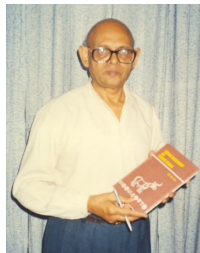


MAHABHARATA KNOWS HARAPPANS AS VEDIC

N.S. Rajaram



*Dedicated to the memory of Dr.
Natwar Jha (1938 - 2006)*

Continuity I

- Ancient India has the world's oldest and most extensive literature
- Vedas, Vedanta, Epics, Puranas
- The Harappan (Indus Valley) contains also the ancient world's most extensive archaeological remains
- What is the connection between the two?

Continuity II

- The two— archaeology and literature have been kept separated via an artifice known as the Aryan invasion theory (AIT)
- Archaeology was the creation of natives (Dravidians?), while literature was created by the invading Aryans in Sanskrit
- We show there is no DISCONTINUITY

Who were the Harappans?

- Harappans are known by their archaeology spread over more than a million square miles, roughly 3100 to 1900 BC.
- They cover a greater expanse than ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia combined.
- Major sites include: Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Lothal, Dholavira, Kalibangan,...

The Aryan myth

- Since there is no such mighty river flowing today between the Yamuna (Jumna) and Shutudru (Sutlej), scholars, mainly linguists assumed that the composers of the *Rig Veda* were foreign invaders called Aryans.
- This is because Sanskrit bears some similarity to European languages like Latin and Greek.

Aryan invasion theory (AIT)

- The following statement is typical:

“At some time in the second millennium B.C., probably comparatively early in the millennium, a band or bands of speakers of an Indo-European language, later to be called Sanskrit, entered India over the northwest passes. ***This is our linguistic doctrine which has been held now for more than a century and a half.*** There seems to be no reason to distrust the arguments for it, in spite of the traditional Hindu ignorance of any such invasion. (Emeneau 1954: p 282; emphasis added.)

AIT (continued)

- As Emeneau states it was an *assumption* made to account for perceived similarities between Sanskrit and European languages.
- This was before data from archaeology or any other scientific data was available.
- Since archaeology contradicts the idea of any invasion, its advocates are now calling it AMT (Aryan Migration Theory)

Harappans and the Vedic people

- According to AIT advocates, the indigenous Harappan civilization (3100 – 1900 BC) had nothing to do with the Vedic literature..
- Also since the Aryan invasion was dated to the second millennium (1500 BC), it makes the Vedas post-Harappan.

This introduces both synchronic and diachronic divide between the Harappans and the Vedic.

Synchronic & diachronic divides

- **Synchronic:** Harappan and Vedic are totally different cultures.
- **Diachronic:** The two flourished during different, non-overlapping time periods.
- This is a consequence of refusal to revise, much less reject the AIT model based on new scientific data.

Vedic-Harappan identity

- Preserving the AIT (Vedas and Sanskrit as foreign) requires separating Harappan archaeology from the Vedic literature and history.

**THIS IS NOW THE REAL (COVERT)
AGENDA-- NOT THE AIT**

Vedic Harappans

- Dropping preconceptions about the Aryan invasion myth unites the Vedic and the Harappan civilizations.
- **Macro level:** Sarasvati is common to both.
- **Micro level:** Harappan archaeology is replete with Vedic symbolism.
- Harappan is the **twilight** of the Vedic Age.

Harappan iconography I

- Icons showing *asanas*
- *Mula-bandhasana* (below)



Harappan-Vedic symbols 2

Pashupati in *mulabandhasana*



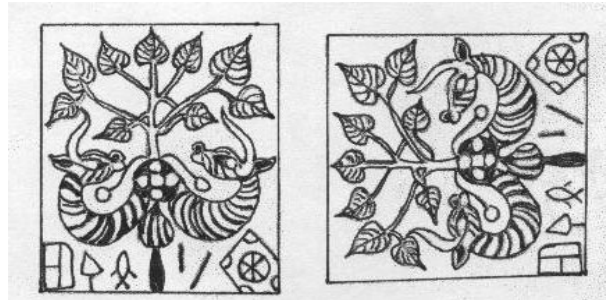
Harappan-Vedic symbols 3

Onkara mudra



Harappan-Vedic symbols 4

Harappan om to Devanagari om



Harappan-Vedic symbols 5

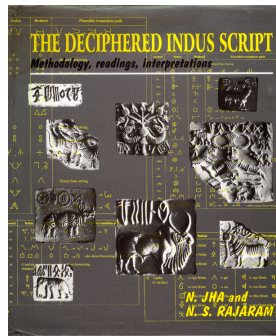
Svasti mantra:

*svasti na indro vṛddhaśravah;
svasti nah pūṣā viśvavedāh;...*

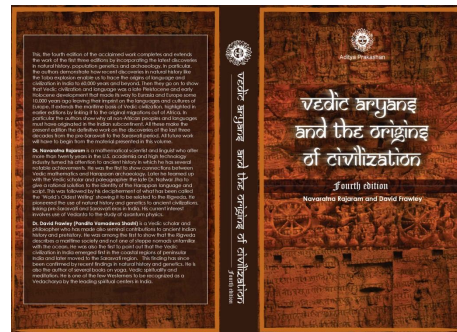


Vedic Harappans, discussion

Jha and Rajaram, 2000



Rajaram and Frawley, 2014



Vedic – Harappan literary link

- This shows that Harappan archaeology reflects Vedic and post-Vedic literary themes
- This is now widely accepted but textbooks still don't mention this
- But the reverse is also true– **literature knows Harappan archaeology, AND DESCRIBES ITS FEATURES**

Mahabharata on seal images

- In the *Mokshadharma Parva* of the MB Krishna describes important Harappan icons in Vedic terms and claims them as his divine attributes. (Or his followers do.)

Example:

*stutvā mām śipiviṣṭeti yāska-ṛṣirudārādhih;
matprasādadhonaṣṭam niruktamabhijagmivān.*

Seals in the MB 1- *vṛṣottamah*



*vṛṣo hi bhagavān dharmah
khyāto lokeṣu bhārata;
naighantuka padākhyāne viddhi
mām vṛṣamuttamam.*

O Bharata Prince! Lord Dharma is renowned in all the worlds as *vṛṣa*. In the *Naighantuka-Padakhyana* it is given that the meaning of *vṛṣa* is *dharma*. Understand therefore that I [Krishna-Vishnu] of high *dharma* am the Magnificent Bull [*vṛṣamuttamam*].

Seals in the MB 2- *ekaśṛṅgaḥ*



*kapiṛvārāhaśreṣṭhaśca dharmāśca vṛṣa ucyate;
tasmād vṛṣākapiṁ prāha kaśyapo mām prajāpatiḥ.*

*ēkaśṛṅga purā bhutvā vārāho divyadrśanaḥ;
imam codhrtavān bhumim ēkaśṛṅgastatoḥyāham.*

The meaning of the word *kapi* is *varāha* and the supreme being (*śreṣṭha*); and *dharma* is called *vṛṣa*. Because I am the embodiment of *dharma*, Kashyapa Prajapati proclaimed me as *vṛṣākapi* [in his *Nighantuka-Padākhyaṇa*].

In ancient times I had assumed the form of a one-horned Boar as Divine Apparition (*vārāho divyadrśana*)—to lift the earth [out of the flooding waters] and for this reason I was called *ēkaśṛṅga* [One-Horned].

Seals in the MB3- *trikakut*



*tathaivāsam trikakudo vārāham
rūpamasthitah;
trikakut tena vikhyātah śarirsya tu
māpanāt.*

In like manner, after assuming the form of *varāha*, there were three *kakuts* [upper and lower parts] to the body. For the reason of this body shape I am renowned also as *trikakut* [He with Three Body Parts].

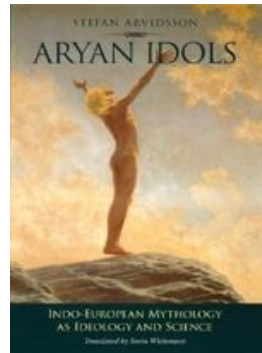
Vedic Harappans

- So both macro and micro level examination point to the same thing— Vedic and Harappan cultures are one and the same.
- Harappan archaeology represents the material side of the Vedic civilization.
- We next demolish recent myths and false theories and look at what the *Rig Veda* has to say about the Vedic world.

Aryan myth is modern European

- Fact I: In the whole of the *Rig Veda*, the word Arya appears fewer than 40 times.
- Fact II: It may be found many times more in just a few pages of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.
- It is a modern European not an ancient Indian obsession.

Persistence of the Aryan myth



No objects can definitely be tied to them, nor do we know any 'Indo-European' by name. In spite of that, scholars have stubbornly tried to reach back to the ancient 'Indo-Europeans,' with the help of bold historical, linguistic, and archaeological reconstructions, in the hopes of finding the foundation of their own culture and religion there.

There is something in the nature of research about Indo-Europeans that makes it especially prone to ideological abuse— perhaps something related to the fact that for the past two centuries, the majority of scholars who have done research on the Indo-Europeans have considered themselves descendants of this mythical race.

Need for a new approach

- The following recent developments force us to explore new methods in history

1. Collapse of the Aryan theories including the famous (or infamous) AIT.

Propaganda and politics will not rescue them

2. Better understanding of natural history— notably the Pleistocene-Holocene transition

Science on Aryan theories II

- Summary of evidence:

“Indian tribal and caste populations derive from the same genetic heritage of Pleistocene southern and western Asians and have received limited gene flow from external regions since the Holocene.”

Pleistocene ~ 50,000 BP Holocene ~ 12,000 BP
- Data now available shows our African ancestors first settled in the coastal regions.

The politics of Aryan theories I

- Special conditions: German nationalism and British imperial interests
- German nationalism is not relevant here so let us look at British interests.

“[Aryan invasion theory] gave a historical precedent to justify the role and status of the British Raj, who could argue that they were transforming India for the better in the same way that the Aryans had done thousands of years earlier.”

The politics of Aryan theories II

- This is well known, but historians have largely ignored it.

Now, after ages, ...the two branches of the great Aryan ancestry have again been brought together by Providence... By establishing British rule in India, God said to the British, "I have brought you and the Indians together after a long separation, ...it is your duty to raise them to their own level as quickly as possible ...brothers as you are..."

British PM Stanley Baldwin in 1929

Future research 1: face reality

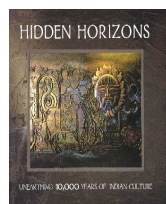
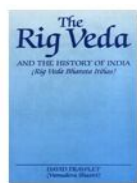
- Face the reality that though acrimonious exchanges are continuing the Aryan myth and its associated theories are dead.
- Although details need to be worked out, Vedic-Harappan relationship is pretty much well understood.
- So we need to look beyond these.

Future research: maritime world

- All future work must recognize that the Vedas are the work of a maritime people:
- Varuna, God of the oceans is said to be the earliest of Vedic deities: (“Varuna...”)

“As rainwaters, rivers follow their course into the oceans like chariots in pursuit of their goals.”
III.36.6
- Varuna was a sea god, of a maritime people.

Pre-Vedic and proto-Vedic Age



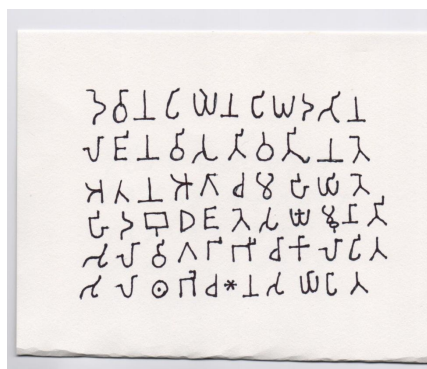
- We need to relate the profuse maritime myths to natural history of the Pleistocene-to-Holocene transition.
- *Rig Veda and the History of India* by Frawley and *Hidden Horizons* by Frawley and Rajaram have taken some steps in that direction.

Message of the seals

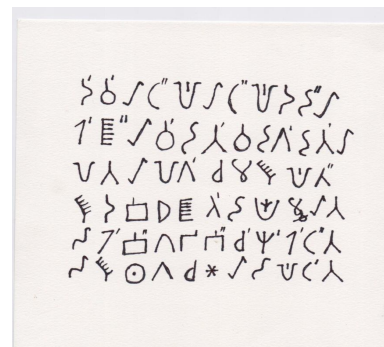
- The seal icons contain more information than the written contents
- We go from Krishna as Vrishottama to Krishna as Purushottama
- A subset of the Indus writing evolved into the Brahmi script used in Ashoka's edicts
- All Indian scripts are derived from Brahmi

Indus to Brahmi (2500 – 250 BC)

Lumbini edict in Brahmi



Lumbini edict in Indus



Question of continuity

- Continuity is obvious, but there are serious chronological questions
- Is Ashoka's date correct?
- If so, why so little change in writing?
- When was the *Mahabharata* completed?
- How do we teach all this?

Insight: Galileo to Max Planck

- We cannot expect an old establishment to accept new truths. As Max Planck said:

“An important scientific innovation rarely makes its way by gradually winning over and converting its opponents: it rarely happens that Saul becomes Paul. What does happen is that its opponents gradually die out and that the growing generation is familiarized with the idea from the beginning.”
- Don't spend too much time arguing over discredited old theories. They will die a natural death.

LOOK TO THE EXCITING FUTURE

Chronology

- We need first to establish a ‘natural chronology’ based on natural history and ecology.
- We need to correlate these with literary accounts and archaeology.
- We need to find independent correlations from astronomy and other sources.

Date	Natural event	Plausible literary account
17,000 B.C.	Late Ice Age	Coastal cultures in Southeast Asia, the idea of pre-flood civilizations
15,000 B.C.	Warming begins; unstable coastline.	Coastal cultures under stress
13,000 B.C.	Ice Age ending; flooding begins of coastal regions. North India gradually opens up for habitation.	Proto-Vedic civilization in the Peninsular India and coastal regions.
11,000 B.C.	Younger Dryas; freeze returns.	Indra-Vritra battles.
10,000 B.C.	Farming spreads in Southeast Asia and the Indian interior.	Memory of Indra-Vritra battles. Origin of the Sarasvati era.
8000 B.C.	Renewed warming. Ice sheets finally retreat. Great North Indian rivers (glacier fed) begin to flow. Monsoon stronger. Sarasvati becomes the greatest river and Sarasvati-Drishadvati doab becomes the Rigvedic home.	‘Vritra’ the coverer slain by the solar god Indra. Beginning of the Rigvedic Age in the Sarasvati heartland, Manu of the flood

Table I: ‘Natural chronology’ of pre-Sarasvati era (Pre-Vedic and Proto-Vedic)

Sarasvati Age: 8000 – 3500 BC



Harappan era: 3100 – 1900 BC

- The Sarasvati during the Rigvedic period was fed by the Yamuna and the Sutlej
- Sometime before 3500 BC, the Yamuna shifted and flowed into the Ganga
- The Sutlej-Sarasvati flowed as a river independently and fed the Harappan sites
- By 1900 BC the Sutlej shifted to the Indus
- This effectively ended the Harappan civilization

‘Historical chronology’: Vedic and Harappan

- 7000 to 4000 BC: ‘High Vedic’
- 4000 to 3500: Transition, loss of the Yamuna
- 3500 to 3000: Vedanta, Early Harappan
- 3100 BC: Mahabharata War
- 3000 to 2100: Mature to late Harappan
- 2200 to 1900: Harappan decline
- 1900 to 1300: Post Harappan, resettlement

Conclusions

- We need to build a foundation based on science and not try to refine failed theories.
- We need to recognize two basic facts: (1) maritime origins; (2) ties to SE Asia.
- Need to correlate maritime images in Vedas and Puranas to natural history.
- We need to look at ‘transitions’ which bring great environmental and human changes.

Final Conclusions

Man-made theories must yield to
nature.

We cannot ignore laws of nature.