

Appropriating the Past
Language, Archaeology, and
Ideology in South Asia and the Diaspora

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The “Aryan Invasion” Controversy

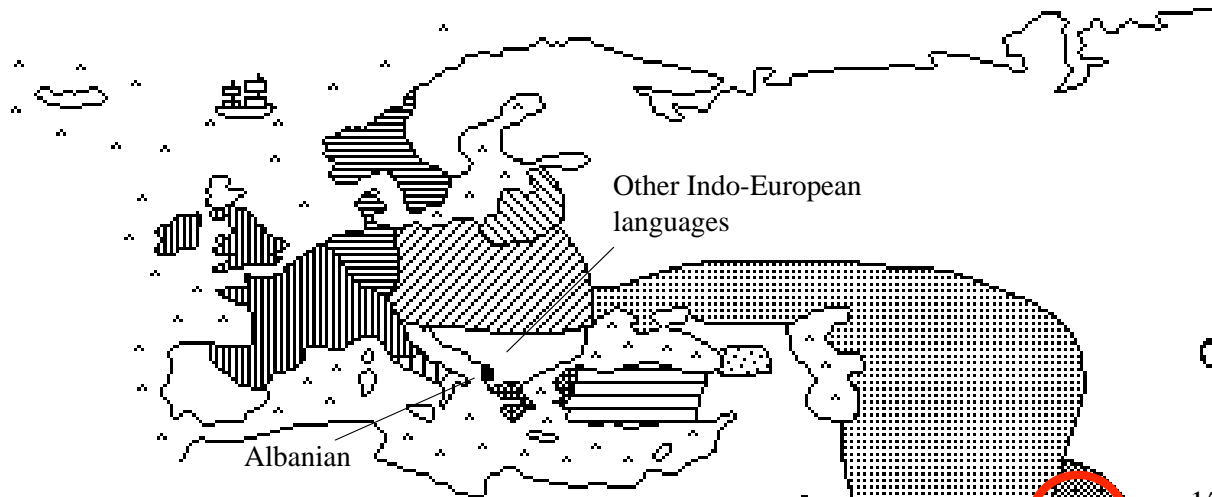
The prehistory of the controversy













शब्द एवेदमग्र आस

The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a **stronger affinity**, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by **accident**; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have **sprung from some common source**, which, perhaps, no longer exists: there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothick and the Celtick, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family, if this were the place for discussing any question concerning the antiquities of Persia. [William Jones, 1786, Emphases supplied]

Comparative Indo-European Linguistics

	Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Tamil
'father'	pitā́, pitár-	patḗr	pater	-tai (en-tai 'my father')
'mother'	mātā́, mātár-	mētḗr	māter	taḷḷai
'I' (< ic)	ahám	egṓ	egō	yāṅ → nāṅ
'me'	mām	emé	mē	(y)enn-ai



- | | | | |
|--|-----------|---|------------------------------|
|  | Albanian |  | Greek |
|  | Anatolian |  | Indo-Aryan (Sanskrit) |
|  | Armenian |  | Iranian |
|  | Baltic |  | Italic |
|  | Celtic |  | Slavic |
|  | Germanic |  | Tocharian |

ca. 1500 BC
to present

Race

A “racial” difference between āryas and dāsas/dasyus?

(Heinrich Zimmer 1879)

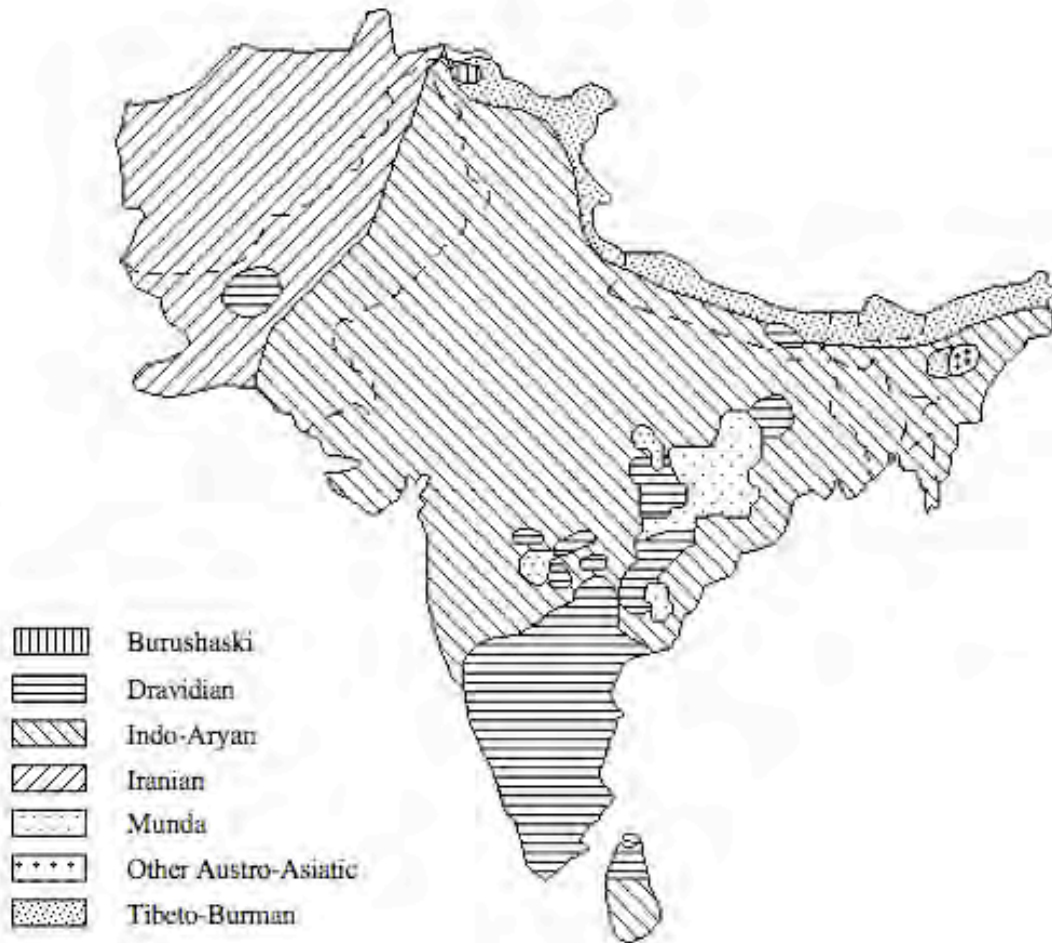
āryaṁ prāvada ... svārmilheṣv ... |

... tvācaṁ kṛṣṇāṁ arandhayat (RV 1:130:8)

‘He (Indra) helped the ... ārya ... in the battles for the *sun(light)*. ... he made ... the **black skin** (of the dāsa/dasyu) subject [to Aryan control].’

Plus Linguistic Assumption:
Prehistoric Subversion of Sanskrit/
Indo-Aryan by Dravidian

See esp. “dental” : “retroflex” contrast (pāta : pāṭa)
(Since Pott 1833)



Conclusion: Indo-Aryans were invaders

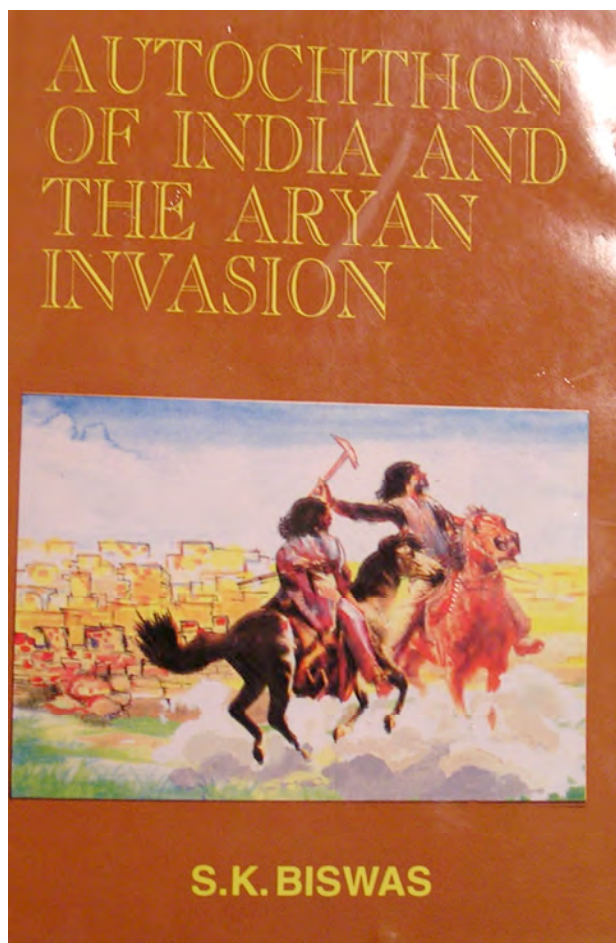
(Similar to the British — bringing
“civilization” to the “natives”)

Reactions

1. The British (and general European) reaction ...
 - 1a. The “Aryan Myth” and the Nazis ...
2. The Dravidian Movement response:

Aryans have always been invaders, enemies of the Dravidians (Arooran 1980:33-34, Venu 1987: 10-11, and Pillai 1981:190; difficult to find such claims in Annadurai and Periyar — Periyar apparently made such an argument in one of his Tamil publications)
3. The Dalit Movement response:

The Aryans subjugated the indigenous population, turning it into slaves — Śūdras. (Phule 1873)



(Biswas, S[augat] K. 1995. *Autochthon of India and the Aryan invasion*. (Re-written History Series, 1.) New Delhi: Genuine Publications and Media Pvt. Ltd.)

4. Indian Nationalist Responses

- a. Vivekananda (1897 “Future of India”):
... our archaeologist dreams of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryan came from — the Lord knows where. According to some, they came from Central Tibet, others will have it that they came from Central Asia.
... **As for the truth of these theories, there is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the Aryan ever came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient India was included Afghanistan.** There it ends. And the theory that the Shudra caste were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude, is equally illogical and equally irrational. It could not have been possible in those days that a few Aryans settled and lived there with a hundred thousand slaves at their command.

b. Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1914-1916, “Secret of the Veda”

... It is indeed coming to be doubted whether the whole story of an Aryan invasion through the Punjab is not a myth of the philologists ...

... but it certainly seemed to me that the original connection between the Dravidian and Aryan tongues was far closer and more extensive than is usually supposed and the possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two divergent families derived from one lost primitive tongue ...

- c. Golwalkar (1939, “We or Our Nationhood Defined”)

Enough of this. Man's knowledge (?) of those times is merely conjectural. He puts forth hypothesis, which are merely of tentative value, Hypothesis is not truth. Out of the heap of hypotheses we reject all and positively maintain that **we 'Hindus come into this land from nowhere, but are indigenous children of the soil always, from times immemorial and are natural masters of the country. ...** Here we ... propounded the one religion, which is no make-belief but religion in essence and built up a culture of such sublime nobility that foreign travellers to the land were dumbfounded to see it ... and all this long before the west had learnt to eat roast meat instead of raw: And we were one nation ...

⇒ Hindutva position

RSS = Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh

BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party

VHP = Vishwa Hindu Parishad

Bajrang Dal

etc.

d. Rajaram (in Jha & Rajaram 2000)

Linguists classify the four major South Dravidian languages — Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and Malayalam — as Dravidian, said to be descended from an ancestral language called Proto Dravidian. It is often overlooked that this is no more than a theory. In factual terms, however, no such language is known; its existence must be accepted on faith. This Proto Dravidian — supposedly unrelated to Sanskrit — is purely a theoretical construct, which in all probability never existed in history; at least there is no record of its existence — either direct or indirect ... Indian linguists also, going back thousands of years, know of no such language even though they record languages that have since disappeared. Thus, on empirical grounds, we have no reason to believe that any such Proto Dravidian ever existed.

Also, there is no denying that British colonial and Christian missionary interests were uppermost in his mind when Bishop Caldwell propounded his Dravidian language family as a subfamily of the Scythian which he claimed to be completely different from Sanskrit.

California textbook controversy over Hindu history



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article page for "California textbook controversy over Hindu history". At the top, there are navigation tabs for "article", "discussion", "edit this page", and "history". A "Log in / create account" link is in the top right. The article title is "California textbook controversy over Hindu history". Below the title, it says "From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia" and "(Redirected from Californian Hindu textbook controversy)". A prominent orange box contains a scale of justice icon and the text: "The neutrality of this article is disputed. Please see the discussion on the talk page. (December 2007) Please do not remove this message until the dispute is resolved." The main text of the article begins: "A controversy in the US state of California concerning the portrayal of Hinduism in history textbooks began in 2005. Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu groups complained that their religions were in part incorrectly or negatively portrayed. The Texas based Vedic Foundation (VF) and the American Hindu Education Foundation (HEF) complained to California's Curriculum Commission, saying the coverage in sixth grade history textbooks of Indian history and Hinduism was biased against Hinduism, and demanding that the portrayal be revised according to the views of Hinduism and Indian history allegedly shared by most Hindus and Indians." Below the text is a "Contents" table of contents with sections: 1 Background, 2 Opposition to the edits of the two Hindu foundations, 3 The State Board of Education decides, 4 Examples of changes, 5 Lawsuits (with sub-sections 5.1 HAF case and 5.2 CAPEEM case), 6 See also, 7 References, and 8 External links (with sub-sections 8.1 Media coverage in the United States and 8.2 Media coverage in India). On the left side, there is a navigation menu with links like "Main Page", "Contents", "Featured content", "Current events", "Random article", "Interaction", "Search", and "Toolbox". On the right side, there is a sidebar for "Hinduism" with sub-sections like "History · Deities", "Denominations", "Literature", "Beliefs and practices", and "Scriptures".

The neutrality of this article is disputed.

Please see the discussion on the [talk page](#).(December 2007)

Please do not remove this message until the [dispute is resolved](#)

Background

Christian, Jewish, Islamic and the two Hindu groups submitted their edits in autumn 2005. After intensive scholarly discussions, over 500 changes proposed by Jewish and Christian groups and 100 changes proposed by Muslims were accepted by the California Department of Education (CDE) and the State Board of Education (SBE); these scholarly discussions extended to Jan. 6, 2006. The 170 edits proposed by Hindus were largely accepted, though 58 of them met with opposition.

...

Late in the process, [Michael E. J. Witzel](#), a Harvard Sanskrit professor "unexpectedly intervened".^[5] Witzel, along with his collaborator Steve Farmer, was informed about the edits proposed by VF and HEF by a person claiming to be a graduate student of Indian origin at a California university. Witzel wrote a letter to the California Board of Education, protesting against the changes ^[4]. He suggested that the matter be discussed publicly, and that professional advice be taken by the Board. The letter was supported by the signatures of 47 academics in the field of Asian Studies from all over the world.

... [Opposition also from organizations speaking for Dalits — many of them, but not all, run by Christian missionaries]

The edits proposed by the VF [= “Vedic Foundation”] and HEF [= American Hindu Education Foundation] were also opposed by a group of organizations that included the [Friends of South Asia \(FOSA\)](#), the [Coalition against Communalism \(CAC\)](#), the [Federation of Tamil Sangams in North America](#),^[11] [Non Resident Indians for a Secular and Harmonious India](#), the [Vaishnava Center for Enlightenment](#), and the [Indian American Public Education Advisory Council \(IPAC\)](#).

Forty-seven professional South Asian scholars from universities all over the world and some major American Departments of South Asian Studies[12] as well as some 150 Indian American professors -signed the original letter of opposition to the proposals of the two Foundations. Seventeen members of the California Legislature wrote a letter of support for the scholars.[6] These documents have been made available on the website of the [South Asia Faculty Network](#). [7]

Soon after Witzel's intervention, Viji Sundaram, a reporter for [India-West \[8\]](#), wrote that **the scholarly consensus behind Prof. Witzel's petition was likely to have influenced the Board of Education's decision** to review the changes suggested by the Hindu groups. Another reporter, Rachel McMurdie of the [Milpitas Post](#), pointed out the **parentage and close links between the VF and HEF and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh as well as the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, the American branch of the Indian organization RSS.**

[Emphasis supplied]

The State Board of Education decides

...

On 8 March 2006, the full Board agreed with the February 27 decision, voting (9 to zero, 2 abstentions) to reaffirm only the changes approved on February 27, and to overturn the rest of the changes suggested by the HEF and VF, with two exceptions: **the Aryan Migration Theory would be mentioned as disputed by scholars, and the Vedas would be referred to as sacred texts, rather than songs or poems.** Most parties expressed qualified satisfaction with the decision; however, the [Hindu American Foundation](#) (HAF), that had not participated in the revisions, threatened the board with a lawsuit[13][14][15].[16].

Ruth Green, past president of the SBE, said that the ruling "represents our best efforts. Many ideological fault lines have played out here. These beliefs are deeply held." [17].

A PR firm hired by the VF and the HEF stated that, "What is at stake here is the embarrassment and humiliation that these Hindu children (in America) continue to face because of the way textbooks portray their faith and culture." [18] Janeshwari Devi of VF said that "The two foundations submitted about 500 proposed changes, and more than 80 percent were not approved."

Organiser

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December 25, 2005

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Diaspora depressed over deception

By Sandhya Jain

The Indian diaspora in America is upset over the manner in which the California education department has permitted known anti-Hindu baiters like Harvard professor Michael Witzel and other usual suspects to intrude in the textbook

The Indian diaspora in America is upset over the manner in which the California education department has permitted known anti-Hindu baiters like Harvard professor Michael Witzel and other usual suspects to intrude in the textbook selection and reform process, in violation of established norms. The result is that while the Curriculum Commission has accepted changes mooted by representatives of the Christian, the Jewish and the Muslim groups, changes desired by Hindu groups are being posted for re-review by Hindu-baiting academics!

The Other Side of Hindutva

If we Hindus grow stronger in time Moslem friends ... will have to play the part of German Jews

(Savarkar, presidential address to RSS members in Nagpur, 28 December 1938; *Indian Annual Register* 1938 (1939), vol. II, Calcutta.)

German national pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the semitic [sic] races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.

(Golwalkar 1939: 37)

All that the Hindu wants is that our culture should flower forth into greatness. He is scandalised that after installing one Muslim as President and another one as Chief Justice, he is told that he not giving jobs to Muslims ... **Muslims must accept the fact that India is as much a Hindu country as Pakistan is a Muslim country or Britain is a Christian country. Anybody who does not accept this way of life is an ostrich today ... and he will be dead as a dodo tomorrow.**

(emphasis supplied)

(*The Organiser*, 4 January 1970; cited by Banerjee 1998: 139)

katuon ke bas do hi sthān, Pakistan yā kabristān

‘there are only two places for the circumcised: Pakistan or the graveyard’

(Slogan of “Kar Sevaks” at the Babri Masjid, Ayodhya, 1990; cited by Nandy et al. 1995)

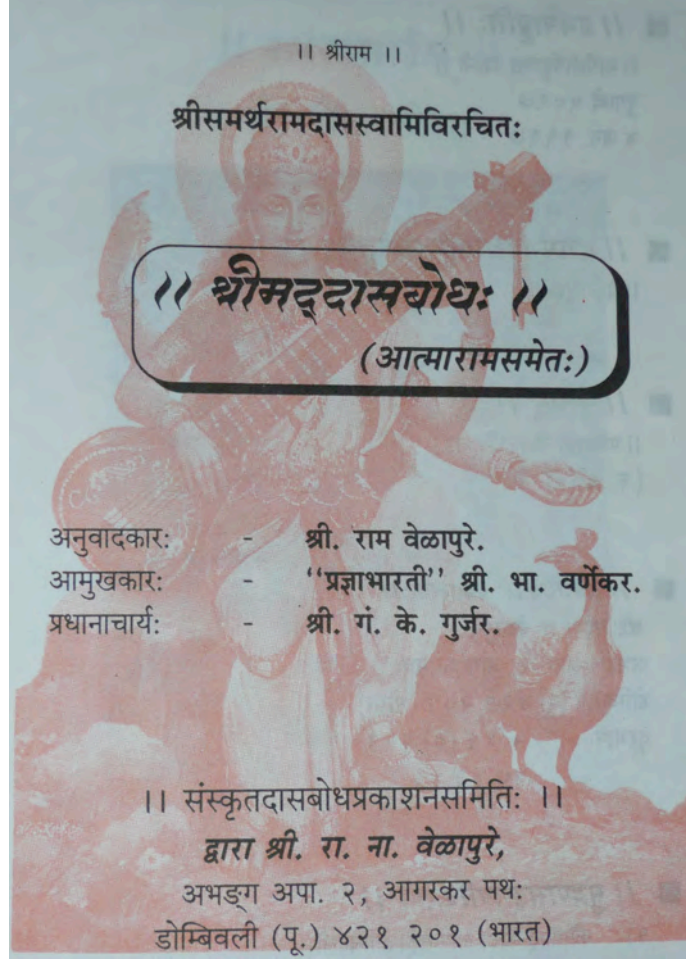
Ek dhakka aur do, Babri masjid tod [toṛ] do

‘Give one more blow, destroy the Babri Masjid’

(Uma Bharati, at the destruction of the Babri Masjid, 1992; cited by Nandy et al. 1995)

Declare without hesitation that this is a Hindu rashtra, a nation of Hindus. We have come to strengthen the immense Hindu shakti into a fist. Do not display any love for your enemies ... The Qur'an teaches them to lie in wait for idol worshipers, to skin them alive, to stuff them in animal skins and torture them until they ask for forgiveness ... [W]e could not teach them with words, now let us teach them with kicks ... Tie up your religiosity and kindness in a bundle and throw it in the Jamuna ... **[A]ny non-Hindu who lives here does so at our mercy.** (emphasis supplied)

(Uma Bharati, election speech, 1991; cited in Hansen 1999)



Distributed at World Sanskrit Conference, Bangalore (1997)

॥ आमुखम् ॥

“प्रज्ञाभारती” श्री.भा. वर्णेकर

१. भारतीये साहित्यप्रपञ्चे अतिप्राचीनकालीनैः ऋषिमुनिभिः मानवस्य समुद्धारार्थं यद् विज्ञानसहितं ज्ञानं शिष्यपरम्परया प्रसारितम् आसीत्, तदेव गच्छता कालेन श्रीशङ्करादिभिः आचार्यैः भाष्यादिरूपेण विशदीकृतम् उपबृंहितं च इति सुविदितम् । ततश्च लोकानां बुद्धि-शक्ति-क्षयादिकारणैः मध्ययुगीने काले दुरूहं दुरवगमं च जातम् । अस्य दिव्यज्ञानस्य विलोपेन लोका स्वहितपराङ्मुखाः उन्मार्गगामिनो वा भवेयुः इति विज्ञानद्भिः साधुसज्जनैः तदेव आर्षम् अध्यात्मज्ञानं पुनरुददीपयितुं प्राकृतभाषाः अवलम्बिताः । प्राकृतभाषामाध्यमेन लोकोद्बोधनम् अतिप्राचीनकाले बुद्धजिनेन्द्रादिभिः कृतम् आसीत् । पालीभाषीयम् बौद्धवाङ्मयं तथा अर्धमागधीभाषीयं जैनवाङ्मयं च प्राचीनकाले प्रभूतं विनिर्ममे । ऐतिहासिकानां मध्ययुगे नाम प्रायः १२ शताब्दीतः आरभ्य १८ शताब्दीपर्यन्तं सर्वासु प्रादेशिकभाषासु प्राक्तनपरम्परानुसारि श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणोक्तसिद्धान्तवबोधि तथा स्वानुभूतिप्रतिपादकं च पद्यमयं वाङ्मयं प्रभूतमात्रया लोकवन्द्यैः साधुसज्जनैः विरचितम् । हिन्दीमराठीकन्नडादीनां सकलप्रादेशिकभाषासाहित्यानां परमं निधानं खलु तदिदं “ सन्तसाहित्यम् ” वर्तते । तथाहि असमप्रदेशे श्रीशङ्करदेवस्य, वङ्गप्रदेशे श्रीचैतन्यदेवस्य, आन्ध्रप्रदेशे रामदासस्य, तमिळुविभागे नायन्मार-आळ-वाराणाम्, केरले एज्युत्तच्चनस्य, कर्णाटके पुरन्दरदासस्य, महाराष्ट्रे श्रीज्ञानेश्वरस्य, गुर्जरे नरसीदासस्य, उत्तरप्रदेशे तुलसीदासस्य इत्येवमादीनां परःशतानां साधुधुर्याणां प्रसादमधुरम् प्रदेशिकभाषोपनिबद्धं पद्यमयं समग्रं साहित्यं, तत्तत्प्रदेशप्रदेशवासिभिः जनगणैः नितराम् समाद्रियते, प्रमाणीक्रियते च । भक्तिसान्द्रस्य आध्यात्मिकसाहित्यस्य निर्मातृणाम् साधुप्रवराणां सङ्ख्या अपरिगणनीया इव अस्ति । पुत्रदारवित्तेषणादिभिः आध्यात्मिकदोषैः स्वीयं मानवजन्म यर्थं कुर्वतां पामराणां उद्बोधनार्थं प्रायः सर्वैः एव “ सन्त-”जनैः भगवद्भक्तिः एव आधान्येन प्रतिपादिता ।

२. “ मोक्षसाधनसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी । ”

Archaeological Evidence as further Complication

The Indus or Harappan Civilization (ca. 3000 – 1700 BC)







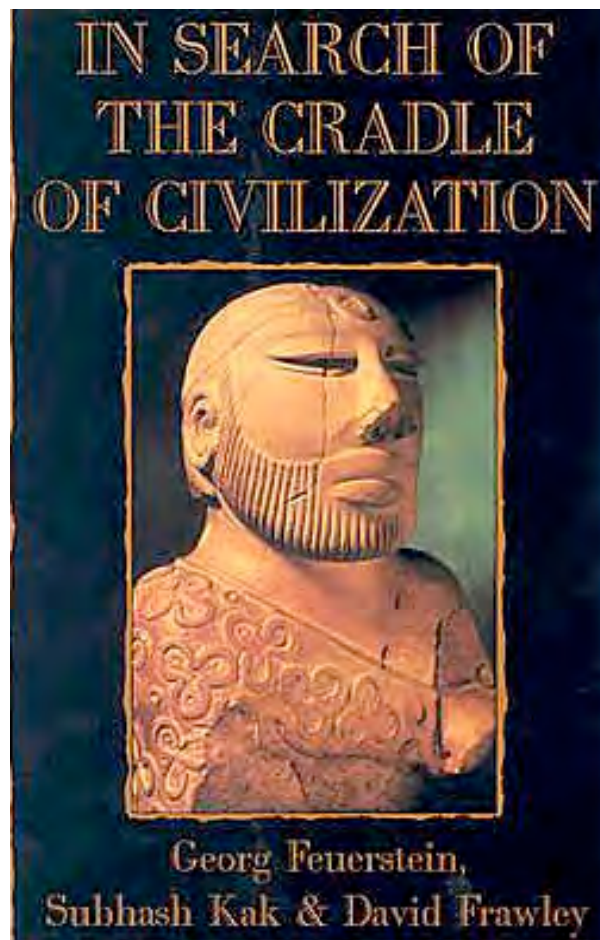




Linguistics, Archaeology — and Ideology

Was the Indus Civilization “Aryan” (i.e. were its people Indo-Aryan/Sanskrit speakers)?

Or did the “Aryans” come from the outside — and even destroy the Indus Civilization?



AUTOCHTHON
OF INDIA AND
THE ARYAN
INVASION



S.K. BISWAS

ADVENT
OF THE
ARYANS
IN INDIA

Ram Sharan Sharma



सत्यमेव जयते

What Can Be Known or not Known?

What is the Best Hypothesis?

The evidenc of Language/Linguistics

Sanskrit/Indo-Aryan IS related to the other Indo-European languages — outside India/South Asia

	Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	Tamil
‘father’	pitá, pitár-	patér	pater	-tai (en-tai ‘my father’)
‘mother’	mātá, mātár-	mētér	māter	taḷḷai
‘I’ (< ic)	ahám	egó	egō	yāṅ → nāṅ
‘me’	mām	emé	mē	(y)enn-ai

See also Trautman 1999 on British scholars and their Indian pandits at Fort Williams vs. Fort St. George

True, the relationship of the Indo-European languages is a hypothesis and so is the reconstructed ancestor, Proto-Indo-European

But, so is the theory of Evolution, or the theory of Black Holes

...

Dravidian Subversion of Indo-Aryan/Sanskrit?

Generally assumed, but controversial ...

“Out of India” or “Into India”?

Difficult to settle on purely linguistic grounds, although some evidence suggests that in-migration is the simpler hypothesis ...

Hock, Hans Henrich. 1999. Out of India? The linguistic evidence. *Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia: Evidence, interpretation, and ideology, Proceedings of the International Seminar on Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 25-27 October, 1996*, 1-18, ed. by Johannes Bronkhorst and Madhav Deshpande. Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora, 3.

“Race” and Related Issues

āryam prāvad ... svàrmiḷheṣv ... ।

... tvácam kṛṣṇám arandhayat (RV 1:130:8)

‘He (Indra) helped the ... ārya ... in the battles for the *sun(light)*. ... he made ... the **black skin** (of the dāsa/dasyu) subject [to Aryan control].’

Hock 1999 (Similarly Schetelich 1991):

In every single passage that provides enough context, the ‘black/dark’ color of the *dāsas/dasyus* contrasts, not with a white skin of the *āryas*, but with the **sun** or the **light world** that they possess or seek to possess. Consider in this regard the *svàr-* of the first line in our example, a word unambiguously referring to the sun (and in fact cognate, in a complicated way with English *sun*).

Through a glass darkly: Modern “racial” interpretations vs. textual and general prehistoric evidence on ārya and dāsa/dasyu in Vedic society. *Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia: Evidence, interpretation, and ideology, Proceedings of the International Seminar on Aryan and Non-Aryan in South Asia, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 25-27 October, 1996*, 145-174, ed. by Johannes Bronkhorst and Madhav Deshpande. Harvard Oriental Series, Opera Minora, 3.

This finding suggests that the term “black/dark” here is not used in reference to skin color, but reflects the perhaps universal tendency to equate black or dark, the color of the dangerous night, with evil persons or forces, and white or light, the color of daylight, with good ones.

As regards *tvac* ‘skin’, note also *romā pṛthivyāḥ* ‘body hairs of the earth’ = ‘the plants’

Moreover, a “racial” interpretation is anachronistic for the time of the putative “Aryan Invasion”. Note the lack of even ethnic identity consciousness at the time of the conflict between Huns and the Roman Empire (Goths on both sides of the conflict) ...



Further Problem:

Archaeologists (e.g. Shaffer & Lichtenstein 1999) find no change in skeletal mix over the last 5000 years

In fact, 'an identifiable cultural tradition has continued, an Indo-Gangetic Tradition ... linking diverse social entities which span a time period from the beginning of food production in the seventh millennium BC to the present.' (Shaffer & Lichtenstein, p. 256)

Common conclusion by Indian nationalists (Hindutva and others):

- **No evidence for an “Aryan Invasion”**
- **The “Aryan Invasion Theory” is wrong, a hoax perpetrated by western missionaries, colonialists, racists to set Indo-Aryans against Dravidians**

(Thus also Chakrabarty 1997)

BUT: There have been numerous incursions by various Central and West Asian groups, including Greeks, Hunas, Sakas, Turks, and Mongols ...

Hence Chakrabarty (1997: 225):

‘Looked at from this point of view, the[se later] invasions, which are considered foreign invasions in the study of Indian history all originated precisely in this interaction area [between the Oxus and the Indus]. Geopolitically, these invasions, inclusive of the Muslim invasions right up to the invasion of Nadir Shah ..., can hardly be called entirely alien in the subcontinental context.’



So, where would the Indo-Aryans have come from??

Moreover: **There is no evidence for an out-migration either**

☞ In-Migration would involve speakers of only **one** language

☞ Out-Migration would involve speakers of **multiple** languages — and should therefore leave a “bolder” archaeological signature

More recent Genomic arguments

Genetic Evidence on the Origins of Indian Caste Populations

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- A genomic study of northern (“Indo-Aryan”) and southern (Dravidian) populations, distinguishing between upper castes (brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya) and shudras.
- Both mtDNA and Y-DNA are considered, with focus on “40 independent, biparentally inherited autosomal loci (1 LINE-1 and 39 Alu elements) in all of the caste and continental populations (~600 individuals).”

Findings:

- a. The “upper castes have a higher affinity to Europeans than to Asians, and the upper castes are significantly more similar to Europeans than are the lower castes. Collectively, all five datasets show a trend toward upper castes being more similar to Europeans, whereas lower castes are more similar to Asians. We conclude that Indian castes are most likely to be of proto-Asian origin with West Eurasian admixture resulting in rank-related and sex-specific differences in the genetic affinities of castes to Asians and Europeans”
- b. Greater West Eurasian affinities for males than for females
- c. Conclusion: This reflects relatively recent in-migration of Indo-Aryans

Findings embraced by different groups

1. Bh. Krishnamurti, leading advocate of the theory that Indo-Aryan was prehistorically influenced by Dravidian, found support for his view in these findings (p.c. 2005)
2. An article submitted to a proposed volume opposing right-wing and Hindu-fundamentalist views, did so likewise (2005)
3. A Dalit website cited a report on these findings, which first appeared in *Newsday* and then in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (<http://www.dalitstan.org/holocaust/invasion/histgene.html> — now defunct, it seems)
4. The article was then picked up the neo-Nazi “Stormfront” at <http://www.stormfront.org/whitehistory/aryangene.htm>

A Priori Problems

- a. Upper castes in South are mainly brahmin
- b. Kulke & Rothermund (1986) point to migration of brahmins (and Buddhist monks) to the south, as larger kingdoms develop in that area
- c. Affiliation of southern brahmins with northern ones therefore may simply reflect movement **internal to India**
- d. Absence of skeletal changes in the north during 2nd millennium BC causes difficulties for view that genomic similarities between northern upper castes and “Western Eurasians” reflect relatively recent Indo-Aryan migration
- e. Consider Turkey: Turkish is a Central Asian language, but only about 1.5% of Turkish genetic marker can be traced to Central Asia (Cengiz Cinnioglu et al. 2004)

More recent findings

Most of the extant mtDNA boundaries in South and Southwest Asia were likely shaped during the initial settlement of Eurasia by anatomically modern humans

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BMC Genetics 2004, 5:26 doi:10.1186/1471-2156-5-26

India Acquired Language, Not Genes, From West, Study Says

Brian Handwerk

for [National Geographic News](#)

January 10, 2006

“Most modern Indians descended from South Asians, not invading Central Asian steppe dwellers, a new genetic study reports.”

"Language can be acquired [and] has been in cases of 'elite dominance,' where adoption of a language can be forced but strong genetic differences remain [because of] the lack of admixture between the dominant and the weak populations."

Ref. to: **A prehistory of Indian Y chromosomes: Evaluating demic diffusion scenarios**

Sanghamitra Sahoo, Anamika Singh, G. Himabindu, Jheelam Banerjee, T. Sitalaximi, Sonali Gaikwad, R. Trivedi, Phillip Endicott, Toomas Kivisild, Mait Metspalu, Richard Villems, and V. K. Kashyap^{*,||}

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, **January 24, 2006** | vol. 103 | no. 4 | **843-848**

And here's one of several responses:

ARYAN INVASION BITES THE DUST --N.S. Rajaram

July 29, 2006 (<http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com/2006/07/aryan-invasion-bites-dust-ns-rajaram.html>)

“Most telling of all was the genetic evidence pointing to the fact that Indians have lived where they are today for the better part of 50,000 years and no Aryan invasion took place. The genetic data was presented by two leading workers in the field— Dr. Peter Underhill of Stanford University and Dr. V.K. Kashyap of the National Institute of Biologicals of New Delhi. Their findings overwhelmingly contradict the notion of any Aryan invasion and/or migration for the origin of Indian civilization.”

vs. "Language can be acquired [and] has been in cases of 'elite dominance,' where adoption of a language can be forced but strong genetic differences remain [because of] the lack of admixture between the dominant and the weak populations."

[Compare again Turkey]


Conclusion re “Race” etc.

No strong arguments for either in- or out-migration

But the hypothesis of in-migration is more “economical”
it involves speakers of just one language, rather than
speakers of multiple languages

Cultural Factors

Generally Accepted Differences Between Indus Civilization and early Indo-Aryan (Vedic) Civilization

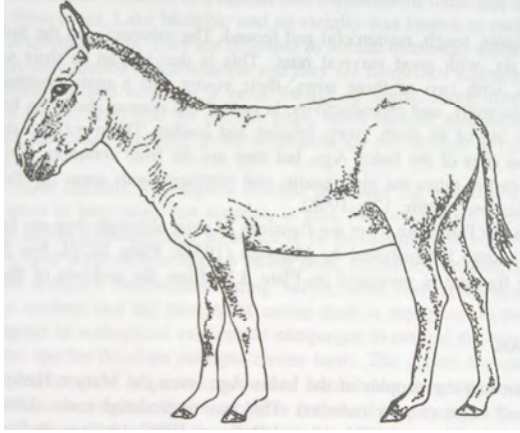
Indus Civilization	Vedic Civilization
Urban, settled	Not urban, not settled
Literate (but ...)	Non-literate — oral tradition
Established fire altars	Fire altars produced only for a particular ritual
Generally peaceful	Frequently war-like
No clear evidence of horses	Horse-and-Chariot Culture Complex
 Unicorn	Horse



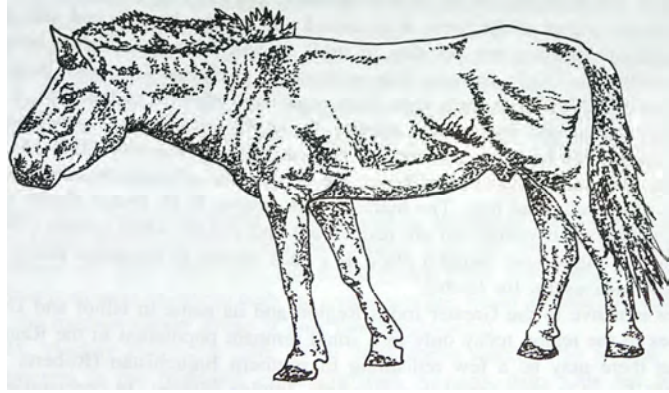
The horse (and chariot) plays a significant religious role in early Vedic society, especially in the *aśvamedha*, where the final sacrifice of the horse is equated to establishment or maintenance of the world

The mystical significance of the sacrificial horse (BAU (M) 1.1)

The head of the sacrificial horse is the dawn; the eye is the sun; the breath, the wind; the open mouth, Agni Vaiśvānara; the body of the sacrificial horse is the year; the back, the sky/heaven; the belly, the air/ether; the hoof, the earth; the two sides/flanks, the quarters; the ribs, the intermediate quarters; the limbs, the seasons; the joints, the months and the half-months; the feet (lit. support), the days and nights; the bones, the constellations; the flesh (pl.), the cloud[s]; the food-in-the-stomach, the sand(s); the entrails, the rivers; the liver and the lungs, the mountains; the body-hair(s), the plants and the trees; the forepart, the rising (sun); the hind part, the setting (sun); when/in that it opens (its mouth [to yawn acc. to one commentary; or to whinny?]), it is lightning; when/in that it shakes itself, it is thundering; when/in that it urinates, it is raining; its voice is Speech. Day arose in front of the horse after (the golden vessel) called “greatness”. Its womb/home is in the eastern ocean. The night arose behind it after the vessel called “greatness”. Its womb/home is in the western ocean. These two vessels arose on both sides of the horse. Becoming a steed it carried the Gods; as a courser, the Gandharvas; as a racer, the Asuras; as a horse, human beings. The ocean is its kinsman; the ocean, its womb/home.



Onager or Hemione

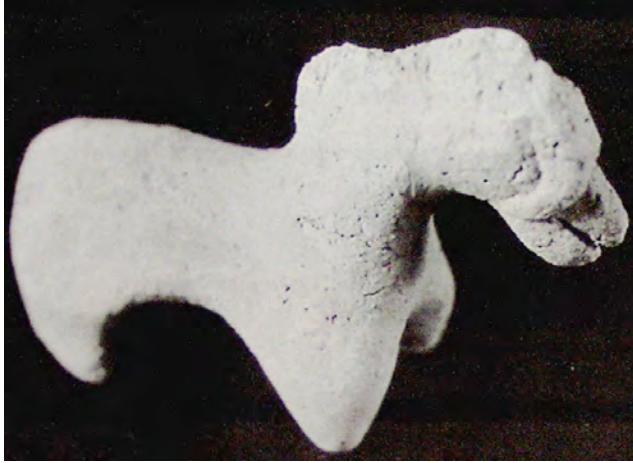


Przewalsky's Horse

Discussion apud Trautmann, Thomas R. 2005. *The Aryan Debate*. New
Delhi: Oxford India (B. B. Lal : Sándor Bököny : Richard H.
Meadow & Ajita Patel)

No unambiguous evidence for horses before ca. 1700 BC, when the Indus Civilization is collapsing, and at the periphery of the Civilization

👉 No evidence for unicorns in the Vedic texts



Terra cotta figurines from Pirak, near Bolan Pass, 16th and 14th c. BC

👉 Horse Burials in the Swat Valley, ca. 17th c. BC, near Khyber Pass

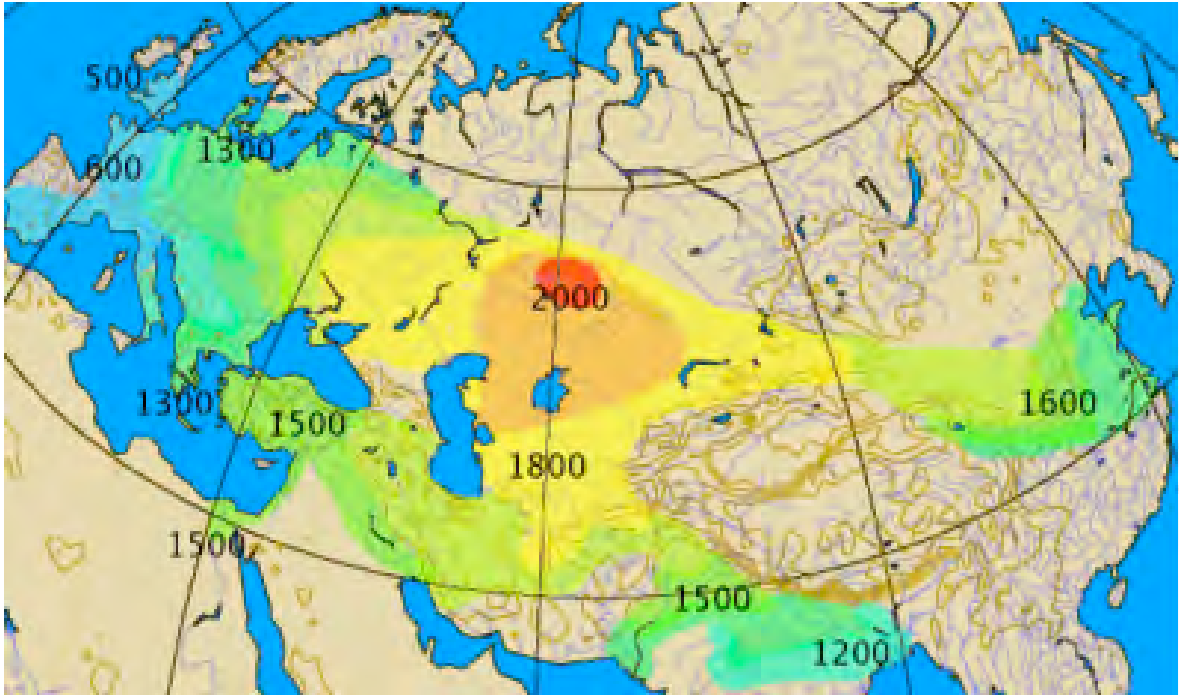
Gandhara grave culture

Main article: [Gandhara grave culture](#)

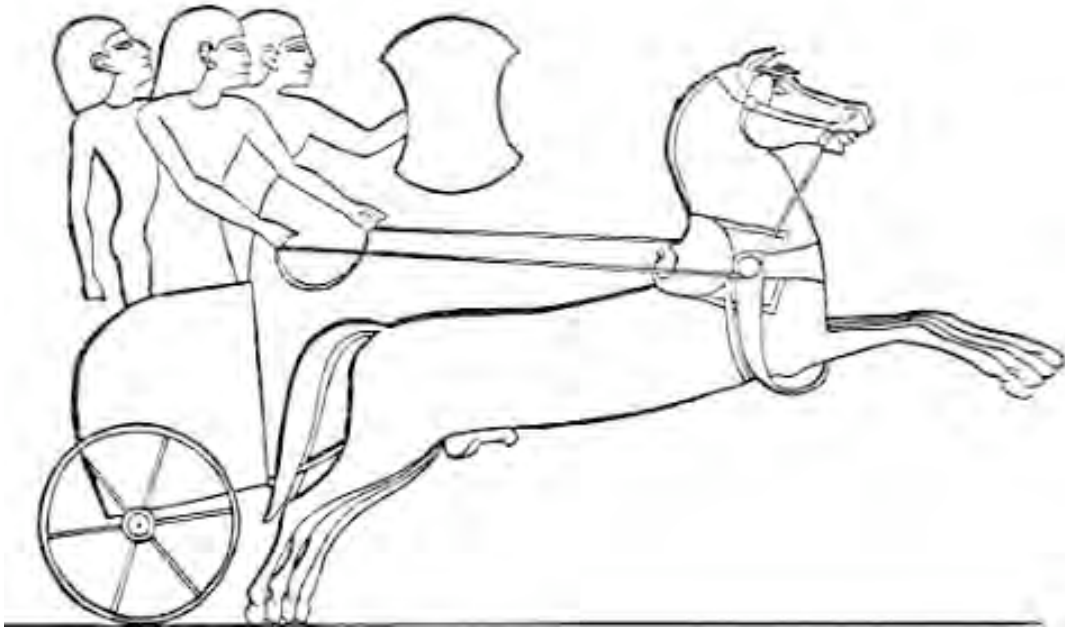
About 1800 BCE, there is a major cultural change in the [Swat Valley](#) with the emergence of the Gandhara grave culture. With its introduction of new ceramics, new burial rites, and the **horse**, the Gandhara grave culture is a major candidate for early Indo-Aryan presence. The two new burial rites—flexed inhumation in a pit and cremation burial in an urn—were, according to early Vedic literature, both practiced in early Indo-Aryan society. Horse-trappings indicate the importance of the horse to the economy of the Gandharan grave culture. **Two horse burials** indicate the importance of the horse in other respects. Horse burial is a custom that Gandharan grave culture has in common with Andronovo, though not within the distinctive timber-frame graves of the steppe.[21]

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Aryan_migration; Ref. to Mallory, J.P. (1989), *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology, and Myth*, London: Thames & Hudson — Emphases supplied)





(From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariot>)



Hittite Battle Chariot
(from Egyptian relief)

(From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariot>)

The spread of horse-and-chariot culture elsewhere in early Eurasia is associated with the spread of Indo-European speakers, especially in Mesopotamia (and beyond) and in Mycenaean Greece

Conclusions re Cultural Factors:

- The cultural differences between Indus and Vedic Civilization make identity unlikely
- Note especially the difference between “unicorns” and horses as (apparent) objects of sacredness
- The first appearance around 1700-1500 BC of clearly identifiable horse evidence at Pirak (near the Bolan Pass) and in the Swat Valley (near the Khyber Pass), combined with the association of horse-and-chariot culture with Indo-Europeans, is compatible with the arrival of a new, Indo-European culture group — most likely Indo-Aryan

General Conclusions

1. The genetic evidence for in-migration is inconclusive
2. But recall the absence of skeletal change in response to later in-migrations
3. What tends to be overlooked entirely is that there is no evidence for out-migration either, at least during the entire 2nd millennium BC
4. The cultural differences between Indus and Vedic civilizations make it difficult to identify them with each other
5. Note especially the unicorn vs. horse iconography
6. The appearance of horse burials in Swat, near the Khyber Pass, in the 17th century BC, on the fringe of the Indus Civilization and at a time when the civilization is fading out, is most parsimoniously explained by assuming the arrival of a new group

7. The strong association of horses and the horse-and-chariot complex with Indo-Europeans and also with Vedic civilization makes the assumption that this new group were Indo-Aryans the most likely one
8. The lack of a clear genetic signature for an in-migration is not anomalous, as shown by later incursions, as well as outside examples such as Turkey.
9. These findings call into question hypotheses based on 19th-century notions of migration and nationality, as well as a close relationship between “race” and language
10. But that’s not really anything novel. For instance, scholars working on prehistoric and early historic Europe find it impossible to trace different groups, such as the Goths, Vandals, or Alans, based on skeletal remains. It is only linguistic documentation (notoriously scarce) and, if we are lucky, specific artifacts that make it possible to do so.