



## Two Lovely Names: on and

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Norbert Oettinger, Stefan Schaffner, Thomas Steer und Eva Tichy



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# MÜNCHENER STUDIEN ZUR SPRACHWISSENSCHAFT

## Information

Ab diesem Heft (*MSS 70/1*) ändert sich die Zusammensetzung des Wissenschaftlichen Beirats und des Herausbergremiums der *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*.

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LAURA MASSETTI

## Two Lovely Names: on Κύπρις and Ἴρις\*

**Abstract:** This paper argues that the Greek god names Κύπρις and Ἴρις are originally individualizing *i*-stem derivatives built on adjectives in *\*-ro-* to the Indo-European roots *\*keup-* ‘to experience a strong feeling(/desire)’ and *\*uejh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to be eager, strive’. Furthermore, Ἴρις may be traced back to the same root as Vedic *Vená-* (“Seeker”), whose description in *RV* X 123 matches that of the Greek goddess.

**Zusammenfassung:** Die Götternamen Κύπρις und Ἴρις lassen sich als *i*-Substantive zu *ro*-Adjektiven erklären, und zwar *\*kupri-* zu indogermanisch *\*keup-* ‚innerlich beben‘ und *\*uih<sub>1</sub>ri-* zu indogermanisch *\*uejh<sub>1</sub>-* ‚sein Augenmerk richten auf, trachten nach‘. Ferner kann Ἴρις auf die gleiche Wurzel wie vedisch *Vená-* zurückgeführt werden, dessen Beschreibung in *RV* X 123 mit derjenigen der griechischen Göttin übereinstimmt.

1. It is common wisdom that the so-called “*i*-substantivization” is a derivational pattern applying to *i*-substantives which are derived from *o*-adjectives.<sup>1</sup> The *i*-suffix is accountable for acrostatic *i*-stems, e.g.

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1 Schindler 1980:390: “Die *o*-stämmige Basis ist ein Adjektiv. Der korrespondierende *i*-Stamm fungiert als Abstraktum”.

Gk. ὄκρις ‘prominence’, ἄκρις ‘peak’ (\*h<sub>2</sub>ók-ri-/\*h<sub>2</sub>ék-ri-) :: ἄκρος ‘sharp’ (\*h<sub>2</sub>ék-ro-), as well as for zero-grade *i*-stems, e.g. Av. *tīyri-* ‘arrow’ (\*[s]tig-ri-) :: *tīyra-* ‘sharp’ (\*[s]tig-ró-),<sup>2</sup> in all branches of Indo-European.<sup>3</sup> The present paper argues that the dossier of non-acrostatic *i*-substantivizations can be enriched with two Greek instances, namely Κύπρις and Ἴρις, two original *i*-stems whose flexion merged into the /-d-/ class (cf. gen.sg. Κύπριδος, Ἰριδος), according to a widespread analogical pattern. In addition to etymologizing the two divine names (§§ 2–3), the case shall be made for Vena (“Seeker”) being the Vedic counterpart of Iris (§ 4). The etymological connection is indeed supported by some distinctive characteristics, which the two figures share (§ 5).

2. As is well known, Κύπρις is an appellative of Aphrodite, the goddess born in Cyprus according to a widespread Greek tradition.<sup>4</sup> As the place-name Κύπρος is probably not Greek, Κύπρις is currently assumed to have no IE etymology either.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, an attempt to explain the divine name in terms of Indo-European implies to separate Κύπρις from Κύπρος and consequently to consider their association as the result of an *interpretatio Graeca*. Actually, the compound Κυπρογενής is explicitly put in connection to the island Cyprus by Hesiod (*Theog.* 200 **Κυπρογενέα** δ’, ὅτι **γέντο** περικλύστῳ ἐνὶ **Κύπρῳ** “**Cyprogenes** since she **was born** on sea-girt **Cyprus**”), while the first attestations of Κύπρις do not relate it to the toponym:

*Il.* 5.330

ὃ δὲ **Κύπριν** ἐπώχετο νηλεῖ χαλκῷ

2 For a parallel “*u*-substantivization” see Nussbaum 1998.

3 Cf. Weiss 1996, Melchert 1999, Nussbaum 1999, Balles 2006, Vine 2006, Weiss 2013.

4 Cf. DELG s.v. Κύπρος. Cyprus is a cult center of Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.362, *HHymn.* 5.65f., 6.1–3).

5 GEW and EDG s.v. Κύπρος: the toponym may be connected with Hurr. \**kab/p-* ‘copper’.

“But he (*sc.* Diomedes) had gone in pursuit of **Kypris** with (his) pitiless bronze”<sup>6</sup>

*HHymn.* 5.1f.

μοῦσά μοι ἔννεπε ἔργα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης,  
**Κύπριδος, ἦτε** θεοῖσιν ἐπὶ γλυκὺν ἴμερον ὄρσε

“Muse, tell me of the doings of Aphrodite rich in gold, **of Kypris, who arouses** sweet **longing** among the gods”

In *HHymn.* 5.2 the expression ἴμερον ὄρσε suggests that Κύπρις is the personification of sexual desire, as confirmed by the meaning of κύπρις (‘desire, love, sex’) in classical and late Greek, e.g. Eur. *Ba.* 773 οἴνου δὲ μηκέτ’ ὄντος οὐκ ἔστιν **κύπρις** “without wine there is no **κύπρις**”.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the collocation [ARROW] – [DESIRE<sub>GEN.</sub> (Κύπρις/Κυπρογένεια)], which is shared by Lat. *Cupido*, may be inherited, as the Atharvavedic evidence suggests:

Pind. *Pyth.* 4.213–217

πότνια δ’ ὀξυτάτων βελέων  
ποικίλαν ἴγγα τετράκναμον Οὐλυμπόθεν  
ἐν ἀλύτῳ ζεύξαισα κύκλῳ  
μαινάδ’ ὄρνιν **Κυπρογένεια** φέρεν  
πρῶτον ἀνθρώποισι

“But the **Kyprogeneia**, queen of **sharpest arrows**, bound the dappled wryneck to the four spokes of the inescapable wheel and brought from Olympus that bird of madness for the first time to men”<sup>8</sup>

6 In Homer the theonym is attested five times only in this episode (*Il.* 5.330, 422, 458, 760, 883).

7 ἔνευνοι· ἐπιτήδειοι τόποι εἰς κύπριν, Κύπρις· πόρνη (Hsch.).

8 For a commentary to the *torquilla*-episode in Pindar, cf. Faraone 1993. Cf. also Aesch. *Prom.* 649–651 [...] Ζεὺς γὰρ ἰμέρου βέλει ἢ πρὸς σοῦ τέθαλπται καὶ ξυναίρεσθαι κύπριν ἢ θέλει “Zeus has been struck by a dart of desire coming from you, and wishes to partake of *kypris* with you”, Theocr. *Id.* 11.16 Κύπριδος ἐκ μεγάλας τό οἱ ἦπατι πᾶξε βέλεμνον “(*sc.* the wound) which the shaft of the great Kypris had fixed (in) his liver.”

Ov. *Ars* 1.261

*Illa, quod est virgo, quod tela Cupidinis odit*

“As she is a virgin and hates **the arrows of Cupido** ...”<sup>9</sup>

AVŚ III 25.1cd

*īsuḥ kāmasya yā bhīmā́ táyā vidhyāmi tvā hṛdī*

“**The arrow of the desire**, which is terrible, with it I pierce your heart”<sup>10</sup>

As has long been suggested,<sup>11</sup> from the formal point of view the divine name may straightforwardly be traced back to a root *\*keup-* ‘to experience a strong feeling(/desire)’,<sup>12</sup> cf. Hitt. *kup-<sup>ta</sup>* ‘to plan, premeditate’ : CLuw. *kupija-*\* (cf. CLuw. *kupijat(i)-*, *kupijatalla/i-* ‘plotmaker’),<sup>13</sup> Skt. *kúpyati* ‘to be angry’, Lat. *cupiō* ‘to desire’.<sup>14</sup> The individuation of further putative cognates in Tocharian remains problematic: Toch. A *kāw<sup>a</sup>* ‘to desire, crave’ and *kāp<sup>a</sup>* ‘to well up, be greedy’ may be denominative formations on *kāwo* ‘desire’, but may belong to *\*k(ū)ep-* ‘to well up’, from which a semantic evolution to ‘love’ is easily conceivable.<sup>15</sup> At any rate, the phraseological coincidence between **Κύπριδος, ἥτε** θεοῖσιν ἐπὶ ἡμερον ὄρσε (*HHymn.* 5.2)

9 For the image in Ovid cf. also *Met.* 5.366, 10.311, *Trist.* IV 10.65.

10 Cf. AVŚ III 25 *passim*. AVŚ III 25 and Pind. *Pyth.* 4.213–219 are strikingly alike and so probably reflect the same ritual, which will be object of detailed discussion elsewhere.

11 Enmann 1886.

12 “Innerlich beben” (LIV<sup>2</sup> s.v.).

13 For *kup-<sup>ta</sup>* :: *kupija-*\* as reflecting an aspectual opposition cf. Melchert 1997, García Ramón 2002. The meanings ‘to plot’, ‘plotmaker’ recall Gk. δολοπλόκος ‘weaving wiles’, referred to Aphrodite in Sapph. fr. 1.1 V., cf. also Theogn. *El.* 2.1362 Κυπρογενές Κυθήρεια δολοπλόκε, Eur. *IA* 1301 δολιόφρων Κύπρις.

14 Cf. also ON *hjúfa* ‘to lament’ (*\*keup-e-*) and Ved. *kopáyati* ‘to shake’ (*\*koup-éje/o-*).

15 Cf. Toch. B *yäs-* ‘to excite (sexually)’, Gk. ζέω ‘to boil’. On the etymology of the Tocharian verbs, cf. Malzahn 2010:562f., Adams 2013 s.v. *kāp-*.

and Toch. A *kāpñune ar-* ‘to awake love’ constitutes a remarkable partial match.<sup>16</sup>

The name Κύπρις can be simply related to *ró*-forms, such as Sabell. *cyprum* ‘bonum’ (Varr.), cf. *Cupra dea*,<sup>17</sup> OIr. *accobor* (*\*ad-kūpro-*) ‘desire’, cf. *ad·cobra* ‘he wishes, desires’,<sup>18</sup> which may have been the starting point of the *i*-substantivization, *\*kupró-* ‘desirable’ :: *\*kupri-* ‘desire’. The Lycian denominative *kupri-* ‘to want’<sup>19</sup> might reflect *\*kupri-* or *\*kupre/i-*, cf. *ṁqre/i-* (noun) : *ṁqri-* (verb). Nevertheless, the denominal formation matches the Celtic one:

OIr. *ad·cobra* : *accobor* (*\*ad-kūpro-*) :: Lyc. *kupri-* : *\*kupre/i-* (cf. Sabell. *\*kupró-*, Gk. Κύπρις).

On the one hand, the zero-grade *ró*-adjective pairs a thematic noun with full grade, i.e. *\*kupró-* : *\*koupr-ó-*, cf. Ital. *\*kupró-* ‘desirable’ : Skt. *kopa-* ‘anger (i.e., strong emotion)’, cf. Ved. *mudrá-* ‘glad’ :

16 THT 638, a4–5 *tuñ= kāpñune arāssi cāmpāṣ pārko yatsi nu mā (cāmpā)ṣ* ‘it can inspire love, but (it can)not create advantages’.

17 For the cult of the *Cupra dea* ‘*Bona dea*’ cf. Calderini 2001. South Picenean attests a stem *\*kupró-*. The form <kuprí> (AQ 2, Capestrano), with <í> for /ē/, has to be understood as an adverb ‘beautifully’ in the light of SPic. <qupírīh> (*\*kuprēd*) with *\*-d#* > *-h#* and anaptyxis of /i/ between /p/ and /r/ (Weiss 1998, Martzloff 2015:39, Martzloff 2011:196). I am very grateful to Prof. Martzloff for his help in the analysis of such forms.

18 Cf. Stüber 2015:664. For OIr. *milchobur* ‘bear’, cf. Watkins 1962:114–116. It still remains an open question whether *Κυπρογενής* was originally a possessive compound with a first member in *-ro°*, i.e. ‘having desirable things (*kupro°*) as generation’\*, later re-interpreted as ‘generated in Cyprus’. A pattern of the type simplex in *\*-ri-* :: first compound-member in *\*-ro-* would parallel that of Lyc. *mizre°* (PN *Mizre-tije-*, on which cf. Carruba 1990:248f.) beside *\*mišri-* ‘brightness’ (cf. Hitt. *\*mišri-want-* ‘pure, shining’), cf. Serangeli (forthc.). However, there is no Greek evidence for °γενής with active meaning and the interpretation *Κυπρογενής* ‘parent/mother of Desire’ is of late date, cf. *Κυπρογένεια Πόθου γενέτειρα* (Theod. Prodr. 9.199).

19 Serangeli p.c.

*móda-* ‘joy’, Ved. *krurá-* ‘bloody’ : OIr. *cró* ‘death’.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, one can speculate whether the *ró*-derivatives may be framed in the Caland system. Latin attests an *i*-stem and an *idus*-formation,<sup>21</sup> namely *cuppis*\* ‘gourmanderie’ and *cupidus* ‘eager’.<sup>22</sup> The *i*-stem *cuppis*\* can be reconstructed on the basis of the gloss *cuppes et cupe-dia antiqui lautiores cibos nominabant* (P.F., 48M),<sup>23</sup> whereas *cuppis*\* itself may be explained in turn as an “*i*-substantivization” of a thematic stem, cf. ἄκρος (\**h*<sub>2</sub>*ék-ro-*) :: ὄκρις ‘prominence’, ἄκρις ‘peak’ (\**h*<sub>2</sub>*ók-ri-/h*<sub>2</sub>*ék-ri-*):<sup>24</sup>

* <i>koṽp-ó-/keṽp-ó-</i>	:	* <i>koṽp-i-/keṽp-i-</i>
Skt. <i>kopa-</i>		Lat. <i>cuppis</i> <sup>25</sup>

In any case, the interpretation of Κύπρις as an epithet of Aphrodite based on an *i*-substantivized *ró*-adjective seems to be well-founded both on a phraseological and a formal level.

3. Ἴρις designates the messenger-goddess and the rainbow in Homer, cf. *Il.* 2.786 Τρωσὶν δ’ ἄγγελος ἦλθε ποδίηνεμος ὠκέα Ἴρις “the swift messenger Iris, whose feet are like wind, came to the Trojans”, *Il.*

20 Data from Weiss 1996:206.

21 The adjectives in *-idus* usually reflect \**Co/eC-i-d<sup>h</sup>o-*, cf. Nussbaum 1999, Balles 2003.

22 The unexpected short vowel of Lat. *cupidus* may be due to the influence of the present *cupiō*, cf. *pūtīdus* : *pūtēre*, *squālidus* : *squālēre* (Nussbaum 1999:403f.). Alternatively, it is possible that the zero-grade *cupi-* in *cupidus* stands for the predictable form of *i*-stems in composition, cf. \**h*<sub>2</sub>*érg-ó-* (ἀργός) → subst. adj. \**h*<sub>2</sub>*órg-i-/h*<sub>2</sub>*érg-i-* (Hitt. *ḫarki-*), cf. Ved. *r̥ji*<sup>o</sup>, Av. *ərəzi*<sup>o</sup>, as the evidence of *u-* and *es-* stems points out: classical examples are Av. *mazdā-* ‘wise’ (\**m̥s-d<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>1</sub>-*) for the *es-* stems (Schindler 1975:266), and εὖ<sup>o</sup> : *su*<sup>o</sup> ‘good’ (\**h<sub>1</sub>su*<sup>o</sup>) for the *u-* stems (Pinault 2003:162–165). Cf. also ἀγαθός (\**m̥gh<sub>2</sub>-d<sup>h</sup>h<sub>1</sub>-ó-*), on which see Pinault 1979.

23 Lat. *cuppēdō* ‘gourmanderie’ does not reflect a stative, cf. Nussbaum Handout:3f. I am grateful to Prof. Nussbaum for having sent me his handout.

24 Nussbaum 2014a, 2014b.

25 With “*Iuppiter*-rule” from \**cūp-i-* (\**koṽp-i-*).

17.546f. ἤνυτε πορφυρέην Ἴριν θνητοῖσι τανύσση || Ζεὺς ἐξ οὐρανόθεν  
 “as Zeus stretches for mortals a dark-shimmering **rainbow** out of  
 heaven ...”.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, she is the daughter of Thaumas and Elek-  
 tre<sup>27</sup> and the sister of the swift-flying harpies in Hesiod.

Hes. *Theog.* 265–269

Θαύμας δ’ Ὀκεανοῖο βαθυρρείταιο θύγατρα  
 ἠγάγετ’ Ἠλέκτρην· ἢ δ’ ὠκεῖαν τέκεν Ἴριν  
 ἠυκόμους θ’ Ἀρπυίας, Αἰλλώ τ’ Ὀκυπέτην τε,  
**αἶ ῥ’ ἀνέμων πνοιῆσι** καὶ οἰωνοῖς ἅμ’ ἔπονται  
**ὠκεῖης πτερύγεσσι**· μεταχρόνια γὰρ ἴαλλον  
 “Thaumas married Electra, the daughter of deep-flowing Ocean. **She bore  
 swift Iris** and the beautiful-haired Harpies, Aello and Ocypete, who with  
 their **swift wings keep up with the blasts of the winds** and with the birds;  
 for they fly high in the air”

Iris’s association with [WIND] and [CLOUD], which occurs in Alcaeus  
 as well as in pre-Socratic writings, passed into Latin literature, cf.:

Alc. fr. 327 V.

δεινότατον θεῶν, || τὸν γέννατ’ εὐπέδιλλος Ἴρις  
 χρυσοκόμα **Ζεφύρω** μίγισσα  
 “The most terrible of the gods (*sc.* Eros), whom **Iris** with beautiful shoes  
**bore**, after mingling in love **with golden-haired Zephyros**”

Emp. fr. 50.2 D.-K.

Ἴρις δ’ ἐκ πελάγους **ἄνεμον φέρει** ἢ μέγαν ὄμβρον  
 “**Iris brings wind** and great rain away from the sea”

26 The simile describes Athene wrapping herself in a cloud, cf. v. 551f. ὧς ἡ  
 πορφυρέη νεφέλη πυκάσασα ἔαυτήν || δύσσετ’ Ἀχαιῶν ἔθνος “so she (*sc.*  
 Athene), wrapping herself in a dark-shimmering cloud, entered the throng  
 of the Danaans”. For a parallel scene in a different IE tradition cf. *RV* VII  
 97.6d *nábho ná rūpám aruśāṃ vāsānāḥ* “(while the horses) like a cloud  
 clothe themselves in ruddy form”.

27 The Hesiodic genealogy is consistent with ‘Iris-rainbow’, cf. West 1966:  
 242, who stresses that Θαύμας “Wondrous” recalls τέρας (*Il.* 11.27f. ἱρι-  
 σιν εὐοκότες [...] τέρας μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, similar to *Il.* 17.546f.).

Xen. fr. 28.1f. D.

ἦν τ' Ἴριον καλέουσι, νέφος καὶ τοῦτο πέφυκε,  
πορφύρεον καὶ φοινίκεον καὶ χλωρὸν ιδέσθαι

“What they call **Iris**, is **by nature cloud** and this: blue, red and yellow to see”.

Ov. *Met.* 1.270f.

*nuntia Iunonis varios induta colores  
concipit Iris aquas alimenta<sup>que</sup> nubibus adfert*

“Iris, the messenger of Juno, clad in robes of many hues, **draws up water and feeds it to the clouds**”

The description of Iris as an atmospheric goddess matches her characteristics in the Homeric poems, where she is connected to [SWIFTNESS] and [WIND]: she (a) is the swift/wind-footed messenger of the gods, (b) she flies and (c) she can be described as winged:

(a) *Il.* 8.399

βάσκ' ἴθι Ἴρι ταχεῖα  
“Go, **swift Iris!**”<sup>28</sup>

*Il.* 2.786

Τρωσὶν δ' ἄγγελος ἦλθε ποδὴνεμος ὠκέα Ἴρις  
“To the Trojans came **Iris**, the **swift** messenger, **with winds on feet**”<sup>29</sup>

*Il.* 8.409

Ἦς ἔφατ', ὄρτο δὲ Ἴρις ἀελλόπος ἀγγελέουσα  
“So he spoke, and **storm-footed Iris** hurried to carry his message”<sup>30</sup>

(b) *Il.* 15.172

ὧς κραιπνῶς μεμαυῖα διέπτατο ὠκέα Ἴρις  
“**So swiftly sped** on in her eagerness **swift Iris**”

28 Identical to *Il.* 11.186, 15.158, 24.144.

29 ποδὴνεμος ὠκέα Ἴρις recurs in *Il.* 5.368, 11.195, 15.168, 15.200, 18.166, 18.183, 18.196, 24.95, *HHymn.* 3.107. A variant is preserved in *Il.* 5.353 τὴν μὲν ἄρ' Ἴρις ἐλοῦσα ποδὴνεμος ἔξαγ' ὀμίλου and can be listed as a further distinctive feature of the 5th book of the *Iliad* (cf. *supra*, fn. 6).

30 Identical to *Il.* 24.77, 159.



(c) *Il.* 8.399

Ἴριον δ' ὄτρυνε χρυσόπτερον ἀγγελέουσαν  
 “And he sent **golden-winged Iris** to carry a message”<sup>31</sup>

On the one hand, these features indirectly assimilate Iris to birds of prey, “the swiftest in flying”, cf. *Il.* 13.62 αὐτὸς δ' ὥς τ' ἴρηξ ὠκύπτερος ὄρτο πέτεσθαι “and he himself, just as a **hawk, swift of flight, rises to fly**”. On the other hand, Iris’s prerogative of [SWIFTNESS] is comparable to that of Hermes, as both gods are swift messengers *par excellence*. Indeed, the notion [MESSENGER] can be itself connected to the idea of swiftness,<sup>32</sup> as the phraseological IE material confirms:

- The collocation ἄγγελος – ὠκύς, cf. ἄγγελος [...] ὠκέα Ἴρις (*Il.* 2.786) matches partially Ved. *āsú- dūtá-* ‘swift messenger’ and YAv. *ašti- āsišta-* ‘the swiftest messenger’, cf. *RV* IV 7.4ab *āsúṃ dūtám vivásvato* ‘*vísṇā yás carṣañīr abhí* “(you,) **the swift messenger** of Vivasvant, who sur(mount) all the domains”, *Yt.* 19.46de *adāt ašte fraṅharacaiiat* ‘*āsište katarasciit* “then each of both sent the **swiftest messenger**”.
- *E Graeco ipso* the fact that Iris is wind-footed, cf. ποδήνεμος [...] Ἴρις (*Il.* 2.78), Ἴρις ἀελλόπος (*Il.* 8.409), recalls Hermes wearing winged shoes, *Il.* 24.340–342 αὐτίκ' ἔπειθ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα [...] **τά μιν φέρον** ἤμην ἐφ' ὑγρήν ἢ ἡδ' ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν **ἅμα πνοιῆς ἀνέμοιο** “at once **he bound beneath his feet his beautiful sandals** [...] **which bore him** over the waters of the sea and over the boundless land **swift as the blasts of the wind**”. This description can be compared to Hitt. *INA GÌR*<sup>MES</sup>-za<sup>KUŠ</sup> E.SIR<sup>HLA</sup>-uš *liliuanduš IM*<sup>MES</sup>-uš *šarkuue-* ‘to

31 Identical to *Il.* 11.185, cf. also *HHymn.* 2.314. The iconographical data match the literary ones, cf. LIMC s.v. Iris: the goddess is usually portrayed as winged, flying, wearing winged shoes and holds the caduceus in her hands.

32 For the prerogative [SWIFTNESS] and Hermes, cf. Durante 1976:95, Langella (forthc.).

wear **swift/flying winds as shoes** on his/her feet' (cf. *inter alia* KUB 33.106++ II 1–4+), as P. Dardano emphasized.<sup>33</sup>

On the strength of this evidence let us now turn to the etymology of the name, which remains a matter of discussion:<sup>34</sup> since Homeric and epigraphic forms point to a digamma,<sup>35</sup> Ἴρις has been traced back to IE \**u̯ieh*<sub>1</sub>- 'to wrap, envelop, turn', cf. Lat. *viēre* 'to bend', Ved. *vyáyati* 'to enwrap' and connected with the substantivized *ró*-adjectives OE *wīr* 'wire', ON *vír* 'id.', Welsh *gŵyr* 'bent', on which an *i*-substantivization (F)Ἴρις 'rainbow' may have been based.<sup>36</sup> Even though tracing back Ἴρις to \**u̯ieh*<sub>1</sub>- 'to wrap' remains possible from the formal point of view, it fails to be cogent semantically.

An alternative, fairly preferable proposal would be to trace Ἴρις back to \**u̯eih*<sub>1</sub>- 'to be eager, strive'<sup>37</sup> or 'to have fresh energy', cf. Gk. (F)ίεμαι 'to pursue', Ved. *vay<sup>i</sup>/vī* 'to trace, follow',<sup>38</sup> Gk. ἵρηξ 'falcon, bird of prey',<sup>39</sup> (F)ἴς 'strength' and the first compound members Ἴφι<sup>ο</sup> (instr.), (F)ι<sup>ο</sup> in WN (F)Ἰάνειρα, (F)Ἰάνασσα (Hom.+).<sup>40</sup> Gk. \**u̯ih*<sub>1</sub>-*ro*- may be supposed on the basis of ἵρηξ, since *ā*k-substantives usually pair with *ó*-adjectives.<sup>41</sup> However, a proto-form \**u̯ih*<sub>1</sub>-*ro*- underlies the adjective 'provided with fresh/swift strength', cf. Toch. A *wir* 'young', which was substantivized as 'man, hero etc.' in many IE lan-

33 Dardano 2012.

34 Bader 1990, EDG s.v. Ἴρις: 'Pre-Greek' on the strength of Att. Εἰρις, a ship's name, which may not belong to the same root.

35 Cf. also the form Βῆρις (IG XII 3 365, VII–VI BC), with <B> for <F> (Muscianisi p.c.), and LIMC s.v. Iris 4 (Athens NM, VII–VI BC): a metope from Thermos (Aetolia) clearly reads <FIPIΣ> next to the wings of the goddess.

36 DELG s.v. Ἴρις, Weiss 1996:204f., Balles 2006:278. This etymology would parallel the name of the 'rainbow' in Latin and Germanic, cf. Lat. *arcus*, ON *regnbogi*.

37 "Sein Augenmerk richten auf, trachten nach" (LIV<sup>2</sup> s.v.).

38 On the meaning of the verb in *Ṛgveda*, see Schmid 1968.

39 βείρακες: ἰέρακες, βειρακή· ἢ ἀρακτική (Hsch.).

40 García Ramón 2006:80: \**u̯iH-ānōr*, with metrical shortening of \**u̯i<sup>o</sup>*.

41 Kölligan 2003:49.

guages, cf. Ved. *vīrá-* ‘young man’, Av. *vīra-* ‘id.’, Lith. *výras* ‘id.’, with */i/*, Lat. *vir* ‘man’, PGmc. *\*ǵira-*,<sup>42</sup> PCelt. *\*ǵiuro*<sup>o</sup>. Furthermore, there is a chance that the Mycenaean MN *wi-ro* (KN As 1516.18) has to be interpreted as */Wīros/*,<sup>43</sup> given the fact that Ἴρις appears in Homer, cf.:

*Od.* 18.73

ἢ τάχα Ἴριος ἄϊρος ἐπίσπαστον κακὸν ἕξει

“soon now shall **Irus**, *un-Irused*, have a trouble of his own creation.”

In the passage, the etymological word-play Ἴριος ἄϊρος, with ἄϊρος matching Ved. *avīrá-* ‘powerless’, and *Od.* 18.4f. οὐδέ οἱ ἦν ἴς || οὐδέ βίη (“(sc. Iros) had **no strength** nor might” suggest that the etymology of the personal name was somehow present to the poet’s mind, as stressed by Calvert Watkins and Françoise Bader.<sup>44</sup> On a formal level, Ἴριος could be accountable for the existence of an individualizing *i-*derivative ἴρις, which was later personified as the messenger-goddess. Suggestively, the ‘synchronic’ etymology of the name Ἴρις in Homer connected it to Iris:

*Od.* 18.6f.

Ἴριον δὲ νέοι κίκλησκον ἅπαντες,

οὐνεκ’ ἀπαγγέλλεσκε κίων, ὅτε πού τις ἀνώγοι

“But all the young men called him **Irus**, because **he used to run on errands** when anyone bade him”

42 Continued by Goth. *wair*, ON *verr*, OHG *wer*, OE *wer*.

43 Nevertheless, an interpretation */Wīlos/* cannot be ruled out, cf. MN Ἴλος (*Il.* 20.239). Moreover, the obscure Myc. MN *Wi-ri-wo*[ ] (PY An 340.3: *wi-ri-wo*[ ]VIR 1) may conceal */Wīrīwōn/* and so match Ἴριών (Gal.), a derivative of *\*ǵihiri-*, as per Ruijgh 1968:148. */Wīrīwōn/* would probably reflect */ī/*, since *īwon-*anthroponyms usually display *-ī-*, cf. Ἐχί(φ)ων (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.179), Ὀφί(φ)ων (Ap. Rhod. 1.503) etc. It can reasonably be assumed that *īwon-*names are based on *i-*collectives, like *āwon-*stems (García Ramón 2014:42), cf. the type of Lat. *fulīgō* ‘soot’, with *fulī-* [*\*d<sup>h</sup>uH-li-h<sub>2</sub>-*], cf. Skt. *dhūli-* ‘dust’, Lith. *dūlis* ‘vapor’, OIr. *dúil* ‘desire’ (Pinault 2001: 99f.). However, the Mycenaean evidence does not allow one to go too far.

44 Watkins 1995:36 fn. 13, Bader 1976.

The possibility that Iris was originally the personification of the ‘fresh/swift energy’ (cf. \**ueih<sub>1</sub>*-) can thus reasonably be assumed in the light of Greek phraseology, which describes Iris both as ‘swift’ and ‘flying’.

4. The present etymological proposal can be confirmed by comparing Ἴρις to a possible Vedic cognate, namely Vena ‘Seeker’, a *nó*-derivative of IE \**ueih<sub>1</sub>*-, Indo-Ir. \**uajH*-, cf. YAv. *vaēnā*- ‘nose’ (“Nachspürer”), as T. Gotō pointed out.<sup>45</sup> The form is attested both as an anthroponym (*RV* X 93)<sup>46</sup> and as a divine appellative in *RV* X 123, where some traits of this divine figure are sketched in a threefold characterization: (a) he is the messenger of the gods, (b) he flies or is directly assimilated to a bird of prey, and (c) he has golden wings:

(a) *RV* X 123.6cd

*hiraṇyapakṣam* váruṇasya *dūtám*

*yamásyā yónau śakunám* bhuranyúm

“The **golden-winged messenger** of Varuṇa, **the (omen) bird** fluttering in the womb of Yama”

(b) *RV* X 123.6ab

*nāke suparṇám úpa yát pátantaṃ*

*hṛdā vénanto abhy ácakṣata tvā*

“When they, seeking with their heart, gazed upon you, **an eagle flying** to the vault”

(c) *RV* X 123.5cd

*cárat priyásya yóniṣu priyáḥ sán*

*sídat pakṣé hiraṇyáye sá venáḥ*

“He roamed among the wombs of the dear one [masc.], himself being dear; he sat **on a golden wing** – he is the **Seeker** –”

45 Gotō 1987:298.

46 *RV* X 93.14ab *prá tád duḥśíme pṛthavāne vené' prá rāmé vocam ásure maghávatsu* “I proclaim this in front of Duḥśima, Pṛthavana, Vena, in front of Rama the lordly, in front of the patrons”, cf. also the names *Venyá-* (*RV* X 148.5, X 171.3), *Vainyá-*.

Although there is no general agreement about the divine identity of the “Seeker” and some possibilities are plausible (Soma, the Sun-god, the Gandharva),<sup>47</sup> Vena may embody the rainbow in *RV X 123*, as Hermann Oldenberg proposed.<sup>48</sup> Vena, the “Seeker”, is actually said to be generated from the union of water and light (*RV X 123.1*), and is ‘born from the cloud’ (*RV X 123.2*):

*RV X 123.1cd*

*imám apāṇi saṃgamé sūryasya*

*śísuṃ ná víprā matíbhī rihanti*

“**At the union of the waters and the sun**, the inspired poets lick him with their thoughts like an infant (calf)”

*RV X 123.2ab*

*samudrād ūrmím úd iyarti venó*

*nabhojāḥ pṛsthám haryatásya darśi*

“The **Seeker** raises up a wave from the sea. **The cloud-born one**, the top of the delightful one has been sighted”

This passage strikingly recalls Xen. fr. 28.1f. D., ἦν τ’ Ἴριν καλέουσι, νέφος [...] πέφυκε || πορφύρεον καὶ φοινίκεον καὶ χλωρὸν ιδέσθαι ‘what they call **Iris**, is by nature cloud [...]: blue, red and yellow to see’ (cf. § 3).

47 Some of Vena’s characteristics in *RV X 123* are traditionally referred to Soma and the Sun. For the coincidence with Soma cf. *samudrād ūrmím úd iyarti venó* ‘*nabhojāḥ* “the Seeker raises up a wave from the sea. The cloud-born one ...” (*RV X 123.2*). For the identification with the divine Sun-bird (*RV X 123.6*), and the references to the luminous nature of the *vená-*, cf. *RV X 123.7d sávar ná náma janata priyāṇi* “(to be seen) like the sun, he engendered his own dear names”. According to Jamison & Breerton 2014:III,1596 “in that final verse the undifferentiated figure of Soma/Sun is actually divided into its two constituent parts, though neither is mentioned by name”. Moreover, the Seeker is directly called Gandharva in the fourth and seventh stanza, cf. *RV 123.4d vidád gandharvó amṛtāni náma* “the Gandharva found immortal names”, *RV 123.7a ūrdhvó gandharvó ádhi náke asthāt* “the Gandharva stood erect upon the vault”.

48 Oldenberg 1912:341f., Oberlies 2012:145.

5. The fairly precise phraseological coincidences between Iris and Vena speak in favor of the assumption that both names go back to IE *\*ueǵh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to have(/run/strive with) fresh energy’: Ἴρις may be understood as an individualizing *i*-derivative of a *ró*-adjective, *vená-* as a *nó*-adjective. The following derivatives of IE *\*ueǵh<sub>1</sub>-* can be set forth:

Simplicia	<p><i>ró</i>-adjective (<i>*uǵh<sub>1</sub>-ró-</i>): Toch. A <i>wir</i>, Ved. <i>vīrá-</i>, Av. <i>vīra-</i>, Lith. <i>výras</i>, Lat. <i>vir</i>, PGmc. <i>*uira-</i></p> <p><i>nó</i>-adjective (<i>*uoǵh<sub>1</sub>-nó-</i>): Ved. <i>vená-</i>, also YAv. <i>vaēnā-</i> ‘nose’ (*‘striving after’)</p> <p><i>es</i>-substantive (<i>*uēǵh<sub>1</sub>-es-</i>): Ved. <i>váyas-</i> ‘strength, energy, power’</p>
Compounds	<p><i>-ro</i><sup>o</sup> (<i>*uǵh<sub>1</sub>-ro</i><sup>o</sup>): Ved. <i>vīra</i><sup>o</sup>, PCelt. <i>*uīro</i><sup>o</sup>: Ved. <i>vīrapśá-</i> ‘abundance in sons and cattle’, Gall. <i>Vīromarus</i></p> <p><i>es</i><sup>o</sup> (<i>*uoēǵh<sub>1</sub>-es-</i>): Ved. <i>°vayas-</i>: <i>údvayas-</i> ‘having superior strength’</p>

Iris’s and Vena’s common traits may be summarized as follows:

- (a) They are [GOLDEN WINGED MESSENGERS]: Ἴρις [...] χρυσόπτερον ἀγγελέουσαν (*Il.* 8.399), cf. *pakšé hiraṇyáye sá venáh* (*RV* X 123.5), *hiraṇyaparakṣam* [...] *dūtám* (*RV* X 123.6).
- (b) They are (in)directly assimilated to birds of prey. Ἴρις is etymologically connected to ἴρηξ and ‘flies swiftly’, cf. διέπτατο ὠκέα Ἴρις (*Il.* 15.172), while *Vená-* is called *suparṇá-* ‘(bird) of beautiful wings’ and *śakuná-* ‘bird of prey’ (*RV* X 123).
- (c) They are associated/identified with [CLOUD] and [RAINBOW] as a visible manifestation of their ‘fresh energy’, cf. Ἴρις [...] νέφος [...] πέφουκε (*Xen. fr.* 28.1f.), *venó* ‘*nabhojāḥ*’ (*RV* X 123.2).

6. In conclusion:

- (1) The GN Κύπρις and Ἴρις reflect individualizing *i*-derivatives, namely κύπρις ‘desire’ and ἴρις ‘fresh energy’\*/‘rainbow’, both built on the *ró*-adjectives *\*kupró-* (Sabell. *cyprum*, OIr. *accobor*, Lyc. *kupre/i-*\*) and *\*uǵh<sub>1</sub>-ró-* ‘young, strong’ (Toch. A *wir*, Ved.

*vīrá-*, Av. *vīra-*, Lith. *výras*, Lat. *vir*, PGmc. *\*uira-*, PCelt. *\*uīro°*).

- (2) The existence of *ró*-adjectives beside other formations, like *i*-stems and an adjective in *-idus* for *\*keup-* in Latin (*cuppis\**, *cupidus*), *es-* and *nó*-stems for *\*uejh<sub>1</sub>-* (Ved. *váyas-*, Ved. *vená-*, Av. *vaēnā-*), may be explained in the framework of the Caland system.
- (3) The semantics of Κύπρις and its cognates confirms the analysis proposed in the present paper, while the coincidence between peculiar characteristics and collocations of Ἴρις and Ved. *vená-* (appellative, also name) supports the assumption of a common etymological origin.

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