the root **u̯eh₂t-* 'to blow, to be inspired' (Pokorny, 1959, 1113) which also gives the name of the god Wodan; F.R.Schröder, for one, has listed traits that the two have in common (1958). The name was also borne by a number of historical characters, notably a Duke Wada of Northumbria, who was, in fact, a contemporary of Offa's (McConnell, 1977, p. 575-576).

46. Chambers, 2012, p. 48-57, 222-223.

47. Norman, 1933, p. 32-33, 40.

48. Arwidsson, 1834, p. 10-27; H. Larsen, 1920; Cumpstey, 2014.

49. The various forms of Widia's name seem to go back to a that of the apparently historical East Gothic hero Vidigoia, who is said to have lived in the fourth century

Wayland, his father, and his son, then, are found throughout Germania. As Karl Müllenhoff sums up the heroes of the three generations, "Wieland would have been seen as the best weapon-smith, Witege the best warrior and knight... Wado as the best boatman and voyager".[50] While some authorities see these kinship links as late,[51] others find evidence for the generational scheme going back to earlier Germanic sources.[52] Some or all of the same characters, in the same relationships, appear in Middle High German epics (e.g., *Dietrichs Flucht*, *Rabenschlacht*), in the Swedish saga of *Didrik af Bern* from around 1500,[53] and, as we have seen, in Scandinavian ballads. Nowhere, as far as I know, are other kin relations imputed to any of them; the *Vǫlundarkviða* says that Vǫlundr and his brothers were sons of the king of the Finns (*synir Finna konungs*; Dronke interprets *Finna* as Lapps), but gives no names.

Wayland's Smithy itself is only one of a number of prehistoric features in and around the Valley of the White Horse, and a number of these appear to be named after his relatives. Not far from the Smithy may be found: Beahhildæ Byrigel, that is, Beodahild's Burial (charter S317, 856 CE); Hwittucs Hleaw, that is, Widia's Mound (S564); and Weardaes Beorh, Wade's Barrow (in both of the above charters), now known as Idlebush Barrow.[54] As Leslie Grinsell says, regarding the first three of these sites, "it seems clear that all three sites were named from figures in the Wayland legend, a legend that would have been as familiar to our Saxon forerunners as are the legends of Robin Hood of St. George and the dragon among ourselves".[55]

Indo-European fashioners

The legend of an extraordinarily gifted smith-craftsman is likely to be found in any society that has metallurgy and crafts.[56] In a world dominated by agro-pastoral production, craftspeople are "outsiders". As Nicole Belmont puts it in the Western European context,

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CE. The name has been interpreted both as 'dweller in the forest region' (Schönfeld, 1911) and as 'forest-barker' or '-crier', which would be a kenning for wolf (Schramm, 1957, P. 83, followed by Müller, 1970, p. 211). The latter certainly seems an appropriate name for a great warrior. We don't know whether the Gothic hero gave his name to the legendary hero or or the reverse.

50. Müllendorff, 1848, p. 67-68.

51. Chambers, 1912, p. 95.

52. Schneider, 1928, p. 369; 1933, p. 83; Ellis Davidson, 1958, p. 150.

53. Hyltén-Cavallius, 1850-54; Cumpstey, 2017.

54. Grinsell, 1939b, 1991; Ellis Davidson, 1958, p. 149.

55. Grinsell, 1939a, p. 19.

56. Christensen, 1919 [1925], p. 31; Eliade, 1962 [1978]; Mallory, 1997; Sergent, 2004a, p. 532-533; West, 2007, p. 156-157. For a Siberian example, see Jochelsen, 1933, p. 172; de Sales, 1981, as well as the works already cited.

> In this way one could explain the suspicion in which artisans were held in this traditional rural setting. They are... gifted with a formidable power, a power of transformation, which causes them to be placed at extreme points of the social hierarchy, either at the very bottom or the very top, while agricultural labor occupies its rightful place in the middle.[57]

If we accept Dumézil's idea that Indo-European-speaking societies typically distinguished the functions of the sacred, of war, and of agro-pastoral production, then the craftsperson is an anomaly, and so is likely to be treated as sacred or abominable.[58] Which is to say that he or she is a good candidate for Nick Allen's fourth function,[59] as has been argued most extensively by Pierre and André Sauzeau.[60] This is exemplified in the figure of the smith in nineteenth- and twentieth-century rural Ireland: he was both feared and admired, both separate from the community at large and a central figure in that his forge was a gathering-place for deliberations and the dissemination of news.[61]

I would like to consider Wayland and his kin against the background of the web of intersecting connections, often unexpected ones, that mark these figures in some Indo-European traditions.

Within this realm, the roles of smith, fashioner, craftsperson, builder, architect often overlap and merge; but the first thing to note is that many of them *have* craft gods and/or legendary masters of craft:[62] Tvaṣṭṛ and the Ṛbhus in the Vedas, Viśvakarman in the epics and Purāṇas; Kāva the Blacksmith in Iran; Hephaistos and Volcanus,[63] and the Kuklōpes and Telkhines; in Ireland, the Dagda 'Good God' and the smith Goibniu, later Gobán the builder of churches

57. Belmont, 1984, p. 51.

58. Douglas, 1966.

59. N.J. Allen, 1987; Mallory, 1997, p. 140.

60. Sauzeau, 2012, p. 201-227.

61. Evans, 1957, p. 199; Danaher, 1966, p. 81-87.

62. Mallory, 1997; West, 2007, p. 154-157, 295-297.

63. Dumézil, 1966 (1970), p. 319-321 and West, 2007, p. 155 have argued that the Roman Volcanus was not originally a smith, but purely a god of fire, for Dumézil of destructive fire as opposed to the hearth-fire represented by Vesta (*contra*: Beckmann, 2004, p. 62); his role as a smith would be a result of his identification with Hephaistos. But here one could make the same argument Dumézil himself uses to justify seeing the Roman Neptunus as a god of waters even before his assimilation to Poseidon:

> If it is likely that Neptune owes his maritime vocation solely to his assimilation to the Greek Poseidon, it was still necessary, for this assmilation to be possible, for him to have a fundamental relationship with water (1963, p. 60).

Given that Volcanus was so thoroughly assimilated to Hephaistos in his role as craftsman, one must ask whether the early Italic peoples, who certainly had metalworkers, had a now-lost smith-god *other* than the fire-god Volcanus. As J.-M.

for the Irish saints,[64] corresponding to Govannon in Wales, Cobannos in Gaulish inscriptions,[65] as well as the goddess Brigit and Saints Brigit and Gobnait. Parallels among some of these figures have been noted for a long time.[66] Some of them seem relevant for Wayland and his kin.

One proposal for the etymology of Wayland's name supports this argument. In this view, it would be derived from the Indo-European root **u̯lek-* 'to shine, to burn',[67] which would also give the names of other Indo-European smith-gods: the Roman Volcanus and the Ossetian Kurdalægon, that is, Wærgon the Noble Smith.[68]

Provider of the great weapon. A striking parallel among most of these personages also happens to be one that does not seem immediately relevant for Wayland. Most Indo-European mythologies involve a great eschatological battle between gods and anti-gods at the beginning and/or end of time.[69] As part of this battle between hosts, or alongside it, is the combat between a hero, representative of the divine, and a great enemy, often three-headed and serpentine, who threatens the world. Fashioners play central roles in these stories. In some of these scenarios, the hero uses a weapon, a hammer, mace,

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Maillefer says regarding the Germanic peoples,

> Smith gods existed from one end to the other of the Indo-European world (not to mention other culture areas), and it is not clear why only the Germanic peoples would have been an exception (1997, p. 330).

The same argument applies to the Romans before the *interpretatio graeca*.

64. Ó hÓgáin, 2006, p. 271-274.

65. Lajoye, 2008b.

66. Grimm (1835, p. 221), for instance, says that Wayland should be compared with Hephaistos and Vulcan, perhaps with Daidalos; Graebner (1920, p. 1106) that Wayland corresponds both to Hephaistos and to the Vedic Tvaṣṭṛ. Christensen 1919 (1926) and Daryaee (1999) draw parallels between Tvaṣṭṛ and the legendary Iranian blacksmith Kāva, Scott (1990, p. 186) among Goibniu, Hephaistos, Volcanus, and Wayland. Bernard Sergent (2004b, p. 527-540) notes a particularly dense set of parallels between Goibniu and Hephaistos, and of these two with the Ossetian Kurdelægon; Shaw (2008) indicates those between Tvaṣṭṛ and the Irish god the Dagda. Starting with Meid (1961), a series of authors have argued an etymological link between the names of Volcanus and that of the Ossetic smith-hero Kurdelægon, and others have extended the connection to Wayland (Schröder, 1977; Beckmann, 2004).

67. Walde, 1930, p. 321; Pokorny, 1959, p. 1178.

68. Meid, 1961; Schröder, 1977, p. 386 ff.; Beckmann, 2004, p. 54-63. Others argue that the name comes from a Proto-Germanic **wala-handuz* 'good hand', which would make it exclusively Germanic (*contra*, Beckmann, 2004, p. 68-69). An etymology from 'wolf' for Volcanus (Capdeville, 1995) and Wærgon (Abaev, 1949, p. 592-594; cf. Dumézil, 1986, p. 68-69) would not include Wayland.

69. O'Brien, 1976; Oosten, 1985; Lajoye, 2012; Sauzeau and Sauzeau, 2017.

or bolt of lightning[70] forged by the divine craftsman/smith. In the Vedas, Tvaṣṭṛ,[71] and in one case the mysterious Kāvya Uśanas,[72] make the bolts (*vájra*) of Indra; in Puranic stories, it is Viśvakarman 'All-Maker', who seems to have replaced Tvaṣṭṛ in much post-Vedic literature as architect and craftsman of the gods,[73] who makes the terrible weapon Sudarśana, used by Viṣṇu and exceptionally by Śiva to destroy powerful demons (*Padma Purāṇa* 6.9.30 ff.).[74] In the Avesta the hero Θraetaona kills the monstrous multiheaded serpent Aži Dahāka;[75] in the *Šāhnāma* and other medieval Persian texts, good king Farīdūn, whose name is the development of the name Θraetaona, overcomes bad king Żaḥḥāk, the development of the name Dahāka, who has snakes growing out of his shoulders, with the help of Kāva the Blacksmith, whose name goes back to the Avestan king Kauui Usan, a cognate of Vedic Kāvya Uśanas. In modern oral renditions of the story,[76] it is Kāva himself who forges Farīdūn's mace (*gorz*, cognate with Avestan *vajra* and Vedic *vájra*). Hephaistos built himself a great palace (*Iliad* 18.370 ff.) and most of the houses of the Olympian gods (*Iliad* 1.670 ff.); he and the Kuklōpes are makers of divine weapons, particularly the thunderbolt (Hesiod, *Theogony* 141, 823-835; Seneca, *Phaedra*, 189-191) that Zeus uses to destroy the giants and the monstrous multiheaded and ophidian Typhôn. In the medieval Irish *Cath Maige Tuired* 'the Battle of Moytura',[77] the great struggle between the Tuatha Dé Danann, the transforms of some of the the old Irish gods[78] and their enemies the Fomorians for sovereignty of the world, the Dagda and his constructions play a central role, as do the smith Goibniu and his fellow-craftsmen.[79] Here the central confrontation takes place between the Fomorian champion Balar of the Evil Eye and his daughter's son Lug of the Long Arm, the champion of the Tuatha Dé. As Balar is opening his deadly eye, which destroys all it looks upon, Lug smites him with a slingstone, pushing the eye out the back of his head so that it kills his own followers (§133-135).[80] A seventeenth-century rendition of the Battle of Moytura specifies that

70. Watkins, 1995, p. 331, 380.

71. Bergaigne, 1883, p. 49; Macdonell, 1897, p. 116; Blažek, 2010, p. 9-10.

72. *Ṛg Veda* 1.121.12; Macdonell, 1897, p. 147; Blažek, 2010, p. 8.

73. Sergent (2012) sees Viśvakarman as distinct from Tvaṣṭṛ--both, as he points out (p. 183), are mentioned together in a line of the *Rāmāyaṇa*—and links him more specifically with Luchta, the wright of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

74. I owe this reference to Lajoye, 2012.

75. Benveniste and Renou, 1933.

76. Daryaee, 1999, p. 12-14.

77. Gray, 1982.

78. Ó hÓgáin, 2006, p. 478-481; Williams, 2016, p. 16-29; Carey, 2018, p. 9-18.

79. For references to the Dagda and Goibniu in medieval Irish literature, see Gray, 1982, p. 121, 125; Ó hÓgáin, 2006, p. 151-154, 277-278.

80. Gray, 1982, p. 60-61.

Lugh's slingstone was crafted by Gobán the Smith, a later form of the name Goibniu.[81] In modern folk versions of the story, Gobán forges the spear that Lugh uses to smite Balar's eye.[82]

Parallels in Germanic mythologies are not terribly obvious. While the Germanic peoples were masters of metalwork, there is no divine smith among the Aesir or the Vanir,[83] and none figures in the world-ending (and -beginning) battle of Ragnarök between the gods and the giants. Here the great craftsmen are mysterious figures called dwarves or elves.[84] Specifically, Thor's giant-killing hammer Mjölnir was forged by the dwarf-smiths Brakkr and Eitri as part of a contest with the Dark Elves (*Prose Edda*, *Skáldskaparmál* 34-36).[85] While Wayland is a purely human smith in most of his incarnations, albeit one with extraordinary powers, in the *Vǫlundarkviða* he is thrice called an elf.[86]

Builder and brothers. Many of these traditions involve a duplication of fashioner figures: one is a builder as well as a maker; along with him, sometimes in rivalry with him, there is a group, often of brothers, who are more specifically smiths. Tvaṣṭṛ's rivals are the Ṛbhus, three brothers. In the *Šāhnāma*,[87] it is not Kāva but "the blacksmiths of the market" (*bāzār-i āhangarān*) who forge Farīdūn's mace. In Greek traditions, Hephaistos is aided by the Kuklōpes, and other smith-figures—notably the Telkhines—are groups of brothers. In medieval Irish texts, the Dagda is the great builder; Goibniu the smith is one of a set of brothers.[88] The *Lebor Gabála* 'Book of Invasions' gives these as the bronzeworker Crédne, the wright Luchta, and the physician Dian Cécht;[89] they are the sons of the goddess Brigit. In the *Cath Maige Tuired*, the first three of these work together to repair and replace the weapons of the Tuatha Dé, while Dian Cécht revives their fallen warriors (§96-103, 122-123).[90] According to the *Sanas Cormaic* (probably early tenth century), Brigit, who is here primarily associated with poetry, is herself one of three sisters, all named Brigit, daughters of the Dagda. The other two are Brigit the goddess of healing and Brigit the goddess of smith-work.[91]

81. Ó Cuív, 1945, p. 3, 35-36; Hily, 2008, p. 122-123.
82. Curtin, 1894, p. 311.
83. Maillefer, 1997.
84. Lecouteux, 1997.
85. Adam of Bremen (eleventh century), an early comparative mythologist, writes that "Thor, with his mace (*cum sceptro*), looks like Jove" (*Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, cap. 26).
86. Ármann, 2006.
87. Khaleghi-Motlegh, 1988, p. 71, l. 258.
88. West, 2007, p. 155.
89. Macalister, 1941, p. 124-125, 156-157.
90. Gray, 1982, p. 50-55.
91. Meyer, 1912, p. 15; Kenney, 1929, p. 357-358.

In Germanic mythology, the groups of smith entities, dwarves or elves, are often brothers, as are, for instance, the Dark Elves, the Sons of Ivaldi (*Skáldskaparmál* 35); note that the Germanic word 'elf' is cognate with the Indic word Ṛbhu.[92] In the *Vǫlundarkviða* Vǫlundr himself is one of three brothers. This led the Swedish poet and scholar Viktor Rydberg to identify Vǫlundr and his brothers with the Black Elves, the Sons of Ivaldi.[93]

In some, at least, of these sources, the group of blacksmiths appears to be of lower status than the single builder figure.[94] The Ṛbhus only attain divinity by dividing Tvaṣṭṛ's cup into three; Kāva is clearly a more important character than the mass of blacksmiths; the Kuklōpes and the Telkhines are secondary figures compared to Hephaistos; the Dagda seems to be a more important, and is certainly a more multivalent, character, than are Goibniu and his brothers.

Lameness. In both Greek (and Roman) and Germanic traditions, the smith-figure is lame. Hephaistos was hurled from heaven; one story is that this was done by his mother Hera because of his imperfection (*Iliad* 18.395-405; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 316-321). In other sources (*Iliad* 1.590-594; Apollodorus, *Library* 1.3.5), his lameness is the result of Zeus casting him down from heaven for supporting Hera against him—Hephaistos was born from Hera without male intercession (Hesiod, *Theogony* 927-929). This trait is shared by the Roman Volcanus, but this may be a result of the *interpretatio graeca*. We have seen that Vǫlundr/Velent is lamed by his captor the king; and his image on the Franks Casket looks like his leg is twisted. The Gascon folktale of "Pieds d'or"[95] has many of the same elements as the story of Wayland,[96] and it is likely derived from a Germanic source.[97] Since this trait appears clearly only in Greco-Roman and Germanic materials, it is unclear to what extent it is common Indo-European. One possible exception is Christian Guyonvarc'h's[98] proposal that Trágmar, the epithet of Gobán's father Tuirbe, be translated 'big foot'. This would link the name to other fashioners who limp or have other problems of locomotion, but it remains speculative.

Ambiguity and relations with the enemy. In the struggles between gods and anti-gods, the allegiances of most of the builder/smith characters we are considering remain unclear. Often they move back and forth between the opposing sides. Tvaṣṭṛ, the builder for the gods and provider of Indra's weapons,

92. Macdonell, 1897, p. 133; Polomé, 1997.

93. Rydberg, 1886 [2010], p. 652 ff. This may a case of Rydberg's "over-tendency to identifications" (Powell, 1890, P. 122; cf. Liberman, 2004, p. 37).

94. cf. Sauzeau and Sauzeau, 2012, p. 218, 225-227.

95. Bladé, 1967, p. 126-147.

96. Leroy, 1982.

97. Sergent, 2004a, 2004b, p. 720 n. 29

98. Guyonvarc'h, 1980, p. 99; cf. Bik, 1992, p. 12, n. 38. The smith in the Grail romances is named Trebuchet 'stumbling' (Bik, 1992).

is sometimes Indra's enemy; he marries a demoness, who gives birth to the monstrous Viśvarūpa. When the latter is killed by Indra, Tvaṣṭṛ creates Vṛtra to exact revenge. In some sources Tvaṣṭṛ is the preceptor of the anti-gods, a role filled in others by Kāvya Uśanas.[99] The Ṛbhus are mortals who must fight their way into the company of the gods. In post-Avestan Iranian tradition there are two figures whose names are cognate with that of Kāvya Uśanas: we find both the smith Kāva, clearly on the side of the rightful king Farīdūn, and Kay Kāvūs, a later king who, while sometimes just, has regular relations with the anti-gods (*daevas*), leading to his (literal) downfall (see below). For Dumézil, this king and his Indian homonym Kāvya Uśanas are defined by this ambiguity, this "scandal", whether political as in the former case or moral as in the latter.[100]

In Greek traditions, Hephaistos and the Kuklōpes sometimes defy and challenge Zeus, and the Telkhines are wicked sorcerers as much as the are craftsmen. In Hesiod and other sources Typhôn, the greatest enemy of Zeus and the gods, is born directly from the Earth; but in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* (334-352), he is the son of Hera alone, and so the brother of Hephaistos. In Roman legend, the terrible three-headed Cacus (see below) is the son of Volcanus as Vṛtra is the son of Tvaṣṭṛ.[101]

While the Dagda, and for the most part Goibniu, are on the side of the Tuatha Dé, there are some inconsistencies. Suspecting that his wife is cheating on him, Goibniu creates a magical weapon to be used against people on his own side.[102] And the goddess Brigit's role in the Battle of Moytura is highly ambiguous. While she is of the Tuatha Dé, she becomes the wife of Bad King Bress; their son Rúadán goes into the camp of the Tuatha Dé to seek out and kill Goibniu. When Goibniu kills him instead, Brigit wails for her son. "Then for the first time were weeping and shrieking heard in Ireland" (§124-125).[103]

In Germanic mythology, it is never clear which side dwarves and elves are on, nor to what extent they are interchangeable with giants. In fact, the best-known builder in Norse mythology, the anonymous "builder", turns out to be a giant in disguise (*Prose Edda*, *Gylfaginning*, 42). And closer to home, Wayland's son Widia/Viðga/Witege, a great hero, ends up changing sides and being pursued, sometimes to the death, by his former lord or one of his vassals.

Jealousy. Many of the figures we are considering are notably jealous of and secretive about their knowledge and skill, often leading to rivalries and contests. To cite Dumézil:[104] "under every clime, the mythology of craftsmen,

99. Dumézil, 1971 [1986].
100. Dumézil, 1971 [1986], p. 55-56.
101. Woodard, 2006, p. 197.
102. Meyer, 1912, p. 83; Carey, 2019, p. 33-35.
103. Gray, 1982, p. 56-57.
104. Dumézil, 1983, p. 193, himself cited by Sauzeau and Sauzeau, 2012, p. 216.

like that of sorcerers, cannot be imagined without competition." Tvaṣṭṛ made the cup out of which the gods drink soma; but the Ṛbhus divided it into four cups, which did not please him.[105] While Hephaistos seems remarkably good-natured (*Iliad* 18), Daidalos does not: his nephew Perdix exceeded him in smithcraft, and Daidalos murdered him, for which crime he was exiled from Athens (Apollodorus, *Library* 3.15). Dian Cécht the divine leech, sometimes said to be a brother of Goibniu, killed his own son Miach for having restored King Nuadu's severed arm, something beyond Dian Cécht's skill (§33-34).[106] In Germanic mythology, dwarves are notoriously secretive and touchy about their skills and jealous of their creations. In *Þiðrekssaga*, the dwarves who have been training Velent decide to slay him because he has become too good a smith.[107] In the *Vǫlundarkviða*, King Niðuðr's wife advises hamstringing Vǫlundr because of the angry snakelike glint in his eye when he sees the sword he made in the king's hand.[108] And his revenge, as we have seen, is horrible.

Wings. Both Daidalos and Vǫlundr/Velent are prisoners of kings and escape by building themselves wings. Some authors have seen this as a direct borrowing from Greek into Germanic mythology.[109] But there seem to be flying fashioners in Iranian and other Germanic legends as well. In Pehlevi texts and in the *Shāhnāma*, the king Kay Kāvūs, whose name, like that of the blacksmith Kāva, is a transformation of the Avestan Kauui Usan—whose Vedic counterpart Kāvya Uśanas made Indra's weapons—flies into the air in a throne attached to eagles.[110] He is punished for this presumption by falling from the sky. There is a suggestion, too, that Wade could fly in his boat. A note by Sir Francis Kynaston from the 1630s says that Wade's "many wonderfull adventures" in his boat are "not much unlike" those of a man who (somehow) sailed his boat over a church steeple.[111]

Water. Smiths are, not surprisingly, generally associated with fire, but in many of the traditions we are considering either the craftsman or a close relation is also linked with a body of water, a lake, river, or sea.[112] As is clear from many Vedic passages, the point of Indra's slaying the enemy using the weapon provided by the fashioner god is to release the waters that have been held in check, which are often called cows—or to release cows, which are often called

105. Macdonell, 1897, p. 133.
106. Gray, 1982, p. 32-33.
107. Bertelsen, 1906, p. 80-81.
108. Dronke, 1997, p. 248.
109. Depping and Michel, 1833; Saussure, 1903-10 [1993]; Dronke, 1997.
110. Skjærvø, 2013.
111. Waldron, 1795, p. xvi.
112. Bik, 1992, p. 6.

waters. In the Avesta, the royal power of the Kavi dynasty is hidden in the waters (*Yašt* 19).[113]

In Greek mythology, Hephaistos, cast out from Olympus, lands either in the sea or on the island of Lemnos; in both cases he is saved and nurtured by sea goddesses (*Iliad* 18.395-410; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 319-320).[114] Daidalos's son Ikaros falls into the sea and is drowned for his hubris.

The Irish place-name lore, the *Dinnshenchas*, tells how the Dagda was the lover of the lady who became the river Boyne.[115] In many Irish tales a Cow of Plenty, called the Cow of the Smith (see below), emerges from, and when she is upset returns to a lake or the sea. In the *Dinnshenchas*, Tuirbe, the axe-carrying father of Gobán the Smith, throws his axe into the sea and defies the waves to cross it; they dare not, and so is created what is known as Tuirbe's Strand.[116]

In the *Þiðrekssaga*, Velent's grandmother is a water-woman, first appearing in a river, then in the ocean. In the German *Rabenschlacht* and the Swedish saga of Didrik,[117] Wieland/Verland's son Witege/Vidik, in dire straits due to his betrayal of Dietrich/Didrik, is saved by his great-grandmother the mermaid, tying up the generations. Velent of *Þiðrekssaga*, Galand in the *Chansons de Geste*, and the smith Trébuchet in the Grail romances,[118] live and work on islands.[119] In *Þiðrekssaga*, Velent has a wonderful boat, like his father Vaðe, who is specifically a traveller by sea.

The most widely accepted etymology for Wade's name links it to the verb 'to wade'; this is made explicit in *Þiðrekssaga*, where Vaðe's name is explained as follows: desiring to bring Velent to the dwarves for training and having to cross an arm of the sea to get to them, he picks up his son and wades (*væðr*) with him across the sound.[120] So pervasive, in fact, is Wade's association with water that both Karl Müllenhoff and R.W. Chambers raise the possibility that "[p]erhaps Wade was originally a sea-giant, dreaded and honored by the coast tribes of the North Sea and the Baltic".[121]

Healing and cursing. Tbe power of healing illness is attributed to smiths in many parts of the world.[122] In Indo-European traditions it seems particularly linked to

113. See Dumézil, 1973, p. 24-27; Puhvel, 1987, p. 278-279.

114. Nick Allen (2010, P. 362; 2020, p. 248) compares Hephaistos' providing of arms with that of the water-god Varuṇa in the *Mahābhārata*: "in both cases a deity who supplies arms lives or has lived in the sea."

115. Stokes, 1894, p. 315-316; Gwynn, 1913, p. 26-39.

116. Stokes, 1893, p. 488-489; 1895, p. 76-77; Gwynn, 1924, p. 226-227, 437.

117. Cumpstey, 2017.

118. Bik, 1992.

119. Beckmann, 2004, p. 19, 20; Walter, 2010, p. 230-231.

120. Bertelsen, 1906, p. 75-76.

121. Müllendorff, 1848; Chambers, 1912, p. 95; *contra*, Bashe, 1923.

122. Eliade, 1956 [1978].

immortality and the restoral of youth. Tvaṣṭṛ and the Ṛbhus contend over the vessel out of which the gods will drink soma. In epic and Puranic mythology (e.g., *Mahābhārata* 1.15-17), the gods and anti-gods agree to cooperate provisionally to produce *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality. This must be churned from the Ocean of Milk, and both sides need to work together to accomplish this. But what comes out of this process is double-edged: along with immortality comes a deadly poison, which Lord Śiva must swallow to prevent it from destroying the world. Kāvya Uśanas, too has powers to heal and to destroy, to revive dead warriors for the camp of the anti-gods and to bestow old age or youth at his will (*Mahābhārata* 1: 71-81).[123] In Iranian legend his namesake Kay Kāvūs builds palaces that restore the aged to youth.[124] In the *Iliad* (1.597 f.), the limping and ugly Hephaistos, apparently incongruously, is the cupbearer of the gods, bringing them the nectar of immortality.[125] During the Battle of Moytura, it is Goibniu's brother Dian Cécht who restores the dead to life on behalf of the Tuatha Dé. Two medieval Irish texts (*Acallam na Senórach*;[126] *Altram Tige Dá Medar*[127]) mention the *Fled Goibnenn* 'Goibniu's Feast', which restores youth to the old. But Goibniu can also curse, as we have seen. In a spell probably dating from the ninth century,[128] Goibniu is asked to drive out a thorn that, if the standard reading is correct, Goibniu himself drove in.[129] While much of the spell is hard to interpret, it is noteworthy that both butter and water are clearly mentioned (see below). St Gobnait, whose name is a feminine form of the word for 'smith' and whose shrine has been shown to have been a prehistoric ironworking site,[130] was also a healer, and her well is still said to have healing powers.[131]

In the German epic *Kudrun*, Wade, "skilled in leechcraft", has the power to heal.[132] The healing herb valerian is known in German-speaking countries as *Wielandswurz* 'Wayland's wort', "since smiths such as Wayland have always also been considered doctors and sorcerers".[133] The late-tenth-century Old English charm *Wið Færstice*, against a sudden stabbing pain, treats the pain as a little spear shot by gods (*esa*, i.e., Aesir), elves, or witches and centers on scenes of blacksmiths making knives and spears. It involves brewing a drink out of herbs

123. Dumézil, 1971 [1986], p. 26-37.
124. Skjærvø, 2013; cf. Dumézil, 1971 [1986], p. 66 ff.
125. Carey, 2019, p. 44-45, links Tvaṣṭṛ and Hephaistos to Irish material.
126. O'Grady, 1892, II, 243.
127. Duncan, 1932, p. 188, 207.
128. Stokes and Strachan, 1903, p. 248.
129. Carey, 2019, p. 31-33.
130. O'Kelly, 1952.
131. E.M. Guest, 1937, and my own observations in 1996.
132. Chambers, 1912, p. 103.
133. Schrader, 1901, p. 59; cf. Grimm, 1875 [1882], p. 377.

and concludes by plunging a knife into it.[134] Noting the parallels among Tvaṣṭṛ and the Ṛbhus, Hephaistos, and Goibniu's Feast, M.L. West concludes that "[w]e cannot but suspect a common background to these stories."[135]

Fire in water. Together, these traits form a web of associations that it is hard to explain by chance, by borrowing, or by some universal quality of smiths. Some of the associations, at least, seem to converge on apparently contradictory themes: on the one hand, miraculous abundance, riches, reward, healing; on the other, great danger and the power to curse; both are held together in a single morally ambivalent figure or set of figures.

In the mythologies of peoples speaking Indo-European languages, these are precisely the qualities of the fire, or shining gold, or immortality, or glowing essence of kingship, that is hidden within the waters.[136] The rightful claimant, the true king or hero, succeeds in retrieving this treasure and is blessed with sovereignty, victory, immortality; if an illegitimate claimant seeks to take it, the result is catastrophic destruction for him- or herself or for the world. In some of these traditions, the hidden brilliant being bears the epithet "child of the waters"—Apā́m Nápāt in the Veda, Apąm Napāt in the Avesta, *sævar niðr* in the Norse *Yglingasaga*. In the comparative literature, the *loci classici* of the "fire in water" theme are Agni's entering the waters in search of the hidden Indra; Iranian stories of royal splendor hidden in the water; Roman stories of the boiling and rising of the Lacus Albanus; and the origin of the River Boyne in the well of Nechtan.[137] But, as Claude Sterckx and Guillaume Oudaer have shown,[138] other figures and situations in Indo-European texts and practices can be added to these.

While in the normal order of things water should put out fire, Indo-European traditions highlight this powerful "fire inside water". In Vedic tradition, at least, this is a reversal of what is clearly a normal cosmic cycle, in which water gives birth to wood, which gives birth to fire[139]—which may explain the fire-god Agni's epithet of 'Grandson of the Waters'. As Agni himself says in the *Mahābhārata* (5.15.37-40),[140]

> I cannot enter the waters! It will be the end of me! ... From water fire, from brahmanhood *kṣatra* [the state of being a warrior], from rock

134. J.L. Bradley, 1987, p. 2-4.

135. West, 2007, p. 156.

136. Dumézil, 1973, p. 19-89; Sterckx, 1986, p. 80-93; 1996: 13-14; Puhvel, 1987, ch 16; Sergent, 2000, p. 198-201; West, 2007, p. 270-272; Edholm, 2017.

137. Sergent, 2004b, p. 370-374.

138. Sterckx and Oudaer, 2014.

139. Watkins, 1995, p. 253.

140. Cited in Dumézil, 1985, p. 191.

> copper[141] have sprung: the universal power (*tejas*) of each vanishes in the presence of its source (*yoni*, literally 'womb').[142]

—yet he is persuaded to enter into the water to find Indra, who is hidden there in a tiny form, so that the latter may grow to his full power. As Agni makes clear himself, this is a reversal of the proper order of things. Like fire in water, such a reversal can be disastrous, but can also represent a transcendance of the limitations of this world.

In their daily practice, smiths must be masters of both sides of the incompatible pair of fire and water. To temper a piece of worked metal, it must be heated to glowing, then quenched, most commonly in cool water, then slowly reheated. This process, which can be repeated several times, maximizes the toughness, that is, the combined hardness and elasticity, of the work. I cannot put this better than does Elisabeth Bik:

> [I]t is not only a question of forging metal that is red-hot from the fire, but equally of quenching it in cold and transparent water. We are dealing here, in Bachelard's expression, with a 'material contradiction'[143]: the steel owes its hardness combined with elasticity to the violent struggle between two antithetical elements that the smith succeeds in uniting. Such 'material images' help us understand how the smith could be so long associated both with water and with fire, and that magical powers would be ascribed to one who controlled these elemental forces (p. 17).

That smiths are associated with fire is almost a pleonasm. The repetitive placing of smith figures near water, on lakes, rivers, and seas, may not be an indication that they are folklorized remnants of water gods,[144] but rather a repetitive reinforcement of the water side of this unstable and powerful mythic equation.[145] One more example of this: When Tuirbe throws his axe into the sea, the Irish text reads *Cían nodcuired a thúaig the*. Edward Gwynn, the editor of the text, suggests (p. 437) that the last word in the line might be read *té* 'hot', and that Tuirbe might, like his son, be a smith: "Tuirbe having forged an axe-head, casts it, still glowing, into the sea to temper the metal," and it would be this combination of fire and water that the sea dare not cross.

The dangerous linkage of fire and water in narrations has a counterpart in the more modest efforts of ritual, in which smiths, who control fire and water to transform the elements of the earth, can use this contradictory power to aid their fellow beings. One example: in Scotland, a traditional cure for rickets:

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141. Van Buitenen (1978, p. 213) translates *loha*, literally 'the red one', as 'iron'.
142. My translation, consulting van Buitenen, 1978, and Garbutt, 2008.
143. Citing Bachelard, 1947, p. 144 and chapter 6.
144. As Chambers, 1912, p. 95 proposes.
145. On the fundamental role of repetition in myth, see Lévi-Strauss, 1955.

> [T]he rickety child was taken to a smithy. A tub was filled with water. This water, by plunging pieces of hot iron amongst it, was raised to as high a temperature as was comfortable for a bath. The blacksmith then received the child from the mother, and bathed it in this water. He also gave the child a little of the water to drink.[146]

Smiths, cows, and milk

I hope to have established that Wayland and his kin fit comfortably into the web of associations around smiths and builders in Indo-European traditions. While the reader may have noticed that nothing has yet been said about cows, they are now coming over the horizon. Many of the figures so far discussed have what has been called a "bovine dimension",[147] and many cases of such a dimension have been noted and analyzed by Jacques Merceron.[148] Here I will run through some of these, then return to Wayland and his family.

I first came across a cow-smith connection in looking at Irish folklore. One of the best-known Irish legendary figures is a Cow of Plenty, called the "grey" or "green cow of the smith", Glas Ghaibhneann or Ghaibhleann or, in the south of Ireland, Glas Ghainach,[149] the name often Englished as Glas Gavlen. The most widespread story is that the Glas gave enough milk to feed the whole world until a wicked woman milked her through a sieve—at which point the offended cow departed never to return. The cow's name links her to a blacksmith, or perhaps to *the* blacksmith Gobán; but there is no story to connect them—other than to say that she is his sister in enchanted form.[150]

Other Irish sources, too, link fashioners and smiths with cows. While the Battle of Moytura is over the sovereignty of Ireland, that is, the world, it also carries indications that the stakes in this war are the cows of Ireland. Bress, son of a Fomorian father and a Tuatha Dé mother, has become king of the Tuatha Dé. He is a tyrannous and stingy ruler—in insular Celtic tradition a king must be generous above all things—and one aspect of his bad kingship is that his father's people, the Fomorians, have taken the cows of Ireland as their tribute. The Dagda has built a castle for Bress. As a reward for his labors, the Dagda asks for only a single heifer (*dairt*; §31-32).[151] At the conclusion of the battle, the

146. Gregor, 1881, p. 45.

147. Sterckx and Oudaer, 2014, p. 8, 10.

148. Merceron, 2020.

149. Ó hÓgáin, 2006, p. 270-271; Merceron, 2020, p. 21-25.

150. Curtin, 1894, p. 283. The only real attempt I have seen to explain the name is John Carey's noting (2019, P. 44-46) that both Goibniu and Tvaṣṭr̥ are the providers of a drink that gives immortality. Cf. Dumézil's contention (1924, p. 174-175) that the cow must have replaced Goibniu's healing beer.

151. Gray, 1982, p. 30-31.

cow, who must have given birth in the meantime, calls her calf,[152] and all the other cows respond by "grazing", that is, emerging from their captivity (§165, pp. 70-71).[153] This is followed by the defeat and banishing of the Fomorians.

A set of tales told primarily in the northwest of Ireland[154] reproduces elements of the medieval Battle of Moytura: named characters include Balor of the Evil Eye, his daughter's son the hero Lugh, and the smith Gobán. Here, however, the struggle is not over world sovereignty or all the cows in Ireland, but over a single beautiful, abundant, and universally coveted cow, the Glas Ghaibhleann. She belongs to the smith, but Balor, here the king of Tory Island off the Donegal coast, succeeds in stealing her. The pursuit of the cow will lead to Lugh being conceived and eventually to the death of Balor.

The link between the Dagda and the River Boyne, already mentioned, is also a bovine link: in Irish the name of the river and the lady is Bóann, interpreted as Bó Fhinn or White Cow; the name *Bououínda* is already given as the name of an Irish river in Ptolemy's second-century CE *Geography*.[155] The Irish goddess Brigit was the patroness not only of smithcraft, but also of cattle, like St Brigit after her.[156] St Gobnait performed her most famous miracle by mobilizing bees as defensive weapons to protect a herd of cattle from rustlers.[157]

On a more everyday note, Irish tradition associates blacksmiths particularly with dairy products. Putting a piece of blacksmith's iron in fresh milk guarantees that no one can steal the butter out of it.[158] On a more ancient note, there are a number of Gaulish shrines with inscriptions that link Borvo, the god of bubbling water and springs, an exemplar of the fire-in-water theme,[159] and the cow-goddess Damona.[160]

In speaking of Vedic literature one must be careful, since here virtually anything good can be called a cow.[161] We have seen that one of the major Vedic myths is

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152. Oddly, she's still called a heifer, by definition a cow who hasn't given birth.

153. In the *Aided Chloinne Tuireann* 'Fate of the Children of Turenn', a story found in manuscripts from the sixteenth century on, it is Lugh himself who demands the return of the cows and casts *draidheacht* 'druidry' on the Fomorians so that all the cows of the men of Ireland return to the doors of their houses (O'Duffy, 1901, p. 16, 83).

154. E.g., O'Donovan, 1856, p. 18-21, n. 5; Curtin, 1894, p. 283-312.

155. Claudius Ptolemaeus, *Geography* 2.1. It is not clear whether the *-uinda* here already means 'white', as in later Celtic languages, or whether it still primarily carries the Indo-European meaning of 'wise, intelligent, to find', in which case the Gaulish would mean 'cow-finder'. In either case, the bovine connection is clear.

156. Torma, 2004.

157. E.M. Guest, 1937, p. 379.

158. Danaher, 1966, p. 86; Guibert de la Vaissière, 2002, p. 183, 189.

159. Sterckx and Oudaer, 2014, p. 20.

160. Lajoye, 2008a, p. 103-108; Merceron, 2020, p. 35-36.

161. Srinivasan, 1979, p. 1.

that of Indra smiting a great enemy using a bolt made by a craftsman, usually Tvaṣṭṛ, in one hymn Kāvya Uśanas. For a number of these enemies—Vala, the serpent Vṛtra, literally 'encloser', and a mysterious group of beings called the Paṇis—the point of the smiting is to rescue stolen and constrained cows. Tvaṣṭṛ himself, the great craftsman, is said in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* (2.3.1.77-78) to be the son of Gau 'Cow'. *Ṛg Veda* 1.83.5 says that Kāvya Uśanas "drove the cows together",[162] a line that makes one think of the Dagda in the Battle of Moytura. The Ṛbhus, the craftsman-brothers, originally mortal, gained admittance to the sacrifice through a series of feats of creation. Among other marvels, they made a cow (RV 1.161.3; 4.34.9: specifically a milch-cow, *dhenú*) which is milked for "nectar (1.20.3) and is all-stimulating and omniform (4.33.8)".[163] On two occasions it is said that the Ṛbhus put the mother together with her calf (1.110.8; 1.111.1).

The Sanskrit epics and Purāṇas feature an axe-and-water figure not yet mentioned, since he is not a smith. This is the Brahman Paraśurāma, literally 'Rāma with the Axe', an avatār of Viṣṇu, who uses his axe to kill all the Kṣatriyas in the world after his father Jamadagni is slain by a king who covets Jamadagni's magic cow (e.g., *Mahābhārata* 3.116-117, 12.49; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 9.15-16). Following his mass murder, the earth refuses to grant Paraśurāma a place to live. He goes to the west coast of India and casts his axe into the water, defying the waves to cross over it. The waves do not; in this way he creates the Malabar Coast.[164] The parallel with the story of Tuirbe was noted by Whitley Stokes,[165] then by Joel Charpentier and now by Brian Collins.[166]

We have alluded to the story of the churning of the Ocean of Milk to produce Immortality, and which produces deadly poison along with it. I'll just remind the reader that it is an ocean of *milk*...

In the *Šāhnāma* story in which Farīdūn, aided by Kāva the smith, dethrones the evil king Żaḥḥāk, the motivation for the action is that Żaḥḥāk murders the splendidly beautiful and abundant and virtuous cow Barmāya, who had served as Farīdūn's wetnurse.[167] Farīdūn's mace is topped with the head of a cow (or ox: *gorz-ī gāwsar*).

In Greek mythology, bovine and fabrician associations converge on the goddess Hera, the mother of the divine smith Hephaistos. It has been argued that her name itself can be interpreted as "heifer";[168] and, distinctively if not

162. Jamison and Brereton, 2014, p. 211; Renou, 1953.

163. Macdonell, 1897, p. 132.

164. Charpentier, 1927, p. 113.

165. Stokes, 1893a; 1893b, p. 489; 1895, p. 77.

166. Collins, 2020, p. 191-194. Collins 2021 offers a possible genealogy of motifs—the first I know of—leading to the parallel between Paraśurāma and Tuirbe.

167. Khaleghi-Motlegh, 1988, p. 61-64.

168. Van Windekens, 1958.

uniquely,[169] from Homer on she is regularly called *boôpis* 'cow-eyed' or 'cow-faced', an epithet that seems to go back to Mycenaean times.[170] According to Pausanias's second-century *Geography* (2.17.1), as a baby Hera was nursed by three sisters, one of them named Euboia 'good cow'. That proto-Greek speakers had a cow goddess is suggested by the Linear B term Bowia, apparently a divine name,[171] 'lady of cattle'.[172]

When Typhôn attacks the gods, they are terrified and flee to Egypt, where they hide disguised in animal form. Hephaistos takes the form of an ox (*boï̋*; Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 28); Hera that of a 'snowy cow' (*nivea... vacca*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.330). None of the other gods takes bovine shape.

Hera's name is given to Zeus's son Herakles, and she adopts him as part of his apotheosis after death (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.7.7). Some of his exploits involve cattle: his eighth labor is to clean the cowsheds of Augeus, and in his tenth labor, most closely parallel to some of the stories we are looking at, he carries out a cattle raid against the monstrous Geryon, who is triple-headed (Hesiod, *Theogony* 287) or triple-bodied (Apollodorus, *Library* 2.5.10) and who possesses wonderful cattle.

When Daidalos was working for King Minos, his queen, Pasiphaë, had fallen in love with a white bull given to her husband by Poseidon. In order to fulfil her bestial desire, she persuaded Daidalos to make her a cow costume so that she could copulate with the bull. The result of this was the birth of the half-human, half-bovine Minotaur, who was enclosed in the Labyrinth that Daidalos had built (Apollodorus *Library* 3.1.3-4), as was Daidalos as punishment for abetting Pasiphaë's crime.

Distinctive to Roman lore is the story of Hercules and Cacus.[173] Several Latin authors tell that on returning through Italy with Geryon's herd of cattle, the herd was stolen by the three-headed giant Cacus—the son of the artificer Volcanus (e.g., Virgil, *Aeneid*, 8.198).[174] While Hercules was asleep, Cacus purloined some of the young cows. Upon awakening, Hercules discovered the theft. One of the remaining cows started mooing, and the stolen cows lowed in response, revealing their whereabouts. This recalls the Dagda's heifer who brings back the cattle who had been distrained by the Fomorians by calling her calf. Hercules found and killed Cacus and proceeded on his way.

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169. O'Brien, 1993.

170. Ruijgh, 1985, p. 156; J.V. O'Brien, 1993, p. 135.

171. Palaima, 1999, p. 448.

172. Chadwick, 1976, p. 95; as the name for a ritual participant, see Sergent, 1990; on Hera, cf. Merceron, 2020, p. 14, n. 4; 88, n. 304.

173. Bréal, 1863; Woodard, 2006, p. 189-203.

174. Rosen, 1838, p. xix-xx, connects Indra/Vr̥tra and Hercules/Cacus; since then, see Bréal, 1863; texts and discussion in Woodard, 2006, p. 189-199.

In all of these traditions, a legendary smith is linked to one or more legendary bovines. This, again, is not an association that can be explained by borrowing or by the nature of smithcraft—or of cows. In the Indo-European context, I think we can interpret the connection as related to the mytheme of fire in water. In most of the examples we have seen, the fire is hidden in the water, and accessing it requires a dose of violence: the water boils, bubbles, explodes, like water from a spring or around a red-hot piece of metal; one might say it churns. In these at least largely bovine-pastoral societies, dependent on dairy products for a large part of their protein requirements, the ratio fire : water :: butter : milk suggests itself, with golden butter emerging from the churning—and requiring a churning for it to emerge.
With these proposals in mind, let us return to England.

Bell Wade's Cow

In English legend, Wayland seems to be associated only with horses. But stories about his father Wade feature a very imposing cow. As noted above, from the sixteenth century at least, Wade has been attributed features of the area around Whitby in Yorkshire, notably a set of standing stones ("Wade's Grave"), Mulgrave Castle, and a road, Wade's Causeway. The Causeway, running through Wheeldale Moor, is first mentioned in print on a map in 1720. A story about the Causeway first appears in the *Eboracum* (1736: 35) of the Yorkshire antiquarian Francis Drake:

> a *Roman* road which runs... for many miles over these vast moors and morasses towards *York*. This extraordinary road, not now made use of, is called, by the country people, Wade's causey; and they tell a ridiculous traditional story of *Wade's wife and her Cow* (k) as the reason of the making of it.

Note k reads:

> The story is, that *Wade* had a cow, which his wife was obliged to milk at a great distance, on these moors; for her better convenience, he made this causway, and she helped him by bringing great quantities of stones in her apron; but the strings breaking once with the weight, as well they might, a huge heap (about twenty cart load) is shown that dropped from her. The rib of this monstrous cow is still kept in *Moult-grave castle*.

In 1779, the Whitby topographer Lionel Charlton describes Wade's grave as made up of two seven-foot high standing stones about twelve feet apart, a circumstance that

> gave rise to the current report, which still prevails, that he was a giant in bulk and stature. And so far have the common people been infatuated

> with this opinion, that they now shew such as visit the remains of that castle a huge bone, which they affirm to be one of the ribs of Bell Wade's cow; believing her, as well as her owner, to have been of an enormous size. But to me this appears a mere fiction; for the bone now preserved there has doubtless belonged to some fish, probably a whale; though such a suggestion is by no means agreeable to its present possessors.

As the reader will note, it is not clear in Charlton's text whether Bell is the name of the wife or of the cow—it's usually taken to be the former, but Hilda Ellis Davidson,[175] for instance, takes it to be the cow's name and links her to other bountiful cows of the type I have been discussing. In fact, Bell or Belle is a pretty good name for a cow, while for a woman it would probably be a form of Belle. But the possibility has been raised[176] that our Bell is a cognate of the Norse goddess Beyla whose name, it has been argued, means 'dairymaid' from *baula* 'cow' (in the *Poetic Edda*, *Lokasenna* 55-56).[177]

To what extent the country folk kept telling this cow story is not clear. The owners of the castle, at least, with their giant bone, were maintaining it. Some decades later, George Young,[178] who is even more sceptical than Charlton, again relegates the cow to a note, which reads:

> According to one edition of these fables, Wade's wife's causey was laid to accommodate her in crossing the moors to milk her cow. The cow, it seems, partook of the gigantic stature of her owners; and, above 100 years ago, some wag contrived to make the jawbone of a young whale pass for a rib of Bell Wade's cow. The precious relic was long shewn under this name at old Mulgrave castle; it now lies neglected in the joiner's shop beside the present Mulgrave castle. It is 4 feet long, and 3 or 4 inches in diameter, and is carved all over with initials, representing the names of numerous pilgrims who formerly repaired to Mulgrave, to present their offerings at the shrine of credulity.

Here, then, it is the giant Wade—father of a smith and, if Villcinus is indeed related to Volcanus, son of one as well—who is the owner, or the husband of the owner, of the wonderful giant cow.

These are the kinds of specific correspondences that suggest a common source, homology or genetic relationship rather than analogy or typological parallels.[179] As Dumézil wrote of the association of a heroic slayer of a three-

175. Ellis Davidson, 1998, p. 38.

176. By an anonymous author in the Wikipedia article "Wade's Causeway" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wade%27s_Causeway), accessed April 2021.

177. Dumézil, 1952 [1973], p. 100-101; cf. McKinnell, 1989, p. 256. Dumézil rejects the "cow" connection and opts for "bee".

178. Young, 1817, p. 724.

179. Dumézil, 1949, p. 242-243.

headed monster with a smith or carpenter—without even worrying about a cow—"elle n'est pas de celles qui s'imposent sous tous les climats à l'imagination humaine".[180]

The Milky Way

Since before human beings first looked upward, and everywhere on the planet, the Milky Way has been an unmistakable feature of the night skies—or was until the light pollution of the twentieth century[181] made us and our children ignorant of what had been familiar to all previous generations. Its visibility makes the Milky Way unique among what Eratosthenes called the celestial circles: both the celestial equator and the ecliptic, that is, the path of the sun's risings through the year, marked by the constellations of the Zodiac, must be inferred and projected into the sky; the Milky Way is there, waiting for you.

Throughout history and across the continents the Milky Way has been conceived as a path or a river, often the path of birds or the road souls follow on their way to the other world.[182] But its association with milk or with cows seems distinctive to Indo-European languages or to translations from them. Versions of "Milky Way" in non-Indo-European, as well as a good number of Indo-European, languages are calques from the Greek *Galaxías* or *Galaktikós kúklos* 'the milky circle' and its Latin translations *Orbis lactea* and *Via Lactea* (at least these always taken to be translations, not old Latin names): for instance, English Milky Way, Arabic Darb al-Labana, or Basque Esne Bidea. But we also find apparently independent associations of the Milky Way with rivers and cows in Irish, with rivers, cows, and milk in Indian traditions—these are the kind of correspondences that suggest a common source older than classical Greece, that is, that may explain the Greek usage rather than being explained by it.

This section of the paper will be (yet) more speculative than the earlier ones. The best way to introduce it may, again, be through my own passage, starting again from Ireland. In doing research on names of and stories about the stars and constellations in the archives of the Irish Folklore Department at University College, Dublin, in the 1970s, one of the things that jumped out was that what is probably the most common name for the Milky Way is is Bealach na Bó Finne or Bóthar na Bó Finne, the Path or Road of the White Cow.[183] Since the Boyne, the White Cow, is the royal river of Ireland, this makes one think of another end of the Indo-European-speaking world: in India, the Milky Way is the Ākāśa

180. Dumézil, 1939, p. 7.

181. Bertola, 2003.

182. R.H. Allen, 1899, p. 474-484; Berezkin, 2009; Witzel, 2012, p. 40.

183. Dinneen, 1904, p. 119; Ó Dónaill, 1977, p. 95. To the point that the Irish-language translation of Isaac Asimov's novel *Foundation* calls the Galactic Empire *Impireacht na Bó Finne* 'the Empire of the White Cow' (Asimov, 1955 [2014]).

Gaṅgā, the 'Celestial Ganges'. In India clearly, and perhaps once in Ireland, the Milky Way in the sky was thought of as the reflection or continuation of the sacred or royal river. While, as far as I know, no stories explicitly make the connection for Ireland, we do have, between modern usage and the place-name lore, an earthly river called Cow that is closely connected to a legendary artificer and having the same name as the Milky Way.

Further exploration raised other apparent correspondences. Here I will just present those that seem relevant for the smith-cow node that we have been exploring.

Behind the Greek term there lies a tale (e.g., Eratosthenes, *Katasterismoi* 44; Hyginus, *Astronomia* 2.43). After the birth of Herakles, the son of Zeus and a mortal mother and whom Hera very much resents, Zeus and Athena, or Zeus and Hermes, plot to make the hero immortal. Through a trick, Hera is given the infant Herakles to suckle. Either she realizes the ruse and pushes the child away, or baby Herakles bites so hard that Hera thrusts him from her. In either case, he has drunk of divine milk; and in both cases, some of the milk spurts out into the sky and forms the Milky Way.

Indian tradition gives several different names and stories for the Milky Way. Probably the most important of these are river names, as appears to be the case in Ireland. In the Vedas, this seems to be the Sarasvatī.[184] It is striking, although by no means unique, that the Sarasvatī is identified as a river of milk and ghee (*Ṛg Veda* 7.95.2, 8.21.18). Since the Purāṇas, at least, the Milky Way has been identified as the Celestial Ganges, which, to gratify a prayer of King Bhagiratha, descended from heaven through the meanders of Lord Śiva's hair to fall onto the earth. It may be significant that the king prayed for the river's descent at a place called Gokarṇa 'Cow's Ear'; and the river emerges from a glacier called Gomukh 'Cow-face'.[185]

Another Indian term that has been said to mean Milky Way is Aryamnaḥ Panthā,[186] the path of Aryaman, a path followed by the souls of the dead. Given, however, its close relation to the stations of the sun, Alfred Hillebrandt[187] argues that instead it represents the Ecliptic. In both cases, the Path of Aryaman would indicate a great curved road in the sky. We will see that this term seems

184. Hillebrandt, 1891, p. 382-383; Witzel, 1984, p. 218.

185. In one of the Vedic variants of the story of Indra freeing captive cows, the cows have been taken by a gang of demons called the Paṇis. Indra sends the divine bitch Saramā to get them back. But once she arrives, the Paṇis bribe her with a bellyfull of milk from the wonderful cows; she then goes back to Indra and reports that the Paṇis don't have the cows. Secondary and tertiary sources (e.g., R.H. Allen, 1899, p. 477; Kramrisch, 1975, p. 241-245) refer to a continuation of this story, which I have not been able to confirm in the sources: Indra, suspecting trickery, gives Saramā a kick in the midriff, and she spews up the magic milk, forming the Milky Way.

186. Grimm, 1815; Weber, 1886, p. 12, n. 1; 1893, p. 84, n. 2; Bengtson, 2016.

187. Hillebrandt, 1903, p. 79; followed by Dumézil, 1958, p. 142.

to be cognate with a Germanic term for the Milky Way. Note that in *Ṛg Veda* 1.139, Aryaman is said to milk the cows of the Aṅgirases; Sāyana's commentary identifies these cows as *kāmadughā* 'Wishing Cows'.

There is some indication that the Iranian river-goddess Anāhitā can be identified with the Milky Way,[188] and it is also called *rāh-ī Kāvūs* 'the Way of Kāvūs', the flying king.[189] Beyond this, there is a feature of the sky called *gōzihr* in modern Persian, usually derived from Avestan *gao-čiθra* 'semen of the bovine', but which could also mean 'having a bovine face, form'.[190] This was a name used for the moon, then for the two lunar nodes identified as a celestial dragon. In the *Bundahišn* (perhaps ninth century), *brēh i gōčihr* 'the brightness of Gōzihr' is identified as the Way of Kāvūs, that is, the Milky Way (5B.22 or 23, depending on the edition).[191]

A number of Western European traditions give the Milky Way the same name as an earthly road, usually a pilgrimage road. It is often called the Way of St James, the road leading to Santiago de Compostella (one translation of the town's name being 'Field of Stars'); but it is also called the Road to Rome and in England Walsingham Way, the route to the shrine of St Mary in Norfolk.[192] Apparently older than these Christian usages, however, are the old German names *Iringes Weg* 'Iring's Way' and *Irminstrasse* 'Irmin's Street'.[193] The element *ir-* is said to mean 'general, universal'; a number of authors, starting with Jacob Grimm,[194] have seen Irmen as a cognate of the Vedic Aryaman,[195] who is the god of the mass of humanity. While these are ways and roads, they do not seem to correspond to any earthly road. On the other hand, there is an ancient Ermine Street running through England, from London to York. As Grimm argued,[196] these indications suggest that the Germanic-speaking peoples, like the Indians and perhaps like the Irish (if the river and road are named for the same White Cow), once saw a celestial feature as the reflection or continuation of an earthly feature.

Here there does seem to be a link to Wayland, through his son. Widia/Viðga/Witige becomes a liege of Þiðrek/Dietrich, but leaves him to serve Ermenrikr/Ermanarich, that is to say, 'King Irmen', the namesake of the Milky Way. The oldest mention of him that we have, in *Widsith*, identifies Wudga (l. 124) as part of the *innweorud Earmanrices* (l. 111) 'troop of Eormenric'.

188. Lommel, 1954, p. 406, n. 6; Witzel, 1984.
189. MacKenzie, 1964, p. 521, n. 53.
190. Panaino, 2005, p. 804; cf. the spot where the Ganges emerges at Gomukh 'cow-face'.
191. Brunner, 1987; MacKenzie, 2002.
192. R.H. Allen, 1899, p. 479-480.
193. Meissner, 1918.
194. Grimm, 1815.
195. Haug, 1854; de Vries, 1952; Bengtson, 2016.
196. Grimm, 1815, p. 36; 1875 [1882], p. 359.

We have, then, in a number of traditions, a legendary smith, the supersmith, who is, or whose close relation is, the proprietor of a superlative cow. In some of these, another piece of the complex is astral, with the extraordinary cow, the extraordinary smith or a close relative, connected to the Milky Way.

Watling Street

In England, Ermine Street does not appear as a name for the Milky Way. But Ermine Street is only one of what in England are called Roman Roads—even though they certainly seem to antedate the Romans. The *Laws of Edward the Confessor*, apparently actually composed in the twelfth century, name four roads under the king's direct protection (Section 12c): *Watlingestrete, Fosse, Hykenildstrete, Erningstrete, quorum duo in longitudinem regni, alii uero in latitudinem distenduntur*, that is, 'Watling Street, Fosse Way, Icknield Street, Ermine Street, of which two stretch through the length of the kingdom, the others through its breadth' (cf. E. Guest 1857: 99). They are beautifully named by the thirteenth-century chronicler Robert of Gloucester, who attributes their construction to the legendary King Beli:

> fair weyes many on ther ben in Englonde,
> but four most of all there ben I understonde,
> that thurgh an old kyng were made erethis
> as man schal in this boke aftir here telle iwis.
> fram the south into the north takith Ermingestrete
> fram the east into the west goeth Ikenildstrete
> fram southeast to nordwest, that is sumdel grete
> fram Dover into Chestre goth Watlyngstrete,
> the ferth of thise is most of alle that tillet fram Toteneys
> fram the one end of Cornwaile anone to Cateneys,
> fram the southwest to nordest into Englondes ends,
> Fosse men callith thilke way, that by mony town doth wende;
> thiese foure weyes on this londe kyng Belin the wise
> made and ordeyned hem with gret fraunchise,
> for whoso dide therein only thefte other ony wouz
> he made juggement therof and gret vengeaunce ynouz.[197]

These "Roman roads" have for some centuries been of interest to walkers, local historians, amateur and professional archaeologists, and now proponents of astrogeography and ley lines.[198]

While Ermine Street corresponds to the German *Irmenes Weg*, it is Watling Street, running between Chester in the northwest and Dover in the southeast, that is

197. Cited in Grimm, 1815, p. 31; cf. W.A. Wright, 1887, p. 12-13.

198. Thomas, 1916; Codrington, 1918; Margary, 1955-7; Taylor and Taylor, 2019.

also a name for the Milky Way.[199] Watling Street itself is first mentioned in a late-ninth-century treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, defining the border between the English and the Danelaw, and appears in other Old English sources after that. Its first recorded identification with the Milky Way seems to be in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, composed in the late 1370s or early 1380s. Chaucer is citing the Greek story that the Milky Way is the burn mark resulting from Apollo's son Phaethon losing control of his father's chariot of the sun and scorching the sky (ll. 935 ff.).

> Now, quod he thoo, cast up thine eye,
> See yonder, lo, the *galoxie*,
> Which men clepeth the milky weye,
> For hit is white; and some, parfeye,
> Callen hyt *Watlyng strete*,
> that onis was brente with the hete,
> whan that the sunnis sonne the rede,
> which hite Phaeton, wolde lede
> algate his fathirs carte and gie.

The identification is made again in Gavin Douglas's 1513 Scots version of the *Aeneid* (3.8.22), and yet again in the 1549 *Complaynte of Scotland*, in which the author is talking about where to see comets:[200] "it aperis oft in the quhyt circle callit circulus lacteus, the quhilk the marynalis callis vatlant streit."

I want to raise the possibility that here, too, we have a refraction of an old conception linked to Wayland and Wade. To an eye (my eye) only mildly self-educated in Germanic mythology and philology, "Watling" looks like a diminutive or patronymic from the name Wade/Wate, as duckling is of duck. Wayland, the son of Wade, would therefore be a Watling, and it would be justified to add the Milky Way to the English dossier of the smith and the cow. This may indeed be a case of a little learning being a dangerous thing, but let's see where Watling Street leads.

I am not, of course, the first to have thought of this connection, but it has usually been foreclosed before being pursued very far. There are four reasons that have told against it.

Age. To link Watling Street with Wayland and Wade and Irminstrasse, the original conception must be very old, going back to common Germanic times. But references to the Milky Way as Watling Street are absent in Old English texts and first appear only in Middle English. This is pointed out by Henry Bradley in his entry "Watling Street", first published in 1923, for the Oxford English Dictionary (and preserved word for word in the OED to this day). The implication drawn from this late attestation is that the name of an earthly

199. Skeat, 1900, p. 263, n. 936; H. Bradley, 1923.

200. Stewart, 1979, p. 46.

road, cited in Old English sources, was only later, in Middle English, applied to the heavenly one. In his comments on this entry, J.R.R. Tolkien questions "the usual assumption, apparently also made in the Dictionary, that [Watling Street as a name of the Milky Way] is a secondary application,"[201] pointing to parallels in other Germanic languages, notably the fact that Ermine Street, another "Roman road", is, like Watling Street, not recorded at all until the Middle English period and yet "corresponds to the German *Irminstrasse* = Milky Way." Besides this, "Vatlant Streit" is given in the *Complaynt of Scotland* as a name for the Milky Way used by Scottish sailors on the North Sea, who are "unlikely to draw their descriptions from the land-traffic on the North-West route away south in England." This argument "suggests that we have here an old mythological term that was first applied to the *eald enta geweorc* [the ancient works of giants] after the English invasion." And he concludes his discussion, rather sadly, "Its original sense is probably lost for ever."[202]

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201. Tolkien, 1924, p. 21-22.

202. It is, I think, worth noting that in the development of his Legendarium, J.R.R. Tolkien, who was teaching at Oxford during Nick Allen's student days there, was deeply influenced by some of the material we have been considering. As an Oxford undergraduate Tolkien would hike out to Wayland's Smithy and the White Horse, and he continued these visits later with his own children. A central concern of Tolkien's was the largely lost pre-Christian "mythology of England" (Hostetter and Smith, 1996). In this regard he was particularly taken with two ideas: that of Wade's magic boat Guingelot, the consonance of which he would turn into the Elvish Wingelot, the boat of Eärendil the Mariner (whose name is a transform of an Old English name for the Morning Star); and that of a road on earth that is also in heaven. As John Garth puts it (2020, p. 142): "For Tolkien, it was a never-ending fascination that the Anglo-Saxons called one of Britain's old roads *Watling Street*. It was also their name for the Milky Way... Judging that some irretrievable astronomical myth lay behind the name, Tolkien had once pondered recreating just such a 'lost tale', but never pursued it" (the issue is explored at greater depth in K. Larsen, 2021). In Tolkien's mythology, there once was a road—given the geography of his world, this had to be a sea-road across the Western Ocean—leading directly from this realm to the other. His myth treats the roundness of the earth as a calamity: in an echo of the story of the Tower of Babel, here human arrogance is punished by a bending of the earth, so that since then sailing west just brings you east again. The other realm is still accessible to the very few who find the lost road, the straight road that leaves the curvature of the earth and "ascends" to a kind of heaven. While elements of this construct can be cited from as far back as 1913, a set of notes from 1918 (Smith, 2004, p. 96-97) proposes stories around Wayland and Watling Street—not linking them directly, but, in the space of a couple of small pieces of paper, developing each and weaving them around each other and around the figure of Eärendil the Mariner, forming "the beginning of Tolkien's own mythology" (Carpenter, 1977, p. 71).

Watling or Wacling? There is uncertainty over whether the original form was Watling or Wacling, since both appear in manuscripts. In the latter case, there would be no justification for making a connection with Wade. Two place-name studies[203] argue that the original form had a *-t-*, which was misread as *-c-* by some scribes due to the similarity of form of the two letters in Medieval script. Bradley, in the OED, opts for an original -cl-, since "The forms with *tl* for *cl*, which have been universal from the 12th c, are all but non-existent in MSS. of pre-Conquest date; a solitary example is *Wætlinga ceaster* in *OE. Martyrology*, *St. Alban*, 22 June (MS. Cott. Julius A. x. fol.112, written *c* 975)." But this is not true. The late-ninth-century Treaty between Albert and Guthrum gives *Wætlingastræt*, with *-tl-*, as is shown just below on this very page of the Dictionary. Further: "The change of Wæclinga into Wætlinga can hardly be due to the close resemblance of *c* and *t* in OE. script (though many instances of the latter form in modern editions of OE. texts are mere editorial misreadings), because the existence of sense 2 [the Milky Way] seems to show that the name of the Roman road was preserved in popular and not merely literary tradition." Now this is a very odd argument. First Bradley asserts, apparently on the basis of the number of extant readings, that it was originally a *-c-*; then that the source of the difference in letters cannot be scribal confusion, since the term had been preserved in oral tradition, outside of written evidence—and we know this because of its use for the Milky Way, a usage that was just implied to be late and literary.

Location. Neither Wayland's Smithy nor Wade's Causeway is located on Watling Street. The first is near Icknield Street, the second well to the north of York, the terminus for Ermine Street. But in fact many of the old roads were called 'Watling Street'.[204]

-ing* or *-ling* or *-l-ing? Proposing a link between Watling and Wade would require dividing the name Wat-ling or Wat-l-ing. But most scholars have divided it Watl-ing. The characterizing and patronymic suffix *-ing* is common Germanic, from Proto-Germanic **-ingaz*, as in gelding 'one who has been gelded'. Some form of the suffix is used in all the Germanic languages, particularly as a marker of descent and tribal affiliation, as Volsung 'descendant of Vaelsa', Browning, 'descendant of someone named Brown'. *-ling* would be a combination of this suffix with *-el* or *-le*, which has a number of meanings, one of which is diminutive.[205]

In other Germanic languages *-ling* forms diminutives and patronymics; but in Old English it is only attested as meaning "person or thing belonging to or

203. Duignan, 1912, p. 119; Skeat, 1913, p. 62.
204. Duignan, 1902, p. 162; H. Bradley, 1923.
205. H. Bradley, 1908a.

concerned with (what is denoted by the primary substantive)",[206] as in hireling, youngling, underling. It does not take on a diminutive/patronymic meaning until the Middle English period:

> In Eng. the earliest certain instance of this use appears to be *codling*, recorded c 1314 (*kitling*, which appears c 1300, being of dubious formation), in the 15th c. we find *gosling* (of which the earliest quoted form, *gesling*, points to adoption from ON.), and *duckling*.

If *-ling* as a patronymic appeared only in the Middle English period, this means that Watlings are children not of Wade or Wata, but of someone named Watla or Waetla or Waetel, or indeed Waecla. Such an attribution in fact has a long history, going back to the *Chronicle* attributed to Florence of Worcester and dated around 1140. For the year 1013 it records:

> *... in septentrionali plaga Weatlinga-stræta, id est, strata quam filii Weatlae regis... per Angliam straverunt.*[207]
> ... to the north of Weatling Street, that is, the street that the sons of King Weatla... laid across England ...

The *Chronicle* of Roger de Hoveden, written somewhat later in the century, repeats this whole section word-for-word for the same year, except that he writes *Wethlingastrete* and *filii Wethle regis*.[208]

Most modern authorities follow these chroniclers. Weatla or Wethle would have been another, more mysterious, Germanic hero, father of sons who built Watling Street, but unrelated to Wade, Wayland, and company. A passage from John Richard Green's book *The Making of England* is characteristic:[209]

> In the star-strown track of the Milky Way, our fathers saw the road by which the hero-sons of Waetla marched across the sky, and poetry only hardened into prose when they transferred the name of Watling Street to the great trackway which passed athwart the island they had won, from London to Chester.

The hero-sons of Waetla are taken to have been a Saxon tribe whose name is preserved both in Watling Street and in Watlingchester, the old name of the city of St Albans in Hertfordshire. As the OED ("Watling Street") puts it: "*Wæclinga Strǽt*; the first word, app. the genit. pl. of the name of a (real or imaginary) family or clan." Waetla and the Waeclingas are what one usually finds in encyclopedia articles and local histories.[210] As far as I can tell, the assertions that the names of the road and the city come from that of a tribe

206. H. Bradley, 1908b.
207. Thorpe, 1848, p. 166.
208. Stubbs, 1868, p. 77.
209. Green, 1881, p. 166.
210. E.g. Harrison, 2000, p. 64.

(as, for instance, in the Wikipedia page "Watling Street" as of July 2021) give references only to other such assertions.
Outside of Florence's *Chronicle*, apparently copied by Roger, the only pieces of evidence for a King Waetla or Waecla, whether historical or legendary, or, indeed, of a tribe of Waetlingas or Waeclingas, seem to be the names "Watling Street" and "Watlingchester". *Waetla, in particular, may be a philological phantom, a back-formation to explain the different forms of Watling, as if we reconstructed *Duckla as the father of the Ducklings. This is not the case for the other Roman Roads: Fosse Way's name comes from it lying along the great ditch on the edge of Wales; Icknield Street seems to have been named after the Iceni, a well-attested British tribe; and Ermine Street, as we have seen, has Germanic parallels.[211]
Given the comparative material that we have been considering, and the apparent lack of external evidence for a Waetla, one is sorely tempted to connect Watling Street with Wade.

Wade and Watling

Others before me have raised the possibility of such a connection, which certainly suggests itself to the unwary. I feel great sympathy with the author of a now-defunct Wikipedia article "Waetla"—still archived in March 2021 at https://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/1660317, but taken down by June—that identifies Waetla with Wade:

> **Waetla** is a Germanic mythological character who, depending on location, is also known as **Vadi** (Norse), **Wada** (Anglo-Saxon), **Wate** (Middle High German) or **Wade** (modern English).

At some point cooler heads prevailed. Waetla now only appears in the "Watling Street" article, and the article "Wade (folklore)" (last accessed July 2021) begins:

> **Wade** (Old English **Wada** [wɑdɑ]), is the English name for a common Germanic mythological character who, depending on location, is also known as **Vadi** (Norse) and **Wate** (Middle High German).

But long before this, Jacob Grimm faced the same temptation. It is raised in the second (1844) and third editions of his *Deutsche Mythologie*, only to be questioned:

> [Vilkinus] begets with the merwoman a gigantic son *Vadi*, AS. *Wada*..., OHG. *Wato*, so named I suppose because, like another Christopher, he *waded* with his child on his shoulder through the Grœnasund where it is nine yards deep (between Zealand, Falster and Moen); the Danish hero *Wate* in Gudrun is identical with him; the AS. *Wada* is placed toward

211. The tribe of the Earningas, cited to explain the name of Ermine Street, may also be such a phantom.

> Helsingen. Old English poetry had much to tell of him, that is now lost: Chaucer names 'Wades boot Guingelot,' and a place in Northumberland is called *Wade's* gap; Wætlingestrêt could only be brought into connexion with him, if such a spelling as Wædling could be made good.[212]

The enthusiastic Viktor Rydberg, for his part, identified Watling Street with Watlings and the Watlings as sons of Wade.[213] This was a piece of his gargantuan reconstruction of Norse and Germanic mythology, which relied largely on the identification of nominally different characters based on their similar activities and attributes. Here he identified the artisan Ivaldi with Wade and his sons, who are also roadbuilders, as the sons of Wade.

To return to the crux of the problem: Can we justify a division of the name Watling into either Wat-ling or Wat-l-ing?

Three possibilities suggest themselves. One is to criticize the argument from absence. This use of *-ling*, a combination of the diminutive *-le* and the patronymic *-ing*, both separately attested in Old English, could have existed here as it did in other Germanic languages, but does not happen to appear in the extant corpus.

A second argument is from the proximity of speakers of Norse. *-ling* as a patronymic is clearly attested in Old Norse:[214] the children of Yngvi are Ynglings, those of Knútr are Knýtlings.[215] In the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, which provides the first written mention of Watling Street, the road is named because one stretch of it will serve as the boundary between Saxon England and the Danelaw. It is possible that this usage came from the Vikings and replaced whatever the Saxon form of the name had been—as happened, apparently, with the word gosling for a little goose.

A third possibility would be to see Wat-l-ing as involving *both* the diminutive use of *-le-* and the patronymic use of *-ing*. This is what is suggested by no less an authority than W.W. Skeat,[216] who takes Watling to mean the sons of little Wade. He is discussing the name of Wattisham in Suffolk:

> The form *Wates* requires an A.S. nom. *Wæt*; and though we have no record of this except in Latin, we find the allied weak masc. *Wata*, and the dimin. *Wætel*, as in Watling Street, and in Wattisfield. The sense is 'Wæt's home' or 'Wæt's enclosure.' The Latinised form is Wattus, spelt "Uattus rex" in [a charter of 692, Sawyer 45].

The argument here is that there was a Wade or Wat, to whose name was added the diminutive *-el*, well documented in Old English; and to this was added the

212. Grimm, 1875 [1882], p. 376-377.
213. Rydberg, 1886 [2010], p. 674, 714, 735.
214. Bradley, 1903b.
215. Bayldon, 1870, p. 86.
216. Skeat, 1913, p. 6.

genitivizing *-ing*, also well documented. The argument that the combined form *-ling* is not recorded until Middle English hardly holds.
If the objections can be overcome in any of these ways, we have a possible English concordance to an Indo-European construction linking smithery (the word is in the OED), bovinity, and astrality.
As a little coda to this section, I'll just note that that one of the beginnings, or endings, of Watling Street is on the north coast of Kent, next to the village of St Nicholas at Wade. The village name is explained by its location near a former channel that separated the mainland from the Isle of Thanet and had to be waded across. But one can always imagine. And one of the two inns in the village is called the Bell...

Conclusions

If we use Nick Allen's typology, smiths and builders, both revered and feared, can be seen as typifying the fourth function. There may be a functional parallel with the figure of the cow: as a beautiful nourishing being, she is third-functional; as a sacred being, she is first-functional; and both as the prize in warriors' raids and, often, as warlike herself, she is second-functional. Like the Goddess, she walks right across the functions, which is to say that she is a fourth-functional figure herself.
Together, one could interpret the elements surveyed here as surviving fragments of what was once a more coherent story. In the primordial wars between the gods and the anti-gods, the stakes were immortality, sovereignty, fertilizing water, and wealth, wealth understood in the form of the world's cattle or a single quintessential cow. The cow or cows was/were trapped by the monstrous champion of the anti-gods; using a weapon forged by the divine fashioner, smith and/or builder, the champion of the gods killed his counterpart and released the cow(s). As a topic for further exploration, one wonders whether there are celestial analogues to this story: that, for instance, the milk of the wondercow escaped and formed a clearly visible pathway in the sky, which mirrors or extends a major river or road on earth.
But it may not be possible to reconstruct a single coherent proto-myth. We may be dealing, instead, with a field of powerful symbols, each carrying a certain semantic load and certain kinds of associations[217] and which can link up in different ways. The smith/builder is sometimes the owner of the Cow of Plenty, sometimes the son of the owner, sometimes the father of his enemy; a mace or axe is carried by the hero, the craftsman, or the son or father of the legitimate owner. Can such transformations be mapped or predicted, as Dumézil, for instance, was able to interpret some transformations in myths and symbols in terms of the global tendencies of societies (e.g., the Indian valorization

217. Lévi-Strauss, 1962 [2020].

of the priestly, the Germanic valorization of war, the Roman valorization of their own history)? The next step in expanding the toolbox of comparative mythology may be to integrate the kind of synchronic transformational and typological analysis practiced by classical structuralism with the diachronic structuralism of comparative linguistics. Such a synthesis, foreseen, I think, by Nick Allen, would bring together his fascination with classificatory systems[218] and his joyful passion for historical reconstruction.[219]

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