

***Anatolian bull and Vedic horse in the Indo-European diffusion.***

July 2005.

**Argument.** In this paper I examine the presence of bull and horse in the various IE branches. It is noteworthy that the IE stem for 'horse' is absent in Hittite while all other major branches have it. The horse has no place at all in the religion, ritual or mythology; the horse's function is taken over by the bull. This alone suffices to show that the Hittites are not indigenous in Anatolia as some scholars claim and that therefore, Anatolia is not the original PIE homeland. Other types of evidence are used from mythology and linguistics to support this conclusion. The myth of the Weather god killing the dragon, which is a common IE theme (India, Greece, Scandinavia etc), is quite swamped by Near-eastern material. The Hittite language itself has some IE relics but is otherwise flooded with Mesopotamian, Hurrian and Assyrian elements.

Some scholars (mainly Lord Renfrew, 1991 and after) claim that Anatolia (what is today central and south-eastern Turkey) is the cradle from which the IEs (=Indo-Europeans) dispersed to their historical habitats. This view presupposes that the Hittites, and other peoples who spoke related languages (Luvian, Pallaic) are autochthonous. Renfrew claims precisely this on vague and dubious linguistic conjectures, an area in which, he admits, he is no expert (1999). Incidentally, Renfrew's theories, connecting the spread of language with spread of wheat and rice, are now meeting much greater resistance from other scholars. As one of them puts it: "New archaeobotanical evidence suggests the spread of wheat and rice cannot explain language change in India and Southeast Asia" (Shouse 2001: 989). Historians, archaeologists and expert hittitologists disagree with Renfrew and regard the Hittites intrusive to Anatolia (Gurney 1990; Puhvel 1991 and 1994; Roux 1992; Dunstan 1998) while most main-stream scholars prefer the Pontic Steppes and some few others regard Saptasindhu in what is today Northwest India and Pakistan as the original homeland of the IEs (Friedrich 2004; Kazanas 2002; Feuerstein et al 1995; Sethna 1992; et al). However, apart from archaeological/historical considerations, there are other factors indicating that the Anatolians were intrusive. One such factor is the horse-sacrifice which is, in one form or another, present in most major IE traditions, from Vedic in the east to Celtic and Scandinavian in the west *but totally absent in Anatolia*. Significantly, the IE stem for 'horse' (*S aśva*, *L equus*, *Celtic ech* etc) is also absent, the Hittite word being *ansukurra* of Sumerian origin.

The horse was not unknown in Anatolia in the early 2nd millennium (all ancient dates are BCE) unlike Egypt. This animal was introduced into Mesopotamia from Iran late in the 3rd millennium but came into common use only in the 2nd millennium a little before it reached Egypt at c 1600 (Saggs 1989: 213-4). According to P Raulwing, some scholars "presuppose the introduction of the domesticated horse (*Equus ferus f. caballus*) into Anatolia... as early as the 4th/3rd millennia BC" (2000: 33), in other words c 3000, the same time as Iran. But Raulwing points out that the existence of domesticated horses in Anatolia cannot be proved before the Hittite period (p 34), that is not before 1700, at the earliest, when the Hittites are known to begin to form their kingdom. Indeed, he lists several scholars stating it is the Hittites or Indoaryans, ie Mitannis c 1600, who bring domesticated horses to Anatolia and northern Syria (p 34).

Be that as it may, the Hittites show an exclusive preference for the bull in their religion. The horse is certainly known to them when they emerge in historical times and steadily forge an empire c 1600 that lasted almost 5 centuries. Nonetheless, the horse does not figure in any way in the Hittite cults (Gurney 1990: 109-140; Bryce 2002: 156, 192). No deity is associated with a horse and there is no horse-sacrifice or horse-mythologem of any kind. In Anatolia the sacred animal is the bull and it is associated with the principal deity, the Weathergod Tarhunna/Taru/Teshub. In the Anatolian iconography the god is depicted driving "a primitive kind of chariot drawn by bulls... The bull is his sacred animal and may stand alone on an altar as his cult-symbol" (Gurney, p 111, also 123; Bryce

2002: 156, 192). In another instance two bulls are standing by the legs of the Weathergod and his consort and wear ‘the conical hat of divinity’ (Guerney p 117; plate 16, facing p 83, shows the king and the queen worshipping the bull). During the funeral rites for a king or a queen, writes Gurney, two oxen are sacrificed and eighteen sheep (pp 137-8).

But the bull-cult has additional aspects. E R Anderson mentions a practice similar to the Vedic *aśvamedha*, during which the chief queen *mahiṣī* is said to practise copulation, simulated or actual, with the dying/dead horse, whereas the Hittite practice is a bull-sacrifice (1999: 386). C. Watkins (whom Anderson cites) describes in detail the well-preserved iconography of this ritual where the king and the queen have sex during a bull-sacrifice (2001: 266-7 with references).

Some form of bull-cult is not unknown among several of the other IE peoples but what preponderates markedly is the horse-cult and the horse-mythology. Among the Iranians, the bull “appears as one of the incarnations of Verethraghna”, the Avestan equivalent of Indra (Macdonell 1995: 150); there is also the myth of the first man Gayomart and the first bull Gosh, which may have been the source of the Mithraic sacrificial bull in Iran and subsequently other countries. In Greece, Zeus becomes a bull and carries off Europa, Dionysos is described as a “bull-god” (Kerényi 1982: 109), Talos the Sun is also called *Ταῦρος Taurus* ‘the bull’ (*GM* 92, 7), while Achilles sacrifices several oxen during the cremation of his friend Patroclus’s corpse (*Iliad* 24, 165-7); the significance of the bull in Greece probably derives in large part from Minoan times when bull-rites were common. Writing of the “great bull” in Ulster (Ireland), A. and B. Rees cite G. Dumézil to the effect that the animal “symbolizes the warrior function both in Rome and India” (1995: 124). In India too, apart from the glorious bulls depicted on Harappan seals, we find that Manu had a miraculous bull who could kill demons and foes with his mere snorting; he was sacrificed and his power passed eventually into the sacrificial ritual itself (*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* I, 1, 4, 14). In the same text (II 5, 3, 18) the bull is said to be Indra’s form; earlier, in the *RV(=R̥gveda)* Indra is repeatedly called a bull *vṛṣabha* (I 54, 2; II 12, 12; etc) and less frequently other gods (Agni I 31, 5, etc; Rudra II 33, 4; etc etc). Nonetheless, in all IE branches it is the horse that has strong religious significance as we see with the two Aśvins in India, *Iqeja* in Mycenaean Greece, *Epona* in Gaul (all denoting ‘horse-deity’) and the myths and rituals involving horses and horse-sacrifices from Ireland and Scandinavia right through to ancient Saptasindhu in India – *everywhere except Anatolia*. The Balto-Slavs have retained no important horse-mythology (see the white horse of pre-Christian Svantovit and the later flying horse of Ilya-Muromyets) but, on the other hand, the bull is totally absent (except for Svantovit’s bull-horn filled with wine annually and serving as an omen).

The horse-sacrifice in one form or another, as already stated, is a fairly common feature of all the major IE traditions. One frequent myth is that of a god taking on the form of a horse for various reasons. For example, in Vedic mythology Saranyū, the daughter of god Tvaṣṭṛ, marries Vivasvant, the Sungod, then disappears and takes the form of a mare; her husband becomes a stallion, mates with her and as a result the Aśvins are born (*RV* X, 17, 1-2; *Bṛhaddevatā* VI, 162 ff). We find a similar tale in Greece when goddess Demeter became a mare to avoid the harassment of Poseidon, god of the sea; he became a stallion and mated with her in the plains of Arcadia: as a result were born Areion, a noble horse with black mane, and a girl, and Demeter came to be worshipped in Arcadia as Demeter *Ἐρινυῶς Erinus* (= *saranyū* ? The story is in Pausanias VIII 25, 5). A different myth appears among the Scandinavians when Loki, the god of tricks and transformations, becomes a mare to attract from work the giant-mason’s stallion Svadilfari; as a result is born Sleipnir, a horse with eight legs, the swiftest animal in the world, which is given to Odin, king of the gods (*Edda* p 35-6; Crossley-Holland 1993: 11-14). But the horse serves also as an offering in sacrifices in Greece, Rome etc. In the Vedic tradition this becomes a highly elaborate royal ritual known as *aśvamedha* (described at length in the White Yajur Veda, *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* XXII-XXV, the Black Yajur Veda, *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* IV 6, 6; V 4, 12, VII, 4, 12ff and in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* XIII, etc). Here, at some stage of the rite, a splendid

stallion is killed and the chief queen spends the night and is supposed to copulate with the animal, as was said earlier. Variants of this are found among the Celts (king with mare), Scandinavians and Romans (Anderson 1999; Puhvel 1989: 269-276).

The Hittites have their own variation which, as was said above, involves a bull-ritual. This is most significant.

If we accept that the IE peoples branched out and away from Anatolia, (Greeks, Romans and Celts to the west, Germans and Balto-Slavs to the north and north-west, Indo-Iranians to the east), then we must suppose that, while the Hittites preserved the pristine tradition of the bull-rite unadulterated, the others in some miraculous manner adopted the horse-sacrifice, all giving it primary importance over and above any bull-rites they retained, and this despite the fact that they travelled away in carts drawn by oxen, as the Hittite iconography indicates, at a time long before the horse came into common use. It is clearly absurd to suppose that all these peoples separated by thousands of miles adopted not only the horse-sacrifice in place of the bull-rites but also developed almost identical myths about their deities and horses. The absurdity becomes even greater when we take into account the fact that in all these distant locations (Saptasindhu, Greece, Gaul) the bull was present in abundance.

It is far more reasonable to suppose that the Hittites came to Anatolia from another and distant land. Their texts mention no migration, but when the texts appear first in writing c 1620, the Hittites must have been living in Anatolia for 600 years and more, mentioned in foreign documents as early as 2200 (Gurney, pp 141); so memories died out. They came (say c 2500) bringing both the horse- and the bull-rites. In the Near East as well as Crete and the eastern Mediterranean, as is well known, the bull (not the horse) had from early times acquired religious significance. It would be natural for the Hittites who came perhaps as a small band of warriors (an elite dominance group) to abandon and forget the horse-sacrifices and maintain in common with the local population only bull-rites. C. Watkins gives details not only of one of these rites, amply documented in iconography, but also mentions that the extant Hittite Law Code condemns with punishment of death all forms of bestiality with cattle, sheep etc, but *not with horses and mules*; in the latter case the only punishment is that the offender could not become a priest (2001: 266; also Puhvel 1989: 276 and 1991: 64). This suggests that the Anatolians preserved the memory of a practice that was considered lawful, or at any rate was not unknown, among the warrior class or the royalty; for, indeed, one form of horse-sacrifice included, as we saw, sexual contact between the queen and the stallion (in Ireland the king and a mare).

The evidence from these rites and laws indicates thus that the Hittites were not autochthons but intruders into the area. This conclusion is reinforced by an additional consideration. The closest and commonest relationships among humans are those of parents and children – denoted by the words ‘brother, daughter, father, mother, sister, son’. These words, exactly as they are in English and all Germanic languages, have cognates in almost all other IE branches. Thus Sanskrit has *bhrātr̥, duhitṛ, pitṛ, mātṛ, svāsr, sūnu*, ; similarly Greek has *phratēr, thugatēr, patēr, mātēr* and so on. To these we should add ‘husband’ and ‘wife’: S *pati*, Baltic *pats*, etc, and ‘wife’ S *patnī*, Gk *potnia* Baltic *patī*, etc. All IE languages have two, three, four and some all of these words (including Tocharian). *Hittite has none*. We find many absences also in words denoting parts of the body which are quite constant with people despite any other changes. Hittite has some IE words like those for ‘eye’=*akessar*, S *akṣi*, L *oculus*, etc), beard (= *zamangur*, S *śmaśru*, Baltic *smakra* etc), bone (*hastai*, S *asthi*, Gk *osteon*, etc) foot (= *pata*, S *pad-*, Gk *pous/pod-os* etc). But it has no IE stem for arm (S *bāhu*, Gk *pēchus*, Tocharian *poke* etc), ear (Gk *ous*, Latin *auris* or S *śrotra*, Celtic *clyst* Gmc *hlyst*); flesh (S *māṃsa*, Gmc *mimz*, Toch *misa* etc); nail (S *nakha*, Gk *onux* etc); nose (S *nas-*, L *naris*, Gmc *nasa* etc); and so on. The incidence of these stems (and many more) in most IE branches brings out the fact that they were quite common; yet they are absent from Hittite. As it is inconceivable that all other branches

innovated with identical words in this respect, we must conclude that the words existed in the original Proto-Indo-European dialect(s) and Hittite lost them in course of time. This could only come about by reason of long travel far from the original homeland and of mingling with alien, non-IE, cultures. Also, the immigrant warriors brought no women and children with them, or very few, and so the PIE stems for those most intimate family relations were lost.

We observe similar (heavier) losses in the Hittite mythology (=religion). Apart from some minor elements (see Puhvel 1991: 62ff), only the myth of the Stormgod slaying the dragon Illuyanka who had offended him has something of an IE character. But even this has a most un-IE frame. There are two versions of this myth (analysed in Watkins 2001: chs 30, 33 and especially 45, 46; the alleged parallel with the Irish saga of Fergus in ch 45 seems to me utterly irrelevant). In the first version the goddess Inara invites the gods and the dragon with his brood to a feast, where the dragons get overfed and can't enter their hole. Meanwhile she has, with a prepayment in sexual intercourse, secured the assistance of a human, Hupasiyas, who now proceeds to bind the dragon, whereupon the Stormgod comes and slays Illuyanka. (Inara then installed Hupasiyas in a house telling him not to look out of the window; but he did, saw his wife and children and weeping prayed to go home. Here the text breaks off. It is obvious that, even if the tale is wholly Near Eastern, Hupasiyas is unnecessary to the main action of the slaying of the dragon and belongs to a different legend which is fused with the god-dragon fight.) In the second version, the plot is even less IE. The dragon at first overcame the Stormgod and took his heart and eyes; the god married a poor man's daughter and had a son who married the dragon's daughter and went to live in her home; at his father's request, he then returned the heart and eyes, whereupon, with his former powers restored, the Stormgod went into the sea and killed both the dragon and his own son, at the latter's request: here again we seem to have the fusion of the motif 'god-slays-dragon' with another tale. Very different is the simple plot of the IE tales in which the god, or human hero, alone or with companions, kills the oppressive serpent/dragon: Vedic Indra, Iranian Thraetaona, Greek Zeus (*Theogony*) and Apollo (*Hymn*), Scandinavian Thor (himself being killed even as he slays the Midgard serpent) and Russian Perun.

One wonders if the two Hittite tales (and they *are* distinct) are at all IE. With the killing of the dragon, the IE myth provides, apart from anything else, release from oppression or threat of some kind. Even in the Mesopotamian tale *The Epic of Creation*, the killing by Marduk of the dragoness Tiamat (goddess of an older generation) brings about release, while her dismemberment has cosmogonic results (Dalley 1991: 254-5). This aspect of release is totally lacking in the two Hittite tales. Citing other scholars Watkins sees the dragon as a symbol of chaos and stagnation and his death as the return of Cosmic Truth and Order (p 299) and thus links the tales with the IE legends. This symbolism however is only what the scholiasts have imported into the tales. In the IE myth the symbolism holds because, in the Vedic legend, for example, the dragon Vṛtra is said to block the waters, while in the Greek legends the dragons actually threaten gods and mortals. In the extant Hittite texts the dragon blocks nothing and threatens nobody.

If in these two tales the very barest and basic element of the Stormgod killing the dragon is of IE origin, then it is fused with Near Eastern material. Watkins criticizes F. Vian, S. Littleton and J. Puhvel for speculating about this fusion (449-50) and asserts that even the second version with the temporary discomfiture of the Stormgod is IE: he thinks we should be guided in our judgment by the diction of the texts "and hug the formulaic ground closely" (450). For this he adduces the verb *tarahta* 'overcame' in the Hittite second tale and the Avestan cognate verb *titarat* (in a passage that is not strictly parallel, since here Good Thinking and Fire overcome the hostilities of Angra Manyu but don't slay him), and some more examples in chs 34, 35. This I find inadequate, to say the least. If I speak a language which has words that are phonetically and semantically cognate with words in another language, then I shall of necessity use these words in ways similar to those in the other language, whether the context is liturgical or not; the resemblance and connection or not of my speech

with a passage in the other language will be determined not by one or two cognate words but by the subject-matter, theme, structure and other similarities. Watkins does not provide such similarities. Then, Watkins forces a similarity that is not there in the Avestan passage: the Evil Spirit Angra Manyu is about to overwhelm the creation but in fact does not because it is overcome by Fire and Wisdom (Watkins, 355, 450). A far closer parallel is found in the Mesopotamian legend of Ninurta, god of war and agricultural fertility, who hunts Anzu, the lion-headed Eagle, on the mountains but suffers a setback when the monster, (with the power of the Tablet of Destinies he had stolen) makes the arrows of the god turn back against him (Dalley, 214).

Nonetheless, despite my disagreement with Watkins on these issues, I do think that even the Hittite second tale contains some IE material as well as Near Eastern on four counts, some of which escaped Watkins.

a) 'God slays dragon' is an IE theme.

b) The name *Inara* may well be cognate with *Indra* (Kazanas 2001).

c) In *RV* II 11, 5 (also V 30, 5) Indra fights and kills *Vṛtra* within the waters *apsu* (and so has exclusively the epithet *apsujit* 'victorious-in-waters') just as the Stormgod in the Hittite second tale slays the dragon in the sea.

d) In two *RV* hymns *Vṛtra* is overcome at first but fights on again and then is killed by Indra (I 32, 5-7; V 32, 4-8); this motif could have been reversed in the Hittite second version producing a temporary defeat of the god. Then in *RV* I, 32, 12 there is a hint that *Vṛtra* struck back at Indra and in IV 18, 9 the god is struck to the ground by demon *Vyāmsa* and has his jaw broken; so there is a parallel of the god being discomfited also. Now, in all these Vedic contexts the verb used in *han-* but the other similarities are sufficient to suggest possible kinship between the Hittite and the Vedic situations. The presence of two cognate verbs alone would not have been adequate.

Be that as it may, I have indulged in this digression only to stress the paucity of blue-blooded IE material in Hittite mythology (also Puhvel 1991:61) and to let Watkins describe the situation: "The Hittites were from the earliest times exposed to the influence of other languages each of which had literary tradition... [They] were profoundly influenced by Mesopotamian culture as mediated through the Peripheral Akkadian... and by the contact with the Assyrian merchant colonies of the 19th and 18th centuries... The major cultural influence, at least in religion and cult came from Hurrian ... [resulting in] the Hurrianization of the Hittite pantheon" (2001:52-3). T. Bryce also traces influences from Mesopotamian and other cultures (2002: ch 12).

It is again inconceivable that the Hittites stayed in the homeland (while the others left), proved strong enough not to be conquered by their non-IE neighbours and proceeded themselves to conquer others and build an empire, yet mysteriously lost the words for the most basic of relationships, lost the religious significance of the horse and their I-E pantheon and absorbed heavy doses of vocabulary and prodigious amounts of cultural features from their neighbours. Such losses could not occur to the culture of an indigenous, conquering, dominant people. We cannot but assume that the Hittites came from a distant land and initially were not numerous or powerful enough to impose their own culture but found it easier to adopt cultural elements from the local indigenous peoples: this is the view also of the historians mentioned in the first paragraph above – Dunstan, Guernay, Puhvel and Roux. Thus we conclude that Anatolia was not the IE homeland. Puhvel thought the same and wrote: "As for the Anatolians, it is equally clear [ie as the Germanic peoples] that they were not autochthons of Asia Minor but had migrated to that habitat in a less than immemorial past" (1994: 253). Watkins expresses a similar view (p 53). As for the Russian scholars, T.V. Gamkrelidze and V.V. Ivanov, who also argued for the IE *urheimat* in north-eastern Anatolia, E.C. Polomé wrote: "The shorter version of these linguists' views published some years ago in the *Journal of Indo-European Studies* ha[s] given rise to a number of critical comments, to say nothing of their *Urheimat* and migration theory. Most

vulnerable are, indeed, their views on the road taken by the Indo-European tribes leaving their alleged Anatolian homeland to reach Europe and spread over their western territories” (1994: 300). Polomé should have included the entry into Saptasindhu in the east which is even more problematic since there is no evidence for it of any kind.

In the title of this essay the epithet ‘Vedic’ and not ‘IndoEuropean’ is used deliberately, because another proposed cradle of the IEs is the Saptasindhu – as has been argued in several other studies (Friedrich 2004; Kazanas 2002 & 1999; Feuerstein, et al 1995; Sethna 1992; Frawley 1991, 2001; et al). There is ample evidence, textual and/or archaeological, for the migration of the Celts, Scandinavians, Romans and Greeks, Balts and Slavs and even Iranians. There is no archaeological or literary evidence at all for any Indoaryan immigration into Saptasindhu from at least 4500 to c 600, since there is a change in the skeletal record in that area c 6000-4500 only; no other mass entry can be detected until the Persian encroaches after 600 BC. Moreover, it is well-established that the Gypsies left India through Persia in the early centuries CE (Fraser 1995; Hock 1996) and spread to the Near East and western Europe. Groups of Indoaryans could have left at earlier periods, also. So Saptasindhu has just as serious a claim to be the IE homeland. And this mythological/cultic matter of the horse- and bull-rite reinforces this claim.

However, one must take into account J.P. Mallory’s objections about the Out of India Theory (2002). This indo-europeanist sets up various models and demolishes them in an attempt to demonstrate the grave difficulties entailed in the Out of India migrations (ibid). He had done a similar exercise with other proposed homelands like Central Europe, Pontic Steppe in South Russia, etc, and showed that each one was beset with difficulties; in the end he chose the Pontic Steppe as ‘the least bad’ solution (1997: 115). But the entire framework, set up under the light of the wretched Aryan Invasion/Immigration Theory, is erected on tiers of conjectures and prejudices. Nobody really knows that the alleged migrations from the Steppe involve IE-speakers. Such are the prejudices of the received paradigm, that J.V. Day accepts the Steppe even though his own voluminous cranioskeletal research shows evidence, “*surprisingly* meagre in places” only as far as “Hungary and the northern Balkans and perhaps Greece” (2001: 317, 326); my emphasis, to indicate the writer’s expectations). Another alternative is that there was an Indo-European continuum spreading from Saptasindhu to the Pontic Steppe and that “there were movements of people, some quite indeterminate, within it and in and out of it” (Kazanas 2003). The evidence in its present state allows no other firm conclusion.

This in no way affects my earlier conclusions that the Indoaryans are by 1500 indigenous in Saptasindhu and that the large bulk of the *RV* originates in the 4th millennium BC (Kazanas 2003). Quite independently, in a recent study comparing Vedic and Mesopotamian religious developments Dr S. Levitt concluded that most of the *RV* belongs to the 3rd millennium but the early hymns may well be of the late 4th millennium (2003).