

Why Linguistics necessarily holds the key to the solution of the Aryan question

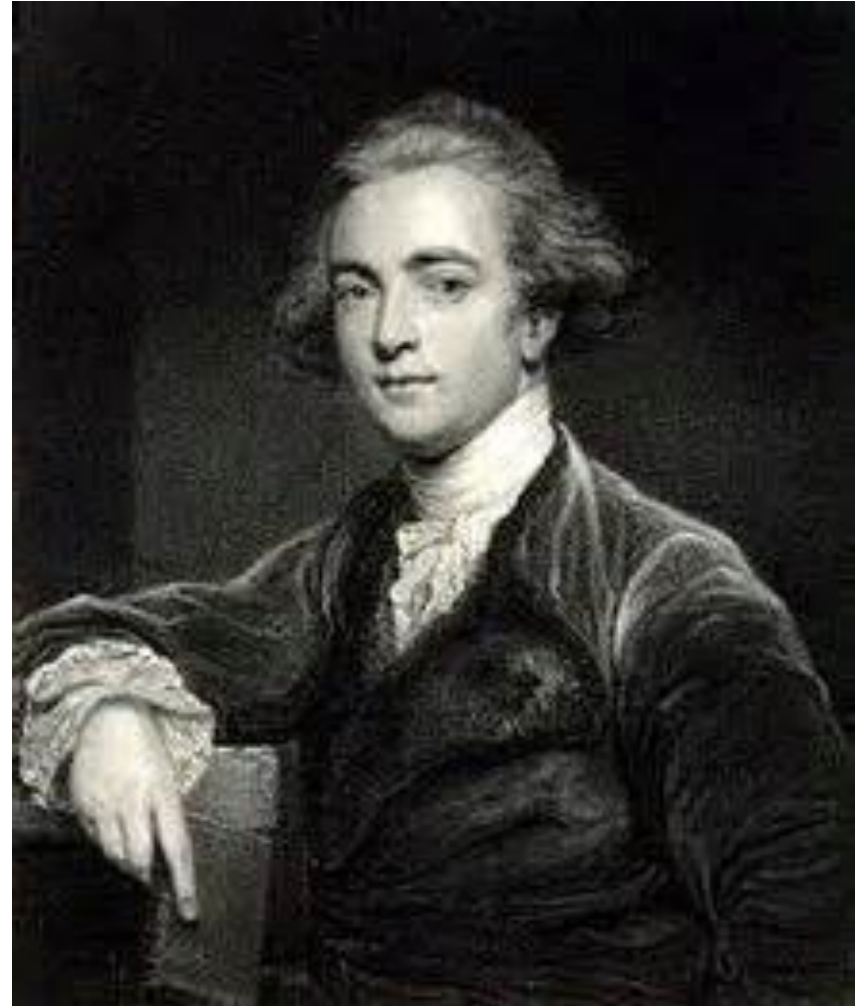
Dr. Koenraad Elst, Draupadi
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Indo-European

- The Indo-European (IE) language family unites most Indian and European languages.
- Common origin: Proto-Indo-European (PIE).
- Reconstructed by Comparative-Historical Linguistics.
- Posits that the observed linguistic processes happened in the past as well.
- Deemed “pseudo-science” by Hindu critics.

William Jones

- Suspected since 16th century.
- Official °Kolkata 1986: “philologer” lecture by William Jones.
- India = cradle of IE linguistics, as of linguistics itself.



The Aryan Invasion Theory

- From 1820, OIT with Indian Homeland gave way to more westerly Homeland plus invasion into India: the Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT).
- Used by colonials or missionaries,
- ... but not “concocted” by them.
- Followed less from evolving linguistic insights, though sometimes unwarranted deductions.
- Bigger distance PIE/Skt ~ Homeland/India.

The Out-of-India Theory

- Out-of-India Theory (OIT): term apparently coined by Edwin Bryant ca. 1996.
- Flattered: most OIT champions merely deny IE immigration,
- ... whereas OIT posits IE emigration.
- Prevalent ca. 1786-1820.
- Even earlier: Voltaire traced Europe to India.

The OIT revisited

- Revived 1992: KD Sethna's *Karpāsa*: Rg-Veda ignorant of cotton and other Harappan items.
- Thesis: Rg-Veda largely pre-Harappan Indian.
- Other factors of higher chronology, e.g. Abraham Seidenberg's thesis that the "Pythagoras" theorem in *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* is source of Babylonian/Greek one.

Astronomical evidence

- *Śatapatha, Kauṣītaki, Atharva* situate themselves ca. 2300 BC.
- *Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa* situates itself ca. 1350 BC.
- Point consistently to higher chronology.
- Not a single astro-reference supports AIT.
- Unfortunately, “history-rewriters” abuse this type of evidence > far-fetched high dates.

Material evidence

- Archaeology, e.g. Harappan jewelry in C. Asia.
- Genetics, e.g. Ukrainian cows partly Indian.
- Render AIT improbable, > special pleading:
“Aryans may have invaded under the radar.”
- So does demographic common sense.
- Emigration, yes, but genes don't speak > don't prove language: imposition? Assimilation?

Comparative Mythology

- Beyond IE: dragon-slayer; 3 *guṇa*-symbol colours.
- Within EU: numerous correspondences, e.g. mother makes Duryodhana/Achilles/Baldr invulnerable minus one body part > killed.
- Nick Allen: many Mahabharata/Iliad correspondences, but MBh have yogic element. Explanation: it got lost on the way.

Textual evidence

- Harappan script undeciphered.
- High-chronology Rg-Veda very close to PIE.
- PIE = “pre-Vedic Sanskrit”, e.g. only Sanskrit preserves 3 numbers x 8 cases of PIE.
- Rg-Veda remembers expulsion of *Druhyus* by *Ānavas/Pauravas/Māndhātṛ*, = IE emigration.
- Confirmed in Puranas: *Druhyus* set up kingdoms in the NW, e.g. *Gandhāra*.

Relative chronology

- Rg-Veda consists of 10 books, chronologically:
 - the “family books” 6, 3, 7 (old), 4, 2 (middle), 5 (late);
 - then 8.
 - 1 is collection of remainder, period of 4 to 8.
 - 9 contains most Soma hymns, was added later.
 - 10 is clearly younger than all the preceding; same period as Yajur- and Atharva-Veda.

Shrikant Talageri

- River/region gradient: east to west.
- Onomastic and metric gradients:
 - Easterly > westerly books.
 - Vedic > Iranian.
 - Vedic > Mitannic.
- Pre-Vedic: UP;
- Early Vedic: greater Haryana;
- Late Vedic: up to Afghanistan.

Ārya

- “The able ones”, “the owners”, “those conforming to order” ... many explanations.
- Then meaning in Anatolian, Iranian and Vedic: “fellow-citizen”, “countryman”, “us”.
- Veda calls own Paurava people *Ārya*.
- So, *Ārya* becomes “Vedic”, > “civilized”, “noble”.
- Calls adversaries *Dāsa*, *Dasyu*, *Paṇi*, *Asura*; all names known from Iranian world. Also *Śūdra*?

Vedic history

- *Ānavas* = Iranians: Kashmir to Panjab to Afghanistan; confirmed in Avesta.
- Describe two-stage expulsion of *Anavas*:
 - Battle of the Ten Kings.
 - *Vārṣāgira* Battle, = against *Vistāspa* + *Zarathuštra*.
- Main historical event in Rg-Veda: war between Vedic tribe and Iranians.
- Condition terms: *Deva/Asura*, *Dāsa*, *Śūdra*.

Linguistic arguments

- Linguistic expansion not from centre.
- River names in NW India pure Sanskrit.
- Isoglosses: e.g. augment Greek *e-lipon*, *e-lexa*; Sanskrit *a-dhāt*, *a-gamat*, yet leave Russian “Homeland” in opposite directions.
- Difference between European groups due to different substrate languages.
- Not Indo-Iranian but Germanic < Uralic.

Rootedness

- Root in Skt. often more rooted in basic vocabulary. (Nicholas Kazanas)
- *Dugdha*, “milk” ~ *duhitar*, “daughter” (< milkmaid), elsewhere *daughter* unrelated.
- **pa-ter*, “father” < *pa-*, “protect”, elsewhere unrooted, only “father”.
- *Nāma*, “name” < *namāmi*, “to address/greet”, elsewhere only “name”.
- Other members creolized, derivative.

Loanwords

- Other languages have far more loanwords: Anatolian, Greek, Germanic.
- Hydronyms mostly borrowed from pre-IE or from other IE; but in NW-India all pure Sanskrit.
- Often Sanskrit words declared non-IE yet not attested elsewhere.

Linguistic paleontology

- *Fagus*/beech “proves” European origin.
- Wolf, bear “prove” cold northerly origin.
- Discarded; yet useful in agricultural words.
- Dominant: PIE in Russia ignorant of agriculture, adopted it + its terms separately in India + Europe.
- But some PIE agricultural terms: *parṣa*, *sīrā*.
- Knew it, forgot most on trek through Russia.

Botanical terms

- Premendra Priyadarshi (medic) 2014:
 - Good on genetics;
 - Rash on climate changes during Vedic period.
 - Far-fetched in chronology (like many Hindus).
 - Of mixed quality in Linguistics; amateur.
 - But points the way on biological vocabulary.
- First Hindu after Satya Swarup Misra to tackle linguistic evidence.

Conclusion

- Hindu misconception that Linguistics entails AIT.
- May just as well prove OIT.
- It just hasn't been seriously tried.
- Since “Aryans” or “IE-s” defined by their language, only (short of written testimonies) the linguistic evidence will determine their Homeland, i.e. the cradle of their language.

Thank you

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- Power point available if you write to me.
- See also my blog:
 - koenraadest.blogspot.com