APPENDIX

SARASVATĪ AND HER CORRESPONDING NAMES IN THE GREEK AND ROMAN MYTHOLOGIES
Appendix

SARASVATI AND HER CORRESPONDING NAMES IN THE GREEK AND
ROMAN MYTHOLOGIES

1. Introduction:

The Greek and Indian mythologies have many a similarity. In spite of apparent polytheism in their mythologies, there is astonishing similarity in respect of deities in Greece, Italy and India. Some of the deities of the Greek mythology correspond to those of the Latin:


2 It is quite obvious from the list of corresponding deities quoted by Charles Coleman, op.cit., p.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek Deity</th>
<th>Indian Name</th>
<th>Greek Deity</th>
<th>Indian Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siva</td>
<td>Indra</td>
<td>Rama</td>
<td>Bacchus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brahma</td>
<td>- Saturnus</td>
<td>Bala Rama</td>
<td>(Ditto, as the inventor of the use of wine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yama</td>
<td>- Minos</td>
<td>Skanda</td>
<td>Mars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varuna</td>
<td>- Neptunus</td>
<td>Durga</td>
<td>Juno</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surya</td>
<td>- Sol</td>
<td>Suraswati</td>
<td>Minerva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chandra</td>
<td>- Lunus</td>
<td>Remb'hd</td>
<td>Venus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vayu</td>
<td>- Aeolus</td>
<td>Ushasa</td>
<td>Aurora</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viswakarma</td>
<td>- Vulcan</td>
<td>Swaha</td>
<td>Vesta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aswinicamara</td>
<td>- Castor &amp; Pollux</td>
<td>Prit'hivi</td>
<td>Cybele</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ganesha</td>
<td>- Janus</td>
<td>Sri</td>
<td>Ceres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavana</td>
<td>- Pan</td>
<td>Gopyah</td>
<td>Musae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viraja or Vaitarini</td>
<td>- The River Styx</td>
<td>Atavi Devi</td>
<td>Diana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuvera</td>
<td>- Plutus</td>
<td>Aswiculapa</td>
<td>Gennii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krihna</td>
<td>- Apollo</td>
<td>Heracula</td>
<td>Hercules</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
mythology. It speaks of inter-relationship between the mythologies of these countries; and tempts us to suppose that in the olden days, India, Greece and Roma had come together to know each other.

The Indian goddess Sarasvati corresponds to the Roman goddess Minerva and the Greek goddess Athene. Athene is also called Athena whom the Romans identify with Minerva.

2. Sarasvati and Minerva (the Roman goddess): Minerva is the patroness of all arts, trades and is the goddess of memory and warfare. Sarasvati, too, is the patroness of all arts and

1 Cf. the list given by C. Witt, Myths of Hellen or Greek Tales (New York, 1903), p. X.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Latin</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Aphrodite.&quot;</td>
<td>Venus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appolon.</td>
<td>Apollo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artemis.</td>
<td>Diana.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athênê.</td>
<td>Minerva.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kronos.</td>
<td>Saturnus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Démêtêr.</td>
<td>Ceres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dionusos or Bacchos.</td>
<td>Bacchus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hephaistos.</td>
<td>Valc anus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hera.</td>
<td>I n o.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hermês.</td>
<td>Mercurius.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persephonê.</td>
<td>Proserpina.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plounton.</td>
<td>Pluto.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poseidon.</td>
<td>Neptunus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeûs.</td>
<td>Juppiter.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


sciences; but she is not portrayed to patronise trade. It is a striking difference between them. She is called 'ghorā' and 'vrtra-ghanī', which point to her function connected with warfare. She not only kills Vrtra; but also protects warriors and, therefore, she is called 'virapati'. This leads us to believe in the existence of some sakti-worship in the olden days; and it is possible that warriors might have invoked Sarasvatī for their protection and victory. The epithet 'pāvīravi' for Sarasvatī shows that Sarasvatī had a weapon (pavi) in her hand. In the Rgveda, Sarasvatī is not described in clear terms as the goddess of war; but the adventurous deeds, she does amply show this trait of her personality. In the post-Vedic times, Kārttikeya and Durgā are associated with warfare; while Vedic literature knows nothing about them. Sarasvatī's association with war brings her near to the armed Minerva, while the other aspects of her personality correspond to Minerva without weapon. When her patronage of letters is emphasized for poetic composition or when she is taken to be the patroness of arts or the goddess of memory, she is of modest nature, and this aspect of her personality corresponds to the modest nature of Sarasvatī, when taken to

1 John Dowson, op.cit., p. 284.
2 RV., VI.61.7.
3 Ibid., VI.61.7.
4 See supra, pp. 54-55.
5 See supra, pp. 58-60.
be the goddess of learning, music, poetry, history, arts and sciences.¹

The armed aspect of the personality of Minerva shows that she is the
goddess of warfare and it is only this capacity of hers that she is
painted to have a glittering, armour poised spear,² breastplate and
shield since her birth.³

3. Sarasvati and the Greek Muses:

We find a great deal of similarity between the personality of
Sarasvati and the Greek Muses. Sarasvati, in the post-Vedic mythology,
represents all sorts of vidyās arising from eloquence and wisdom. Nay,
she has been held to be the goddess of eloquence and wisdom; and has
been invoked for the same as a Muse.⁴ The similar conception about
vidyās is also found in the Greek mythology. There 'Gopysas' or 'Vidyas'
are termed Muses.⁵ Before reckoning similar features between Sarasvati
and the Greek Muses, it is necessary to find out Sarasvati's conception
as a Muse in ancient Indian literature, particularly in the Ṛgveda.

(i) The Ṛgveda and the conception of Muse:

As we see our earliest scripture, the Ṛgveda is written in poetic
style and one comes across numerous glimpses of real poetry in it. In
this Veda, we find the description of certain abstract ideas like

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1 See infra., pp. 230-231.
2 H.A. Guerber, op.cit., p. 39.
3 A.R. Hope Moncrieff, op.cit., p. 37.
5 See supra., p. 225, f.n. 2.
'Sraddhā', 'Anumati', etc., which show that the poet were really in quest of an object with subtle form to guide them in their pursuit of poetry. For poetry, the creative genius is of paramount importance. To acquire this genius, they deified abstract ideas and worshipped them. In such a pursuit, the goddesses 'Ṣunṛtā', 'Ṣuryā', etc., are highly extolled and held as the goddesses of genius and poetry. Geldner makes out the same idea from 'Ṣuryā' or 'Ṣuryasya-duhitā' (Ṛgveda, IX.72.3) and terms her the genius of poetry and song. The same sense is understood to lie in Sarasvati's description as: "codayitri sūnṛtānām cetantī sumatinēm". Here, we find a closeness in nature between Sūryā and Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī, in the later literature, is taken to be the goddess or the patroness of poetry; but its seed is found in the Ṛgveda proper also, where she is called 'dhīnām avitri', meaning protectress of holy thoughts or prayers. Sūryā was at first taken to be the Ṛgvedic goddess of poetry, but later on, she came to be regarded as poetry personified and Sarasvatī as the goddess of poetry. In the Vedic pantheon, Sūryā is called Vāk; and it is also worth-noticing that the word Vāk stands as synonym for Sūryā and Sarasvatī. In this context, we may refer to the age of Nighantu, where Sūryā and Sarasvatī were probably identified and the personality of Sūryā had merged into that of Sarasvatī; because it reckons both of the

1 RV., X.151.5.
2 Ibid., X.59.6, 167.3.
3 Ibid., I.40.3; X.141.2.
4 Ibid., IX.72.3.
5 See supra, pp.44-45.
6 RV., VI.61.4.
7 See supra, pp.44-45.
words Sūryā and Sarasvatī as the synonyms for Vāk. 1

(ii) Similarity between Sarasvatī and the Greek Muses:

The word ‘Muse’ is derived from Greek Ἑμεία, meaning to think, to remember. 2 The Greek Muses, though originally three, 3 are now reckoned nine in number and are all the daughters of ancient Zeus and Mnemosyne. They stand for genius or spirit, which guide a poet in his composition. 4 Sarasvatī, too, is assigned the similar function and has been held, particularly in the classical age, as the inspirer of poets. Her acceptance as the goddess of inspiration, 5 puts her as the inspirer of genius or the poetic spirit.

In the Greek mythology, we find nine Muses; namely, 1. Clio, 2. Euterpe, 3. Thalia, 4. Melpomene, 5. Tersichore, 6. Erato, 7.Polyymnia, 8. Urania, and 9. Calliope. 6 The character of these Muses is also distinct.

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1 Cf. Noh.I.11, where various conception of Vāk is carried out in good detail.

"(1) Ślokah; (2) Dhārā; (3) Ilā; (4) Gauh; (5) Gauri; (6) Gāndharvī; (7) Gābhīrā; (8) Gāmbhīrā; (9) Mandra; (10) Mandrājanī; (11) Vāśi; (12) Vāni; (13) Vānīcī; (14) Vāsah; (15) Pavīh; (16) Bhāratī; (17) Dhamanīh; (18) Nālīh; (19) Menū; (20) Weīh; (21) Sūryā; (22) Sarasvatī; (23) Mīvit; (24) Svāhā; (25) Vaguh; (26) Upabdhī; (27) Meyuh; (28) Kākut; (29) Jīhvā; (30) Ghoṣah; (31) Svara; (32) Sābdah; (33) Svanah; (34) Rk; (35) Hotrā; (36) Gīb; (37) Gāthā; (38) Gnah; (39) Dhenā; (40) Gnāh; (41) Vipā; (42) Nanā; (43) Kasā; (44) Dhiṣanāh; (45) Nauh; (46) Akṣaram; (47) Mahī; (48) Aditīh; (49) Sācih; (50) Vāk; (51) Anuṣṭup; (52) Dhenuh; (53) Valguh; (54) Gaidā; (55) Sarah; (56) Suparnī; (57) Bekurā."

2 Vergilius Ferri, Encyclopaedia of Religion, p. 511.
6 James Hastings, op.cit., p. 4.
Clio represents history; Euterpe, lyric poetry; Thalia, comedy; Melpomene, tragedy; Terpsichore, dance and song; Erato, love song; Polyhymnia, sublime hymn; Urania, astronomy; and Calliope, epic poetry.¹ Sūrṇīta,² Vērkāryā,³ Śūryasya duhitā,⁴ Sarasvati,⁵ etc., conceived as the goddesses of poetry or poetic genius may be act as the Muses. All these goddesses are later on merged into the personality of Sarasvati, who alone, with her diverse forms, survives as the goddess or the patroness of learning, arts, sciences, poetry, etc.

Like the Greek Muses, Sarasvati represents various fields. Under the name of Brāhmī or Brāhmīṇī, she is understood to be the goddess of sciences; and as Bhāratī, the goddess of history.⁶ The Purānic accounts provide Sarasvati with a lute in one of her hands and establish her association with music.⁷ She is considered as the goddess of music even, and it is for this reason that she is worshipped by musicians. The Greek Muses as a whole are described to have a great liking for music and dance. They enchanted a divine gathering, and Apollo guided them as their Choir-master with the music of his lyre. Their liking for music and dance is so acute that they performed them at Delphi on Mt. Helicon around the fountain of Aganippe.⁸ They are closely connected with a stream of an earthly character.

¹ A.R. Hope Moncrieff, op.cit., p. 34.
² RV., I.40.3; X.141.2.
³ Ibid., I.88.4.
⁴ Ibid., IX.72.3.
⁵ Ibid., III.53.15.
⁶ Charles Coleman, op.cit., p.9.
⁸ James Hastings, op.cit., p. 4.
Hippocrene, mythologically described to have sprung from the hoof of the divine horse called Pegasus. It associates the earthly fountain with the divine horse and, thus, its attachment with divinity is but natural. The home of these Muses is in a country near Mt. Olympus and, thus, they should be closely associated with gods of Mt. Olympus. This association of the Greek Muses with a mountain and a river, brings them nearer to Sarasvati as a river described to have sprung from a mountain (parvata); but having a divine character. The Hippocrene river is described to have sprung from the hoof of Pegasus, which corresponds to the Sanskrit word 'pajas', meaning force, movement and the like. The root 'śṛ' after Sarasvati also implies movement. She resides in the cloud as storehouse of waters. Thus, there is much similarity between the birth of rivers Sarasvati and Hippocrene. The only slight distinction, we find is that the former receives its existence on the earth through god Indra; and the latter not through gods; but through their horse Pegasus. This difference is not so vital as to make us ignore the philosophical importance behind Indra and Pegasus, both of which represent force or energy.

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1 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p.105; for detailed information about Pegasus, we may see James Hastings, op.cit., Vol.XII, pp.741-742.
3 See supra., p. 3R.
4 See supra., pp. 6-8.
5 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p.106.
6 See supra., p. 3R.
7 Cf. 'vṛṣṇah patnih' vide supra., pp.55-56.
8 Monier Williams, op.cit., p.140.
9 Sri Aurobindo, op.cit.,p. 106.