

**Correspondence archive between N.Kazanas (NK) and S. Talageri (ST)  
(through email) :**

**On 22 Feb 2005 NK wrote to Ashok Chowgule :**

Dear Shri Chowgule,

As I don't have an email address for Mr Talageri, perhaps you would kindly send him this message.

I read his *Rigveda* (2000) 3 years ago and, as is known, defended him publicly (in the *JIES* 2002) against Witzel. I consulted it again recently and noticed a minor but important error. On p 114 (and elsewhere he says that Saptasindhu "is referred to only in the Middle and Late MaNDalas" of the *RV* . However, several references in the Early Books have escaped him. III.1.4,6(?) 24.4 (only two rivers but both in the 7 river land); IV.13.3; 19.3; V.43.1(?); VI. 7.6; 61.10; VII.8.24; 18.24; 36.6; 67.8.

Thus there are enough in the early Bks too (VI, III, VII), some pre-Sudas. (There are several more than he cites in Bk I also, but these are not so important.)

Is he doing any research just now?

Best wishes,

N. Kazanas

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**On 26 Feb 2005 ST wrote to NK**

**Dear Dr. Kazanas**

I have just received a copy of your letter to Shri Ashok Chowgule regarding the references to the Saptasindhu in the Rigveda. I must thank you for your interest and for bringing to my notice what you perceived as an error.

I was quite surprised, however, to read the exact nature of the error pointed out by you. So far as the exact verses cited by you are concerned:

- 1) At least one of the verses cited by you does not exist: VII.8.24.
- 2) Another verse, IV.13.3, refers, not to rivers, but to the seven horses of the chariot of the sun.
- 3) One more verse, III.24.4 (actually 23.4), you say, refers to "only two rivers, but both in the seven river land". They are not: the rivers lie in Haryana, to the east of the seven river land.

4) As to all the other verses cited by you, I must explain that I am aware of these references. On p.113 of my book, I have pointed out: "There are other phrases in the Rigveda which refer to 'seven rivers'; but these do not constitute references to the Punjab, as seven is a number commonly applied in the Rigveda to various entities to indicate 'all' or 'many'...". I have then given a list of numerous such uses of the number.

I further pointed out that it is the specific phrase "Saptasindhu", or its Avestan equivalent "Hapta Hendu"—and not just any reference to "seven waters" using other words—which is a name of the Punjab. Not one of the verses cited by you contains this phrase, though the said verses refer to seven rivers, and some of them even show awareness of the fact that the Sarasvati (the easternmost of the seven, and the only specific river named in two of those verses, VI.61.10 and VII.36.6) is one of seven rivers which constitute a group.

One other verse, VII.18.24, refers to the Dasarajna battle in which Sudas has conquered into the land of the seven rivers.

The Saptasindhu as an entity — as the name of a place, since it is “place names” I am discussing on pp.112-120 — appears only in the verses cited by me on p.114 of my book, not one of which appears in Mandalas VI, III, or VII.

I hope this answers your query. If you have any other points to discuss, please communicate with me. And thank you very much, again, for your interest. My next book will be an extension of my 2000 book, including new evidence, as well as detailed analyses of the points raised by Witzel, besides a special study of the evidence of the Vedic metres.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G. Talageri

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**On 1 March 2005 NK wrote :**

**Dear Shri Talageri,**

Thank you for your reply. I am just as surprised by my errors. Of course, IV.13.2 refers to 7 horses and I don't know how it slipped in. BII.8.24 should be VII.18, 24, which was given.

I follow all your explanations. You realized that my motive was to help not to criticize and show how cleverer I am. Indeed, there are some point I would like to discuss and I have some free time just now. But I don't want to take you away from your new Book. Another thing is that I criticize severely sometimes points that don't seem to be reasonable or to accord with facts. I trust we can agree to differ without acrimony.

We are in the same camp and it is important that our views should converge as much as possible though one can never expect absolute identity.

Before anything else, kindly explain the significance the phrase *sapta sindhavah* has for you. Why do you think it so important? Much hinges on this and I feel I must insist that you have an error here.

Let me also know how much Vedic you know so that I may phrase my writing accordingly.

We 'll carry on from there.

Best wishes,

N. Kazanas.

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**On 3 March 2005 ST replied to NK's letter of 1/3/05**

**Dear Dr. Kazanas**

Thank you for your letter. I have no doubt whatsoever about your sincerity; and I have the greatest admiration for the analyses on linguistic points, particularly involving Greek grammar or linguistic development, that I have seen in various papers and articles of yours that I have read.

I am not really that busy with my next book, though I should be. And I am always eager to discuss issues and points of doubt. Please, therefore, feel free to discuss any point

with me, kindly excusing any lateness on my part in replying to any e-mail. I will of course try to reply as soon as possible (whenever I become aware that I have received an e-mail, which is not very regular since I do not generally check my e-mail on a very regular basis).

About the Sapta Sindhava, it is not that I personally consider the phrase important, but that conventional theory has it that the Rigveda was composed in that region, and therefore gives that phrase an importance not warranted by the facts. The facts show that the Vedic people (the Purus) were always residents of the area to the east of the Saptasindhu, and that the Saptasindhu region and areas to the west were the lands of Indo-European groups characterised as Anus (specifically, the Iranian, Hellenic, Armenian, and possibly Albanian branches of Indo-European): see pp 103-124, 199-201, 210-231 of my book.

As I have pointed out again on p. 225, the references to seven Sindhus occur only in the middle and late Mandalas, and, as the specific phrase Sapta Sindhava, it occurs only in the late Mandalas VIII, IX, X (ie. it is not found even in the late Family Mandala V). Earlier phrases like sapta yahvi (III.1.4 and IV.13.3), sapta visruha (VI.7.6) and sapta sravat (VII.67.8) have not been interpreted by anyone, so far as I am aware, as names equivalent to Sapta Sindhava.

As I have shown, the movement of the Vedic Aryans from east to west is shown by the combined evidence of the distribution of river-names, place-names, and animal-names in the Rigveda. And  $\frac{3}{4}$  a point I will be proving on the basis of many more criteria and bodies of evidence in my next book, whenever it is completed  $\frac{3}{4}$  the elements of "Proto-Indo-Iranian" culture, common to the Rigveda and the Zend Avesta, are found in the earliest parts of the Zend Avesta but the late parts of the Rigveda. The Sapta Sindhu is one such element.

Hoping to hear from you.

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G. Talageri

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On **6 March 2005 NK wrote** to ST. (His letter has been appended to ST's answer below).  
Also on **8 March 2005 NK sent again** the following message :

**Dear Shri Talageri,**

I thought to let you know that the computer has been corrected and I have been given your reply - for which many thanks. Please, do work on your book. Your field of research sounds very important.

Regards — N. Kazanas

**On 20 March 2005 ST replied .**

**Dear Dr.Kazanas**

I received your letter voicing your perceptions of errors in my book. I will, of course, take your criticism in the friendly spirit in which I have no doubt whatsoever it is offered; and, since, as far as possible, I never like to leave any point unanswered (and I really welcome opportunities to clarify doubts and objections, since it always helps to clear the air. I would not, for example want these and such other doubts and objections to be raised, and left unanswered, in the future, perhaps when I am dead and gone and will not be there to reply to them), I will

proceed to deal with all the points raised by you. Please take my reply in the same spirit.

First, I append below your letter under discussion:

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**Dear Shri Talageri,**

My secretary tells me that one of our computer-experts has made some 'improvement'

on our apparatus and now we are not receiving any emails. So I don't know if you have replied and what. As I have now read several sections of your book attentively I thought I'll send you some thoughts anyway.

First, I agree fully with the general drift and I like the idea of the movement eastward. But, I can't close my mind to certain facts and I am surprised nobody has referred to them or perhaps they have. Hereafter I speak of T(alageri) rather than "you".

1. Although you assured me that all references to *saptasindhu* are on p 114, there is another one, *saptá síndhusu* 'in, on, among the 7' 8.24.27b. I didn't mention it before because it is in a late Bk. T's omission doesn't matter, but it is probably the most significant instance since this could, better than any other citation, be taken as the name of a 'country, land, region' and not just '7 rivers'.

2. On pp 113-4 T states that 'Saptasindhu' is the name of "a specific region", i.e. Punjab.

No, this is not so at all. Only 8.24.27b, which says that the aryas are there (locative) may perhaps be taken as a name, like the "United States" which is also plural. But the 10 or so cases T cites refer to rivers not to the region that has them.

The citation 1.35.8 may also refer to an area/land since it is in the series 8 *kakubh-*, 3 *dhanva-* and *yojana* but it seems more reasonable after all these different areas to mention 7 rivers. Otherwise all others refer to rivers and their waters flowing. (8.69.12 may at first sight suggest a region, one that belongs to Varuna, but in the next pada is verb *anuksaranti* 'flow/stream toward' and this again suggests the rivers themselves. Also in 8.41.9e Varuna 'rules over the 7' *saptanam irajyati* but no rivers are mentioned.)

Five at least of T's references say that Indra (having killed the serpent/dragon) released or set in motion the 7 rivers to flow on. Thus they don't refer to a country.

Now, if it were a region's name it would have been a neuter noun *saptasindhú* or a bahuvrhi adjective *saptásindhu* (note the accents!) describing *pada* or *vara* 'country that-has seven-rivers'.

3. To select the phrase *saptá síndhu-* (again note accents!) as alone referring to (the area/land of) the 7 rivers is wholly arbitrary. Just as valid are references to 7 *nadis*, *yahvis* 'rivers' *svasrs* 'sisters', *matrs* 'mothers', *sravatah* 'flowing streams' etc. T excludes all these under the (mistaken) notion that *saptá síndhu-* is a region's name. Not right.

4. Some modern scholars use the name Saptasindhu for brevity and convenience, avoiding 'N-W India & Pakistan'. It is a modern convention no more. We don't know

what the IAs (=IndoAryans) called their country or if they had the notion of a country as we do today.

Avestan *hapta hendu* is certainly the name of a location but we don't know what it meant to the Iranians. The word *\*hendu* doesn't occur elsewhere and the Avestan words for 'river' are *thraotah-* (=S *srotas* 'stream'), *ravan-* and *raodah-* (both probably cognate with S *sru*, Av *ru-d-*). For the Iranians it was probably only a memory of a place they had lived formerly.

This accords well with their *harah - vaiti*, which = S *sarasvati*. In S *saras* means 'lake, pool' but perhaps also 'eddy, swirl, current', while in Avestan 'lake' is *vairi-*. Here also the Iranians had the memory of a river *sarasvati* and gave the name to one in their own habitat. Avestan has no cognates with S *sru* >*sisarti/sarati* 'flow, leap, run', *saras* etc other than *\*harah-* in *harahvaiti*.

5. T says (p 113 bottom) that in RV "seven" can denote "all" or "many" and on p 115 many examples are given. But these, or most of them, mean exactly 7. This (like 9) is a magical/mystical/occult number: e.g. 7 is, horses or rays of sun, tongues of fire, etc. Numbers 7 & 9 denote levels in creation, stages in ascending/descending processes, attributes or qualities like 7 tastes, metres, tones, regions *varsas* etc. Clearly the 7 *rsis*, sun-horses, tones and the like are not "all *rsis*", etc.

However, let us grant that at times 7 does mean "all". How does this fit with our rivers?

Why should 6.7.6 *saptá visrúhah* denote all flowing streams and not the well-known 7? Also 6.67.8 *saptá sravátah* '7 flowing-ones'? And why should Indra release only the 7 rivers in Punjab (as T put it) in 1.32.12, 2.12.3 & 12, IV.28.1 etc, and not all rivers on earth?

Taking further the last point if Saptasindhu was populated by the Anu-Iranians (as per T), why should Indra do them this favour? He is the beloved god of the IAs, so he should have helped with the rivers in Haryana (as per T) Drsadvati, Yamuna, Ganga. Yet there is not a single mention of these rivers being set in motion by the Thunderer (who dug so many other river-channels).

Parenthesis. I may be wrong, but Yamuna was originally a tributary of Sarasvati and c 2000 due to tectonic shifts changed course and turned to Ganga. So references to Yamuna in RV mean river close to and a tributary of Sarasvati.

6. T's criteria for the movement east-west are rather dubious regarding river-names in

various books. The fact that Bk VI doesn't mention any rivers west of Sarasvati doesn't mean what T infers. By the same token, Bk IV mentions no Sarasvati or other rivers east. Are we to infer that the Rigvedins forgot those areas? No, of course not.

T writes at length of the steady progress westward linking it with Sudas (p 106ff). In the process several hymns are mentioned but not 7.18 where the movement (if these is a movement) is from west (Parusni) to east (Yamuna). Mind you at present

I don't regard this as important but who is Bheda?

And what about the animals? On T's page 121 we see that Bk VI doesn't mention the *gaura*, the *mayura* and the *prsatī*. Even the elephant has only two mentions in Bk VI and none in Bks III & VII. Are we to infer that the *gaura*, *mayura* and *prsatī* were not there in early times? Surely, not.

7. All in all, Kazanas wants to show that, in fact, the seven rivers are well known even in the early Bks and there are very clear allusions to them: 2. 12.3,12; 3.1.4(?) ; 4.8;33; 4.19.1; 28.1; 5.43.1(?); 6.7.6; 61.10; 7.18.24; 33.3; 36.6; 67.8. Of course, they are implied elsewhere.

What this implies is that the Sarasvati was the axis of the area of the Rigvedins from earliest times. That Sudas engaged in battles is certain. But whether he went on campaigns to conquer new lands (as T says) is very doubtful. The RV suggests to me an Aryan spread well to the east and west of Sarasvati and various internal conflicts among different clans/tribes not so much for land-conquest as for religious rectitude.

8. Rigvedins left Saptasindhu (which in fact had more rivers/streams than 7) for three reasons: a) Exile; some were either forced to leave, or chose to leave because of religious differences. b) Adventure; some left to explore new lands and colonize them, perhaps because also of population rise. c) Missionary work, as is said in some hymns to spread the Vedic culture (eg X.65.11).

I bring up this aspect so late in the day for two reasons. One, I didn't know or understand the RV so well 4 years ago. Two, although I read your book from cover to cover and made many notes my interest was guided by Witzel's aberrations.

Please, take my objections in the good faith which wrote then.

Yours sincerely,  
N.Kazanas.

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Your criticism centres chiefly around two points: one: the word Saptasindhu; and two: my geographical analysis of river, animal and place names. Then there are some minor points. I will therefore reply to these three categories. But before that, I must refer to two instances where I must basically concede your points:

One: you have pointed out a verse, VII.24.27, which refers to Saptasindhu, and indeed, which is even the most important one since "it could, better than any other citation, be taken as the name of a 'country, land, region' and not just 'seven rivers'", and which is missing in my list of verses on p.144 of my book. You are perfectly right. And I have been equally surprised that nobody has referred to it. I noticed the omission after my book was printed, and it has been my regret since last year that I forgot to make the correction in the reprinted version in 2004. The verse, however, not only does not contradict my conclusions, but in fact

strengthens it since the only direct reference to Saptasindhu as a region is found in a late Mandala.

Two: you point out that the number 7, like 9, is a magical/mystical/occult number which denotes levels in creation, stages in ascending/descending processes, attributes or qualities. But this is precisely what I mean, though expressed differently, when I write, p.113, that “seven is a number commonly applied in the Rigveda to various entities to indicate ‘all’ or ‘many’”. Obviously, eg. “the seven carry seven spears”, one of the examples given by me, does not mean “all carry all spears”!

But, ironically (since you ask, in the case of rivers, “let us grant that at times 7 does mean ‘all’. How does this fit with our rivers?”), it is precisely in the case of rivers that the phrase means “all”: obviously Indra does not release only the seven rivers of the Punjab, as opposed to the rivers of Haryana. Obviously, Indra is being referred to as releasing the waters of rivers, per se, in the case of sapta yahvis, etc., as well as sapta sindhus. And no, this (as I will elaborate later) does not invalidate my classification of Saptasindhu as a name for the Punjab, nor render my citation of I.32.2, II.12.3, IV.28.1, etc. invalid.

#### SOME MINOR POINTS

1. In your point 8, the three reasons you cite for migrations seem rather dubious, but I will not take them up, since I feel they are subjective issues. What I cannot accept is the statement that the Rigvedic people “left” Saptasindhu. Also, in a previous point, 4, you refer to the IndoAryans calling, or not calling, “their country” Saptasindhu. Firstly, any major migrations that took place were *not* of the Rigvedic people (the Purus), but of the non-Vedic Anus and Druhyus. And secondly, the Rigvedic people were *never* in the Saptasindhu region proper in the first place, except as participants in battles in that area; and of course the fact that they lived on both sides of the Saraswati would technically put their westernmost frontiers on the easternmost fringes of the Saptasindhu. All later literature, including the other Samhitas, place the Vedic people, or the Purus, to the east, or in the easternmost fringes, of the Punjab; and I have shown in my book that the Rigvedic data, stridently ignored by the scholars in their bid to forcibly install the Rigvedic people in the Punjab in order to fit in with the invasion/migration theory, does exactly the same.

2. You write: “Parenthesis. I may be wrong, but Yamuna was originally a tributary of Sarasvati and c.2000 due to tectonic shifts changed course and turned to Ganga. So references to Yamuna in RV mean river close to and a tributary of Sarasvati.” I don’t get the exact point sought to be made here. It is certainly likely that the Yamuna was a tributary of the Saraswati  $\frac{3}{4}$  an *eastern* tributary  $\frac{3}{4}$  which later flowed into the Ganga; and the traditional awareness of this is reflected in the belief that the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna in Prayag is also a confluence with the extinct Saraswati (which did not flow anywhere near Prayag). That the Yamuna ran

very close to  $\frac{3}{4}$  to the east of  $\frac{3}{4}$  the Drisadvati is referred to by me on p.99 of my book, but of course I cannot say whether the Yamuna at the point of this reference in the Rigveda had as yet started the diversion of its course into the Ganga.

3.You write: “That Sudas engaged in battles is certain. But whether he went on campaigns to conquer new lands (as T says) is very doubtful”. I do not know on what page precisely I have described Sudas as going on “campaigns to conquer new lands”. But the facts certainly do imply such a case, and there is nothing at all doubtful about it. No other person in the Rigveda is referred to as engaged in battles at three such different geographical locations as the Parusni in the heart of the Saptasindhu, the Yamuna in Haryana , and Kikata, which even Witzel (who rejects its identification with Magadha) places as far southeast as Madhya Pradesh. He is described crossing over the Vipas and Sutudri with his warrior bands. Verse III.53.11 refers to Sudas’ horse being let loose (in what is clearly a reference to something like the Asvamedha of the epics), and Sudas conquering, or intending to conquer, in all directions.

4.Further: “T writes at length of the steady progress westward linking it with Sudas (p 106ff). In the process several hymns are mentioned but not 7.18 where the movement (if these is a movement) is from west (Parusni) to east (Yamuna). Mind you at present I don’t regard this as important but who is Bheda?”. Well, whomsoever Bheda may be  $\frac{3}{4}$  and we have no further data on him which could lead to any fruitful speculation on this point  $\frac{3}{4}$  one thing which is definite is that the hymn does not show any “movement” from the Parusni to the Yamuna:

Sudas’ activities involving the Kikatas (whether in Bihar or in Madhya Pradesh), and his crossings over the Vipas and Sutudri (the *easternmost* of the five rivers of the Punjab), can both be definitely identified as *earlier* than his battle on the Parusni with the people of the Asikni, since they involved his *earlier* Rsi Visvamitra, and we therefore get a clear east-to-west movement (both the Parusni and Asikni being to the west of Kikata, as well as of the Vipas and Sutudri).

However, the references to the Parusni battle as well as the references to the Yamuna battle occur in the same hymn (or hymns, since they are also found in VII.83), and there is no direct statement in these two hymns as to which came first. But since Sudas’ ancestors clearly lived in the Kurukshetra region beside the Drsadvati and Apaya (III.23.4), and Sudas earlier commenced his Asvamedha in the same region, Vara a prthivya (III.23.4; III.53.11), it is incredible that a later reference to the Yamuna (again, see my reference, mentioned above, on p.99 of my book, regarding the proximity of the Drsadvati and Yamuna) in a later hymn should be treated as a new “movement” towards that region. Furthermore, hymn VII.18, in particular, clearly deals primarily with the *new* event, the Dasarajna battle on the Parusni, and then, in passing, it refers to various *earlier* battles of Sudas or to mythical battles of Indra (Vaikarnas, Bheda-Ajas-Sigrus-Yaksus, Devaka Manyamana, Sambara).

## MY GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF RIVER, PLACE AND ANIMAL NAMES

The above were minor points. But your objection to my geographical analysis of river, place and animal names is more fundamental, and deserves a more detailed



reply. You write:

“6. T’s criteria for the movement east-west are rather dubious regarding river-names in various books. The fact that Bk VI doesn’t mention any rivers west of Sarasvati doesn’t mean what T infers. By the same token, Bk IV mentions no Sarasvati or other rivers east. Are we to infer that the Rigvedins forgot those areas? No, of course not. [...] And what about the animals? On T’s page 121 we see that Bk VI doesn’t mention the *gaura*, the *mayura* and the *prsati*. Even the elephant has only two mentions in Bk VI and none in Bks III & VII. Are we to infer that the *gaura*, *mayura* and *prsati* were not there in early times? Surely, not.”

I am really amazed at the, if you will excuse me, surprisingly specious and fallacious logic demonstrated above. Obviously, it is no-one’s claim that the composer of every single hymn, or the compiler of every single Mandala, is required to furnish a list of the names of every single river, place and animal known to him or to the Vedic people of his time. But there *is* a clear logic to the analysis of these names *when they fall into a logical pattern*: for example, right from the early days of Indological analysis of the Rigveda, it has been accepted that the geographical horizon of the Rigveda as a whole stretches from the regions of the western tributaries of the Indus in the west to the region of the Ganga in the east, and does not include, for example, the southern regions of the Narmada, Godavari or the Kaveri, *because these rivers, and other geographical factors associated with them, are conspicuous by their absence in the Rigveda* (I will come back to this point later).

Let me point out some of the fallacies in your objections:

1. You parody my conclusions from the analysis of the names as follows: “Bk IV mentions no Sarasvati or other rivers east. Are we to infer that the Rigvedins forgot those areas?” and “Bk VI doesn’t mention the *gaura*, the *mayura* and the *prsati*... Are we to infer that the *gaura*, *mayura* and *prsati* were not there in early times?”. But the two kinds of inferences you illustrate here have not been drawn by me anywhere:

I have nowhere claimed that the Rigvedic people “forgot” anything. In fact, it is the invasionist scenario which has the Vedic people “forgetting” extra-Indian locations, and I have, throughout my book, criticised the idea: in the larger context of the history of the various Indo-European branches, it is obvious that past associations must have been forgotten by speakers of most of the branches in the course of time; but the Rigvedic people who, in respect of both mythology and language, represent the oldest recorded, and the most archaic and representative, face of Proto-Indo-European culture, could not have so soon *so completely* forgotten past associations, if any had been there. And here, now, you suggest that the logic of *my* analysis amounts to having the Rigvedic people “forgetting”, in certain later parts of the Rigveda, areas mentioned by their ancestors in earlier parts of the same text <sup>¾</sup> *all within the time-frame of composition of this one text!*

Nor have I, anywhere, claimed that any river, place or animal was “not there in early times” simply because it is not named in any Mandala or in the Rigveda as a whole. I have everywhere generally assumed that the rivers and animals in the Rigvedic period were

more or less “there” in the same positions and areas then as they were in later recorded ancient times, barring certain possible changes like rivers changing course, etc., which did not materially alter the *relative* geographical positions. [And of course we have the fact that a river which was “there in early times”, the Sarasvati, practically ceased to be there in *later* (ie. post-Vedic) times.]

Of course, it can be alleged that the inferences I have drawn amount to treating certain rivers, places or animals as being more or less “unknown” or “unfamiliar” to the Rigvedic people, in the period of certain early Mandalas. I will clarify this presently. But even from this point of view, the examples you give, to illustrate the kind of inferences I have allegedly drawn, show a total failure to grasp the logic. Even if we reframe your question as “Are we to infer that the gaura, mayura and prsati were unknown or unfamiliar to the Rigvedic people in the period of Mandala VI?”, it still does not illustrate my position: nowhere have I claimed that the Rigvedic people, in the period of any particular Mandala, were unacquainted with certain animals simply because those particular animals are not mentioned in that particular Mandala, *even when* that *same* Mandala mentions *other* animals found in exactly the same areas. In fact, on pp. 124-126, I have pointed out that the non-mention of the tiger in the Rigveda does *not* indicate non-acquaintance, since so many other animals restricted to the tiger lands  $\frac{3}{4}$  in fact, to the *eastern* parts of the tiger lands!  $\frac{3}{4}$  are frequently mentioned in the Rigveda.

“Book VI doesn’t mention the gaura, the mayura and the prsati” (and also possibly hundreds of other animals found in the same parts of India, which, unlike these three, happen to be “not mentioned” in other parts of the Rigveda as well), but it does mention the elephant and buffalo. Likewise, there are no mentions of the elephant “in Bks III & VII”, but book III does mention the buffalo, mayura and prsati, and book VII does mention the buffalo, gaura and prsati  $\frac{3}{4}$  and, see p.122 of my book, these are mentions which show intimate familiarity with these animals. Contrast this with the mentions of the camel (and Witzel’s quoted comments on the same), see pp. 122-123, 206-207, 225, and 227 of my book, and also of mesa (sheep) and mathna/mathra horses, all of which happen to represent a distinct zoological area to the northwest of that represented by the other animals.

2.As I pointed out earlier, there is a definite logic to the analysis of the names of rivers, places and animals in the Rigveda. The very same logic, which tells us that the geographical horizon of the Rigveda as a whole did not cover the areas of the Narmada, Godavari and Kaveri, also tells us that the “fact that Bk VI doesn’t mention any rivers west of Sarasvati” does mean exactly “what T infers”, since this inference is not based *only* on this isolated fact, but on a whole body of corroborating facts detailed by me on pp.103-123, 131, etc. of my book. I will not repeat them here, except to point out that if we take VIII.24.27 to be the only direct reference to the Punjab as Saptasindhu, as you suggest, then the east-to-west movement depicted in my chart on p.120 can only become even more eloquent with the elimination of Saptasindhu from the Middle Period.

At this point, it will be pertinent to clarify the exact connotation of the terms “known” or “familiar”, as opposed to “unknown” or “unfamiliar”, as used in the context of the analysis and discussion of the geography of the Rigveda or other similar ancient texts. Obviously, it cannot mean that at a particular, if shifting (in the course of time), geographical point or borderline, we are to assume that there was a sudden wall rising up to the skies, with the Vedic people totally unaware of what, if anything, existed beyond that wall. What the geographical data indicates is simply the geographical horizon of habitation, and politico-

historical activity, of the Rigvedic Aryans at any point of time.

Thus, if we examine the texts of the literature of the saints of Maharashtra of the mediaeval period, we will find references primarily, if not exclusively, to the rivers and places in Maharashtra only. This does not indicate that the Maharashtrian community of the period was totally unaware of the existence of other parts of India outside Maharashtra. And occasional special references  $\frac{3}{4}$  the case of the saint Jnyaneshwar and his brethren being sent to Kashi to obtain certificates of their brahminhood  $\frac{3}{4}$  only confirm what should be obvious.

In the case of the Rigveda itself, we have the evidence of the references to the seas and oceans, and to sea-faring activities, distributed throughout the text. We have, on the one hand, the undeniable fact that the geographical horizon (of habitation and politico-historical activity) of the Rigvedic Aryans (=the Purus) does not extend to the south beyond, at the most, the northern parts of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and, on the other hand, the equally undeniable fact (read, for example, David Frawley's reply to Michael Witzel, with inputs from Vishal Agarwal, dt. 29 June 2002, entitled "Witzel's Vanishing Ocean...") that the Rigveda is replete with references to the ocean and oceanic symbolism. No amount of verbal gymnastics can reconcile the two undeniable facts  $\frac{3}{4}$  only the awareness that the Rigvedic Aryan community (the Purus), somewhat (though not exactly) like the Maharashtrian community of a much later period, were the inhabitants of a geographically restricted part of India, but were at the same time part of a much larger Indian civilisational network (in its primitive or formative stages).

And this brings us to the question of the word "Saptasindhu".

### THE SAPTASINDHU

There can be three broad views about the connotation of the phrase "Saptasindhu" in the Rigveda vis-a-vis the Punjab:

One: All references to seven rivers  $\frac{3}{4}$  whether as seven sindhus, or seven yahvis, or seven svasrs  $\frac{3}{4}$  refer directly to at least the seven rivers of the Punjab, and therefore indirectly, or in some of the cases directly, to the Punjab.

Two: Only (and this is the stand taken by me) the phrase "Saptasindhu", on a regular basis, refers directly or indirectly to the Punjab or its seven rivers.

Three: The references to seven rivers, by any phrase, have no connection with the Punjab.

The stand taken by you sometimes seems to veer towards the first view, and sometimes to the third one, your basic contention being that the phrase Saptasindhu is on par with all other phrases meaning 'seven rivers/waters', and no more particularly indicates a "specific region, i.e. the Punjab" than any of them. However, this is not right.

1. The phrase Saptasindhu does specifically refer to the Punjab. You write that the use of the phrase to refer to the Punjab, or to "N-W India & Pakistan", "is a modern convention, no more". But the fact that modern scholar after modern scholar has chosen to use this particular phrase (*and only this* among the various "seven river" phrases) for this purpose is not without basis  $\frac{3}{4}$  the basis is in both the Rigveda as well as the Zend Avesta:

The Rigveda, as admitted by yourself, does, at least in one verse, VIII.24.27, use the phrase Saptasindhu (without, moreover, using the accents indicating a neuter noun or a bahuvrihi adjective, which you otherwise insist would be compulsorily required to make it acceptable as the name of a region) as indicating a name: as far ago as 1896, E.W.Hopkins (in his article, "Pragathikani", in the JAOS, 1896, p.87), states the consensus on this issue when he, like yourself, refers to VIII.24.27 as the only place in the Rigveda where the phrase is used, *as in the Avesta*, as the name of an area or country, whereas elsewhere it is commonly used to refer to seven streams. And, except for the occasional crank theory which would identify the name with some other region, it is generally accepted that only the Punjab could be indicated.

The Zend Avesta refers to Haptahendu, and this, again, is generally agreed (although you insist that "we don't know what it meant to the Iranians") by all serious scholars (from eg. Hopkins to Gnoli, and even by Witzel in his article "The Home of The Aryans", 2000, p.312) to be a reference to the land between the Sindhu and the Sarasvati of Haryana.

Moreover, there is evidence, in your own above notes, which clinches the issue: you point out that the word hendu as "river" is completely missing in Avestan, and it is found only in this phrase. Likewise, an equivalent to the root sru (from which the Vedic word Sarasvati is derived) is also missing in Avestan. Both the words, Haptahendu as well as Harahvaiti, are therefore originally borrowings from the Vedic language, where Sindhu is a regular word for "river", and sru is a regular root. And the only circumstance in which this is logical is when the two words are understood as words migrated from the Vedic east to the Iranian west. The word Haptahendu is obviously not just a descriptive word referring to (any) seven streams, but a specific name of a specific area, and this indicates that this must have been the meaning of the original (ie. Vedic) word.

But, while the word was originally Vedic and not Iranian, was the specific area, the Punjab, indicated by the word, *also* originally Vedic and not Iranian? The answer is in the negative: First, the fact that another, western, river, in Afghanistan bears the Avestan equivalent of the name of the eastern Sarasvati indicates that the Iranians must originally have lived at least as far east as the Haryana river; and second, we come up against the fact that the Vedic word is found only once in the Rigveda in the consensually accepted sense of the name of a land. [Hopkins interprets this second fact (in his brilliant discussion on the evidence that Mandala VIII represents a later period, and a different and more western geographical locale, than the six Family Mandalas) as follows: he calls the title "Seven Rivers" an "Iranian name", points out that the Family Mandalas "consistently used 'seven rivers' to mean seven streams and never once to mean the name of a country", and concludes that "as the name given, not by the Vedic Aryans, but by their Iranian neighbours, it is quite conceivable that Seven Rivers should on occasion appear as a name among those who lived nearest to the Iranians" (Pragathikani, JAOS, 1896, p.87). The overwhelming evidence (note also Hopkins' detailed conclusions to the effect that Haryana, and *not* the Punjab, was the home of the Vedic Aryans, in his equally brilliant article, "The Punjab and the Rigveda", JAOS, July 1898, pp.19-28) that the Punjab was the home of the Iranians, and not of the Vedic Aryans, leads Hopkins to miss out the evidence pointed out by you as to the *linguistic* provenance of the *name*.]

2.The other phrases referring to seven rivers/waters (sapta yahvi/ nadya/ pravata/ visruha/ sravata/ apa etc.), on the other hand, refer not to the Punjab, but to rivers *in general*: either to the heavenly rivers in the sky on which the dragon ahi lies stretched out until slain

by Indra, or to the summits of the heavens traversed by Agni or by the Asvins, or to actual earthly rivers making their way to the ocean. It may appear that this is exactly what you are saying about the phrase “Saptasindhu” (other than in VIII.24.27) as well. But there is a clear difference:

The first difference is that the other words are used only occasionally with “seven” ¾ yahvi (3 hymns), nadya (1 hymn), pravata (2 hymns), visruha (1hymn), sravata (3 hymns), apa (1 hymn), a total of 11 hymns ¾ while the word sindhu alone is used in 12 hymns.

The second is in the pattern of distribution of the phrases. The other phrases are regularly distributed throughout the Rigveda: 4 hymns are in the Early Mandalas, 1 in the Middle Mandalas, and 6 in the Late Mandalas (but note: *not a single* reference in Mandala VIII). The 12 references to 7 sindhus, however, fall in a pattern: *not a single* reference in the Early Mandalas, 2 hymns in the Middle Mandalas, and 10 hymns in the Late Mandalas (4 in Mandala VIII, the very period characterised by many scholars, from Hopkins to Witzel, as indicating an Iranian connection).

The growing *first-hand* acquaintance of the Vedic Aryans with the seven major rivers to their west, in the *post*-Early Mandala period, led to the concept of an actual Land of Seven Rivers, and probably to the coining of the phrase Sapta Sindhu. Once such a phrase, totally missing in the Early Period, had been coined and become common, obviously it would be the phrase that would rise more often to the mind of composers (wanting to make references to “seven rivers” even in the old mystic or general sense) than any of the other phrases: in the period of Mandala VIII, for example, it appears to have completely elbowed out the other phrases.

The situation is somewhat like that of the references to oceans in the Rigveda. People who want to deny that the word samudra, among others, in the Rigveda means “ocean”, point out to the numerous phrases where samudra-etc. refers to the sky, etc. To this, David Frawley, in his reply to Witzel, already referred to earlier, writes as follows (“Witzel’s Vanishing Ocean”, 2002, p.6):

Such a metaphor of the sky as an ocean is common among many maritime peoples. It does not disprove that they knew of the ocean but only that it was the basis of their world-view. That is why all the main Vedic Gods of Indra, Agni, Soma and Surya have oceanic symbolisms. The Vedic fire and the sun are often said to dwell in the waters, which are a universal symbolism for the Vedic people. No one would imagine the atmosphere as like the ocean, or a universe of various seas, if they had no acquaintance with the ocean. Many people image the atmosphere or heaven as an ocean. This reflects a knowledge of the ocean, not an ignorance of it.

Likewise, the phrase “saptasindhu” in the Rigveda, even when used in a general or metaphorical sense, reflects a knowledge of the Punjab region.

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I think I have answered most of the points in your letter. I cannot, of course expect everyone to accept everything I say unquestioningly; but I do think my case is unassailable, at least from the point of view of the facts, the Rigvedic data, and pure logic.

Thank you for the points raised by you. I hope you will continue to do so henceforward as

well.

[I already sent you this letter twice today as an attachment file. But, partly due to the fact that I am not very habituated to internet activities, I have a feeling that it is possible you may either not have received my letter at all, or else you may have received it without the attachment. Hence I will now try one more time to send you the letter as an attachment, failing which I will have to send the letter directly, which will of course result in loss of alignment of the lines, etc., and fudging of the more unconventional alphabets, if any have been used. I am sending copies of the letter to Koenraad Elst and Vishal Agarwal, since I always try to keep them abreast of any discussions that I have on this subject. I hope you will not mind. I received the e-mail from Dr. Daphne Sakalis about your e-mail. Please convey my apologies for not acknowledging her e-mail earlier.]

Yours Sincerely  
Shrikant G. Talageri

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**NK's letter of 25 March 2005 is contained in ST's answer to it.**

**Dear Dr Kazanas**

I am sending by attachment my reply to your letter of 25/3/2005. I have just now read your letter of 27/3/2005 regarding the Hopkins articles. Yours sincerely

Shrikant G Talageri

**Dear Dr. Kazanas:**

I received your letter of 25/3/2005, containing your reply to my last letter, as well as a copy of your article intended for The Hindu. The article was very interesting, although I will take up a point in the article, with which I differ, as the last point in this present letter of mine.

Your reply to my letter is appended below for reference:

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**NK wrote the following to ST on 25 March (He also attached the paper Samudra and Sarasvati in the RigVeda Oct 2004.):**

Dear Shri Talageri

Many thanks for your long reply and the information about the 2 Hopkins papers. As nothing new has been added to the argument, I am in no way convinced re *saptá síndhu* .

Before going on, please, consult the attached paper on *samudra* and *Sarasvati* in the *RV* (published in last issue of the Quarterly of the Mythical Society, Bangalore). It was written for the *Hindu* in 2002 but was not printed there so K revised it thoroughly.

Below I am using your paragraph numeration. But note that it is inadequate: conflating my numbered §§ into "issues", one can avoid specific points and generalize; your paragraphs are too long for easy reference.

1. T's 1-2. K doesn't "parody" T's conclusions, nor suggest that T implies things T didn't imply. T mustn't be so oversensitive in discussions. K simply tried to show that T's mode of reasoning is faulty as is demonstrated by its application in other areas.

2. The appearance of camels in Bk 8 proves nothing. The animal may have been there for many

centuries and nobody noticed. Or the animal may have come suddenly into the region from elsewhere. The issue can be decided largely by the animal's remains: where and when? (Camel bones are even rarer in the I-S-C than horses').

3. T tends to write too much that is not really required – and this K noticed and mentioned it to T 3-4 years ago.

4. T's S-S 1. Apart from Hopkins no other Westerner used the name S-S. Only some Indian scholars did so before K started using it (and thus enraged Witzel). But this proves nothing. If you can email the 2 Hopkins papers (after scanning them) K would be grateful.

5. SS 2. In Bk 8 there are two references with other phrases: 59.4 (7 *svásaras*), 96.1 (*a po matáras* 7). But these, like other statistics that T brings up, are unimportant. Thus he (wrongly) says that only II hymns have phrases other than s-s. Bks 8-10 alone have at least 10 such phrases and there are 10 more in Bks 1-7. There are many more implied references to the 7 rivers. Unimportant.

6. What is important and ineluctable is that the 7 rivers appear in Bk 6 (3 and 7 too). VI.7.6 may be a poetical image, but these are always based on physical realities (as T correctly point out citing Frawley on *samudra*): so the 7 rivers streaming from Agni in heaven flow on earth too. More important is VI.61.10 with Sarasvati having 7 sisters (and being the seniormost, of course). BUT st 3c – 'You (=Sarasvati) disclosed for-the-tribes rivers' (*avanis* plural accusative). St 9 – 'As the sun has stretched/ spread out days, so she (=Sara°), the Divine-Order One, [has extended/spread] us (=Aryans) beyond/over (=ati) all foes and her other (=seven) sisters'. I prefer to believe Bharadvaja that there are at least 7 rivers and the Aryans live among them all (and beyond). Nothing anybody says (unless they prove that Bharadvaja says something different) will make K shift. And T should not slide over this hymn. (Also 3.4.8; 7.2.8; 36.6!)

7. K's statement on 8.24.27b does not "clinch the issue" (as per T) because the locative here can just as easily mean simply 'among' the 7 rivers – not the name of a country. If at this period (Bk 8) s-s was established as a name, then we should find it so used in the subsequent periods (Bks 8-10). But we don't. 9.66.6a 'the s-s flow *sirate*' (=7 rivers flow, not a country); 10.43.3 'the s-s in their forward-flow *pravane* enhance'; 10.67.12 (just like 4.28.1) 'Indra having killed the ahi, set forth the s-s' (and thus T's statement in s-s 2 paragraph one, is wrong). In fact s-s as a name appears nowhere in the RV and if Hopkins implies this, then he is utterly wrong.

8. K's position: the Aryans were spread well to the east and west of Sarasvati from the start of the RV. S-S refers not only to the 7 rivers in Punjab (I suspect there were many more in the 5th and 4th millennia) but also to these east of Sara° even Ganges. Seven was a convenient number because occult/ magical. If T does not wish to consider these facts (esp §6-7) and maintains his position, it is OK, but there can't be any further discussion on this issue.

T says it was not the Rigvedins who left northwestwards but Anus and Druhyus. These two were Aryans and Rigvedins just like the Purus. See 1.108.8, 6.46.7-8 on T's p 92 – and elsewhere in RV. Then, T places the Bhrgus/Phrygians in western Anatolia (map p 264). Surely the Bhrgus were Rigvedic Aryans?

K mentioned Yamuna because on map p 104 it is feeding Ganga not Sarasvati. (Not important.)

9. An additional point is the Earth's navel. It is probable (but not quite certain) that the area Drsadvati-Sarasvati was central (certainly sacred) as indicated by 3.24.4 which T translates correctly, (p 115). 9.82.3 strengthens this since Parjanya 'made his home on the mountains at the earth's navel' and in 2.3.7 at earth's navel there are 3 summits (*sanu*). But all other "earth's navel" seem to be the altar and 1.164.34-5 say 'the world's navel is yajña'. This phrase and *ilás padá-* are invariably connected with Agni and the holy sacrificial flame. No kings and crowds come to worship in this most central place; no fields are sown; no battles are waged; no atheists are driven off; no demons attack. Nothing else happens there – except the fire. So K still entertains a

lingering doubt. And 1. 128.7 need not refer to Manusa tirtha; it can just as easily refer to a human gathering *vrjana* anywhere.

10. How do you arrive at your estimates for the Bk periods (pp 77-8)? Can you be more precise? (I have no views on this.)

There are more issues. We 'll take them by stages. Meanwhile could you ask your publishers if they would be willing to publish in bookform some of my articles? These, as you know, are not written in a popular style and I certainly don't want to pay anything. I shall ask another friend in Delhi University. Keep up your research! Best wishes –

N. Kazanas.

P.S. Forgive, the shorthand style, but I am finishing another IE linguistic paper in favour of Sanskrit and time is precious.

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I will try to reply to most of the points raised by you (except, of course, point 3, “T tends to write too much that is not really required – and this K noticed and mentioned it to T 3-4 years ago”, and similar other comments, since these are not points, just pointless comments; and I have no intentions of allowing this discussion to turn into a comment-for-comment brawl. Also, I cannot write in the K and T style):

1.About your point 1: I am not being over-sensitive. The word “parody” means proving, or trying to prove, something to be ridiculous, or some “mode of reasoning” to be “faulty”, by imitation. And that is precisely what you have tried to do in respect of my conclusions regarding the east-to-west movement — a perfectly legitimate exercise in debate and discussion, and a very effective one *if logically and correctly done*; I have frequently used it myself, so I see no reason to object to the word (and, perhaps it is your reaction to my perfectly natural use of the word that is a trifle over-sensitive).

My point is precisely that it was not logically and correctly done: you write that you “tried to show that T’s mode of reasoning is faulty as demonstrated by its application in other areas”, but, in my earlier reply, I showed how your understanding of my mode of reasoning was faulty, and therefore your alleged application of it in other areas automatically wrong. My mode of reasoning nowhere suggested that the Rigvedic people “forgot” rivers (already referred to in earlier parts of the text); or that geographical elements were elsewhere (at the time of composition of some verse) than they were in later historical times; or that the Rigvedic people, at any point of time, knew some animals from a particular area, but *not* some others from the *same* area, simply because they mentioned the former but not the latter. If you have still not understood the point, let us leave it.

2.About your point 2: you write: “The appearance of camels in Bk 8 proves nothing. The animal may have been there for many centuries and nobody noticed. Or the animal may have come suddenly into the region from elsewhere”. This kind of argumentative logic does not do your position credit.



Firstly, in your accompanying article, you write: “The hymns evince no knowledge of large buildings, of brick-constructions, of fixed hearths/altars, of cotton, of rice and so many other elements of the Indus-Saraswati (or Harappan) Civilization, in contrast to post-rigvedic texts that do so. Consequently they must be assigned to a period before 3000.” How logical (apart from the fact that the Rigveda *does* refer to rice-preparations and mansions with a thousand doors or pillars — but that is a matter of facts and data, and not of logic, which is what we are discussing here) would it be to say : “The appearance of cotton [etc.] in post-Rigvedic texts proves nothing. They may have been there for many centuries (during the period of composition of the Rigveda) and nobody noticed”? [logical parody].

Secondly, it is not just the “appearance of camels”. It does not appear that you have read my earlier reply carefully, or cared to read the page references of my book cited by me in my earlier letter: for the camel, pp.122-123, 206-207, 225, 227 (esp. Witzel quoted on p.123/227, and the Dasa connection on pp.206-207), and the corroborating evidence on pp.103-123 and 131. The list of things which “may have been there for many centuries [during the period of the Family Mandalas] and nobody noticed [until the period of Mandala VIII] ” will turn out to be quite a long and formidable one.

You write: “The issue can be decided largely by the animal’s remains: where and when? (Camel bones are even rarer in the I-S-C than horses). ” When no-one has been able to solve the horse riddle on the basis of the animal’s remains, how can we solve the camel (non-)riddle on even rarer animal remains? But more on this when discussing your last point.

3.[No comments]

4.About your point 4: You write: “Apart from Hopkins no other Westerner used the name S-S. Only some Indian scholars did so before K started using it (and thus enraged Witzel).” I do not understand the issue here. Is it the use of the word Saptasindhu, spelled, more or less, in this manner; or is it the interpretation of VIII.24.27 as a reference to a land?

If the former, it is a non-issue. I have read Witzel’s criticism of your own use of the word: “More serious is the constant use of Saptasindhu, which simply is not a Rgvedic or even a Vedic word: read Sapta Sindhavah....Saptasindhu seems to be a neologism”. This is a typical example of Witzel’s arrogance as well as his diversionary tactics in debate and discussion. Of *course*, Saptasindhu, used exactly with this spelling, is a neologism — even Hopkins has *not* used it. But so are words like India, Punjab, Beas, Sutlej, etc. neologisms, and not Rgvedic or even Vedic words. Also the word Aryan, spelt in this manner, or the word Indo-Aryan. And we *do constantly* use them when discussing the Rigveda without making “serious” issues out of them.

If the latter, then you are wrong. Hopkins was only stating the consensus on this issue [read also Griffith’s translation, where in the footnotes, he clarifies that this phrase in this verse refers to “the Land of the Seven Rivers”] when he stated (in his article “Pragathikani”, JAOS, 1896, p. 87), that while all other references to “seven rivers” mean “seven streams”, VIII.24.27 alone refers to the name of a country, and that this country is the same as the one referred to as Haptahendu in the Avesta. The only point of debate (Hopkins refers to Ludwig’s views on this point) was about its implications for the antiquity of Mandala VIII.

[I am genuinely sorry, I do not know how to send you the two articles by Hopkins. I have them in printouts, and do not know the procedure for getting them scanned and sent. They are from JAOS 1896, and JAOS 1898].

5. About your point 5: You give some figures, and then write: “Unimportant.” If it were unimportant, you would not have devoted an entire point to it. However, I will reply jointly to this point and the next one, since they seem to constitute one broad issue. Here, I will only take up your comment: “But these, like other statistics that T brings up, are unimportant.” It is distressing that a scholar should enter into the study of a subject with the pre-determination that statistics, concerning the data under study, are to be treated as “unimportant”. When statistics are correctly and logically used, when they are interpreted in terms of trends and not absolute mathematical figures, and when the statistical data on a number of *different* points on a subject fall into a *regular* pattern, and the *same* regular pattern, the implications of that pattern become not just *important*, but *indispensable*, in arriving at logical conclusions.

There are, of course, instances where statistics have been incorrectly and illogically used, interpreted in terms of absolute mathematical figures, and conclusions arrived at by erroneous methods even when the statistical data on different points fall into completely different patterns. Arnold has done this in his study of the Vedic metres. And in a review article in the JAOS, 1929, Franklin Edgerton critically analyses the statistical methods by which Von Walther Wust tries to arrive at a chronological order of the Mandalas of the Rigveda: Wust selects 17 categories of late words in the Rigveda, then notes down the number of occurrences of each of these 17 categories in each of the ten Mandalas of the Rigveda, then in each of the 17 categories he divides the number of words in each Mandala by the number of occurrences of the words in that category, then on the basis of the figures arrived at he assigns to each Mandala a number (from one to ten, indicating its relative rank from oldest to latest) in each category, then he takes the mathematical average of the 17 ranks (one in each category) for each Mandala, and then in conclusion places the ten Mandalas of the Rigveda in the order of age indicated by these average figures. Thus, both Mandala 2 and Mandala 6, he concludes, belong to the same age since their average ranks are 5.41, while Mandala 5 is later because its average rank is 5.88!

Edgerton points out that Wust ranks Mandala 3 as “old”, because its average rank is 4.53, and Mandala 2 as “late” because its average rank is 5.41; but the 17 ranks of Mandala 2 are as follows: 1 in 1 category, 2 in 2 categories, 4 in 2 categories, 5 in 4 categories, 6 in 3 categories, 7 in 2 categories, and 9 in 3 categories. The 17 ranks of Mandala 3 are 1 in 2 categories, 2 in 3 categories, 3 in 2 categories, 4 in 1 category, 5 in 5 categories, 7 in 2 categories, and 10 (ie. the latest) in 2 categories. Obviously, the results in each category fall into completely different patterns. After examining the whole rigmarole, Edgerton calls it “pretty sweeping conclusions from extremely flimsy premises”.

The way in which orthodox scholars swallow the conclusions of eminent predecessors, and seem completely blind to glaring differences, can be illustrated by Witzel’s reference to the conclusions of Wust and Hoffman as to the chronological order of the ten Mandalas of the Rigveda. Witzel (in his paper “Early Indian History: Linguistic and Textual Parametres”, in the Erdosy volume, 1995) gives Wust’s order as 9,4,3,5,7,2,6,8,[1],10; and Hoffman’s as

4,6,2,1,7,5,10,3,9,8; and finds that these two “in particular agree more or less in their solutions, even though these were based on different data”!!

In any case[“T tends to write too much that is not really required”], the point is that, unlike these cases, the different categories of statistical and other data I have given all exhibit one consistent pattern, and sweeping dismissals of such data are not very conducive to scholarly studies.

6.About your point 6 (and the residue of your point 5): Let me again point out that it is only the word Saptasindhu (howsoever Witzel would have it spelt in English) in Rigveda VIII.24.27 and the word Haptahendu in the Avesta which refer to a land, specifically the land between the Sarasvati and the Sindhu. Other phrases which mean “seven rivers/waters/streams”, or which “imply” them, do not necessarily refer to this land. Other uses of the phrase “seven Sindhus”, whether referring to these 7 streams or to streams in general, do “imply” a greater acquaintance with the name of this land.

As I pointed out in my earlier letter, there was no wall rising to the skies beyond the Sarasvati, preventing the Vedic Aryans from knowing what was there behind. So, just as they knew about the ocean, they knew about the seven major rivers of the Punjab, and showed their awareness — especially when referring to their own river from among them, the Sarasvati (which is what the references in III.4.8; VII.2.8; 36.61 are all about). But, as in the case of the ocean, the areas of these rivers also did not form part of their area of habitation and historico-political activity.

Incidentally, there are not a few scholars and writers, perhaps all of them Indians, who treat the phrases referring to seven rivers as “implying” the seven sacred rivers of Indian tradition: Ganga, Yamuna, Sarasvati, Sindhu, Narmada, Godavari and Kaveri, and therefore conclude that the areas of all these rivers were part of the geographical horizon of the Rigveda. This is the result of giving more importance to preconceived notions than to the actual geographical data in the text.

And indeed, we “should not slide over” hymn VI.61.9: “She hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her sisters, Holy One. As Surya spreadeth out the days” (Griffith). In this militant hymn to Sarasvati, clearly a prayer for victories from a people residing on the banks of the Sarasvati rather than a statement of actual conquests and expansions, *I* prefer to believe Bharadvaja that it is *not* the Aryans (ie. the Purus, the Aryans of the Rigveda) but *their foes* who live among the sister rivers and beyond.

7.About your point 7: You are right, “K’s statement on 8.24.27b does not “clinch the issue” (as per T)”; but the statements of Hopkins, Griffith, Ludwig, and numerous others (who were definitely not all of them “utterly wrong”, as you put it) do clinch the issue. *S-s* was the name of a land, as testified by the Rigveda VIII.24.27, and the Zend Avesta.

You write: “If at this period (Bk 8) *s-s* was established as a name, then we should find it so used in the subsequent periods (Bks 8-10). But we don’t.” The reason is simple: The Saptasindhu area was not the habitat of the Vedic Aryans. In the period of Mandala VIII, which was a period of close contact with the Zoroastrian Iranians (and the period of composition of the major part of the Zend Avesta), the phrase gained some importance. In the subsequent periods of Mandalas IX and X, the Zoroastrian Iranians had shifted further west, and the residual

Anus were linguistically and culturally “absorbed into the Puru mainstream and they remained on the northwestern periphery of the Indoaryan cultural world” (see p.264 of my book); and the Sindhu was gaining eminence over the Sarasvati, which must have been losing its waters (see p.110 of my book point c), and a phrase “sapta-apa” (a precursor to the later “panca-apa”) had made its appearance (X.104.8). There are many words in the Rigveda which ceased to be used in subsequent periods.

8.About your point 8: The point about s-s has already been dealt with above in points 6 and 7. You are right: when the participants in a discussion on any issue refuse to consider facts, or dismiss them as “unimportant”, there can’t be any further discussion on the issue.

You write: “T says it was not the Rigvedins who left northwestwards but Anus and Druhyus. These two were Aryans and Rigvedins just like the Purus. See 1.108.8, 6.46.7-8 on T’s p 92 – and elsewhere in RV. Then, T places the Bhrgus/Phrygians in western Anatolia (map p 264). Surely the Bhrgus were Rigvedic Aryans?” The Anus and Druhyus are not Rigvedic Aryans just because they are mentioned in the Rigveda, any more than the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hittites, Romans, and others, are Biblical Hebrews simply because they are mentioned in the Bible. You refer to my two references on p.92. Please read what I have written about these two references on p.142 (upper half), and then again what I have written about the Anus and Druhyus on pp.142-143 (contrast this with what I have written about the Purus on pp.139-141, 145-148, 148-154, 154-160, etc). About the Bhrgus, read pp.142(bottom)-143 and 164-180. [Also ch.6, esp. pp.202-208; and ch.7, esp. pp. 254-260]. If all this is not clear, I can have little to add at the moment.

About the Yamuna being shown on the map opp. p.104 as feeding the Ganga, and not the Sarasvati: I had mentioned in my last letter that I could not say “whether the Yamuna at the point of this reference in the Rigveda had as yet started the diversion of its course into the Ganga.” So I merely inserted a map of the riverine system as it is at present, since I just wanted to show the general and relative positions of the rivers. The only additions, of course, were the extinct rivers, Sarasvati and Drsadvati.

9.About your point 9: Your doubts are probably genuine, but I think my list of Haryana place names on p.117 of my book is reasonably correct.

10.About your point 10: You write: “How do you arrive at your estimates for the Bk periods (pp 77-8)? Can you be more precise? (I have no views on this.)”.

On pp.77-78 of my book, I have given my estimate of the period of composition of the Rigveda as, *by a conservative estimate*, around 2000 years. This is, frankly, an “estimate”, and I really cannot give specific criteria on the basis of which I arrived at these periods.

Here, I will take up a point, from your article for The Hindu, which is related to this issue. I read your article in detail, and really appreciated the spirit, the arguments, and the details. If anything in my present reply happens to have given you any contrary opinion, let me state very clearly that I hold you and your writings in great respect. However, one point in your article on which I hold a contrary view — probably the most significant point on which OIT scholars are split down the middle — is the date of final compilation of the Rigveda (and of the event generally assumed by most writers, including myself, to be almost

contemporary with this date: the Mahabharata war). I take this date to be somewhere in the middle of the second millennium B.C., and not around 3000 B.C.

Therefore, my *rough* dates for the periods of the Rigveda are:

3500 (or earlier)-2900 B.C. — Mandala VI and earlier.

2900-2700 B.C. — Mandalas III and VII, and Early I.

2700-2400 B.C. — Mandalas IV, II, and Middle I.

2400-2000 B.C. — Mandalas V, VIII, IX, and late I.

2000-1400 B.C. — Mandala X.

This has been proved reasonably right on many occasions which arose after my book on the Rigveda was published: in early 2000, I was drawn into an e-mail debate between Steve Farmer (later joined by Michael Witzel) on the one hand, and some others (mainly NRI's) on the other hand. The subject was the implications of the references to “spoked wheels” (spokes=*aras*) in the Rigveda. It was Farmer's contention that the references to spoked wheels “throughout the Rigveda” showed that the Rigveda was composed after 2200 B.C., since spoked wheels did not exist before that period. No-one was able to put forward any concrete argument against this claim. However, I was certain that the references to *aras* would not be found in the Mandalas of the Early and Middle Periods, which I put pre-2400 B.C. And surely enough, every single reference to spoked wheels is in the Late Mandalas. [Of course, Farmer argued loud and long that *aras* were “implied” in various other words and phrases in the earlier Mandalas. The evidence of the data in the Rigveda falls into the *same* consistent pattern in every respect. If someone is determined to ignore it, there is nothing to be done about it]. There are many other aspects of Rigvedic data (peculiarly Indo-Iranian words, words showing connections with the west, the Rigvedic metres, etc.) which reinforce my chronology and geography of the Rigveda, and I will detail them in future writings.

About publishing your works, I am certain Sita Ram Goel, the very great thinker and writer, and my publisher, would have been eager to publish your works. But after his very tragic demise in December 2002, and the the shocking demise of his son Pradeep Goel in January this year, I do not know what exactly is the position of the publishing house in respect of publishing new books on these subjects. I do want to see your books in print.

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G. Talageri

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**On 14 April 2005 ST wrote:**

**Dear Dr Kazanas**

I am sorry I could not send this e-mail earlier as there was a block on my e-mail a/c in my computer. I got it removed yesterday

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G Talageri

**Dear Dr. Kazanas**

Thank you for your letter, and your reference to my 1993 opus having played a role in changing your views. You may be right about having some person like Elst, etc. to arbitrate. I will try to reply to your letter point to point as before. I append your letter below:

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**(letter from NK to ST on 5 April 2005)**

**Dear Shri Talageri,**

Thank you again for a very full reply. Please, understand that I am in no way attached to all these ideas and in this sense I don't take them "seriously". I changed my view about the IAs and the RV date because facts compelled my mind (and your 1993 opus helped greatly). If new facts appear I shall change my views again – even make a complete turn-about. But facts it will have to be, not interpretations and emotional appeals. I use T and K for some objectivity.

1.K did not "parody" T's conclusions. The OED definition of "parody" says (mine is 1978) – an author's views "are mimicked and made to seem ridiculous" by applying them "to ridiculously inappropriate subjects". ("parody" is Greek and means this exactly.) Now, K did nothing like this. You can prove somebody's reasoning faulty without ridicule.

2.Camel's bones are scantier than horses'. Equine bones are scanty but now quite sufficient to establish a good presence in the ISC c 2400 (Kazanas 2003 *JIES* ). Even in the RV horses are not numerous, really.

There are no (human) mansions nor rice in the RV . The words *apupa*, *odana* and *puro.as* do not mean necessarily rice. *odana* suggests to me water (*ud->od-*) as basic meaning. Rice and cotton are not found in the ISC before, say, 2400.

3.Pt 4. VIII.24.7 is not necessarily the name of a country any more than other S-S citations. The fact that others take this as a name (Hopkins etc) does not make it so. The AV *h-h* is singular. The S *s-s* is plural locative and makes perfectly good sense "among the 7 rivers". None of T's arguments indicates that *s-s* was the name of the country. After all, although T assured K that all the references to *s-s* were in T's book, K pointed this one out saying that only this might be construed as the name of a region. T's line of argument is now changing considerably.

4.Pt 7. A region's name doesn't change easily. If *s-s* had been given as a name, the name would have stayed. There is no hint that a new name was used for the area in the RV. The references to the 7 rivers and that area continue unabated in the various phrases. (In NW Turkey is the city Istanbul. This is a corruption of the Gk 'Constantinopolis' – though it has been in Turkish hands since 1452. In Egypt is the port 'Alexandria', despite Roman and then Moslem occupation for 2100 years.)

5.Pt 4. The point is unimportant (although statistics favour K) because, as was stated, more important are the references to 7 rivers (in various phrases) in Bks 6, 3, 7. Otherwise, yes, statistics are indeed indispensable – especially with large numbers. (A paper with such statistics will be sent to you – IE Linguistics again.)

6.Pt 6. Griffith's translation is not as accurate as K's. Even so, "She hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her sisters". The "us" *na(.)* refers presumably to Bharadvaja's tribe – not others; the "foes" needn't be only human; the "sisters" are, as st 3, 10, 12 indicate, the 7 rivers/streams. So, clearly, the Aryans have spread "beyond" *ati* these. Now, the simile of the sun-and-days suggests a very long time. That the hymn is "militant" and a prayer "for victories" (so T) may well be true but such comments in no way affect the actual import. (In st 3 the foes seem to be 'god-blamers' and the entire demonic (?) B.saya brood. In st 7 the foe is *v.tra* and in 9 any *dvi*. 'not-well-disposed' [toward us].)

7.Pt 8. The Anus etc are not “just mentioned” (so T) as Egyptians etc in the Bible. They are members of the *pañcājana*. (*k...i-* or *k.iti-* etc), the 5 Aryan peoples/tribes. 6.61.12 says that Sarasvati makes them all 5 prosper. 6.51.11 prays that Indra and other gods make *vardh-* “our land [and] the 5 peoples”. Nowhere in the Old Testament are there such prayers for the prosperity of Egyptians etc. But some of the 12 tribes of Israel at times turned against others (esp in 10th cent) without ceasing to be Israel. The 5 peoples is PIE since we find a similar concept in Greece and Ireland. The 5 Aryan are said to be Anu, Druhyu, Puru, Turvaśa and Yadu. If they are Aryan, they are Rigvedic. Yes, in some hymns the Anus or whoever were hostile or behaved in anarya ways. But then so did the Purus according to Vasi..ha in Bk 7. As with the Hebrew 12 tribes or the Greek peoples, different clans disagreed and fought internecine wars for this or that reason. It is obvious that the Bharatas of the Purus came on top but all this doesn’t mean that the others were not Aryans. In Greece the Atheneans, the Spartans, finally the Macedonians prevailed. Only if one or other clan worshipped other gods and spoke some other language would they be not Aryans. While most of T’s other inferences are right, his insistence on this seems rather strange.

8.K has critiqued these two notions in T. T has defended them. Both have shot their bolts on this. Can the matter be given to uninvolved people like Agarwal, Elst, Frawley and Kak, to arbitrate or give their views?

9.Pt 9. K actually agrees with T on this. The “doubt” is that some verses refer to the sacrificial fire – as 1.164.34-5 make obvious.

10.Pt 10. K respects T’s work but respects even more the Vedic Tradition which says that the RV was compiled (not composed) on the eve of the Mbh war and the onset of the Kali Yuga, at 3102. But K acknowledges that some hymns are later interpolations.

11. There is another side to *ara*. I’ll let you know. But first I’d like to see Farmer’s comments (his “implied” *aras* in the RV). So if you still have them, please send them. As you know, I hope, Agarwal sent me the 2 Hopkins papers and I have read the 1898 one and 1/4 of the 1896. I don’t care much for them. Here I must stop because I must think of my secretary also who has much else to do.

Sincere regards,

N. Kazanas.

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1. The word parody *is* the right word for the technique used by you in trying to prove my reasoning faulty — can you suggest any other word? — and it is a perfectly valid and logical technique in debate.

2. About camels, Michael Witzel (in his article “Early Loan words in Western Central Asia”) writes: “The Bactrian camel was domesticated in Central Asia in the late 3rd mill. BCE and introduced in the BMAC area in...2000 BCE....Its Mesopotamian designation, found in middle and new Akkad. udru ‘Bactrian camel’, is a loan from Iran..”. In the Rigveda, see pp.206-207 of my book, kings with Iranian names introduce the camel, and therefore obviously its name as well, to the Vedic people.

If there are mansions referred to in the Rigveda, it does not matter whether “human” ones are specifically mentioned or not: it means the Rigvedic people were acquainted with mansions. The words *apupa*, *odana* and *purolas* are admitted, even by scholars like Witzel who cannot imagine rice in the Rigveda, as references to rice preparations. In my mother-tongue Konkani, which even today preserves some Vedic lexicon (it is the only modern Indoaryan language, for example, to use *tadbhava* words derived from the Vedic, and common Indo-European, *svan* and *udaka*, rather than the later *kukkura* and *paniyam*), the words *appe* (rice cake), *addana* (the combination of rice and boiling water) and *polo* (rice pancake) mean the same things interpreted by the scholars for the Rigvedic words.

3. Both of us have, indeed, shot our bolts, as you put it in your point 8, on the *Sapta sindhu* issue. But your last sentence in point 3 (“T’s line of argument is now changing considerably”) merits a reply:

This comment does not fit well with what you write in your first paragraph: “I changed my view...If new facts appear I shall change my views again — even make a complete turn-about”. One of the greatest compliments I received about my first book was in a review by Dr. J. Jayaraman in the December 1995 issue of *The Mountain Path* (The journal of Ramanashrama): “Talageri...modifies theory and not the evidence whenever the former conflicts with the latter. His thinking is daring enough to let go of past conditioning...”. In my second book, I pointed out in my preface that I had to completely change the view (acquired on second hand references, and expressed in my first, 1993, book) that the Punjab was the homeland of the Vedic Aryans, after I examined the actual data in the Rigveda. Likewise, starting on the basis of PL Bhargava’s chronology of the Rsis, I set out on my second book with the idea that the Atris and Kanvas were the oldest Rsi families, and found the data in the Rigveda turning my views completely upside down, and had to radically revise my views and let the data dictate the scenario. So, facts not only *can*, but *should*, make one change one’s line of argument considerably.

But in this particular case, I do not see where my line of argument has changed in the least: in my book, pp. 113-114, I have clearly stated that there are various phrases in the Rigveda which mean “seven rivers”, but that only one of these phrases, the phrase “*saptasindhu*” (conventionally written like this in English, as we regularly write the word “Arya”, without phonetic symbols, as Aryan), refers to the Punjab. This is still the case, and it is still my stand. [In many of the occurrences of this phrase, the reference is to rivers in general, *just as the word Gandharva (p.113) in most of its occurrences refers to divine heavenly beings residing in the sky rather than to anyone or anything actually in Gandhara*; in both cases, the occurrences of the words in their derived general meanings do not negate their original geographical implications.]

What happened was simply that I inadvertently left out one, and the most crucial, reference to *saptasindhu*. I noticed it very soon after my book was published in 2000, but I was not unduly bothered, since this was not a case of my deliberately omitting a reference which went against my argument, but of my inadvertently omitting a reference which reinforced my argument more than any other reference. This is the reference, taken in conjunction with the Avestan reference, which showcases the original model of all the other general references.



If there has been a considerable change in the line of argument, it has been on your side: your earlier stand about VIII.24.27 was that it was “the most significant instance since this could, better than any other citation be taken as the name of a ‘country, land, region’ and not just ‘7 rivers’...Only 8.24.27b...may perhaps be taken as a name, like the ‘United States’ which is also plural.” Now you write: “VIII.24.27 is not necessarily the name of a country any more than other S-s citations”. Note the underlined words. And no, the word “perhaps” in the first statement does not justify the second one, which is “a complete turn-about” — which has come about not because new facts have been presented which prove the first statement wrong, but only because the first statement has been incorporated into my argument.

Now you seem so set against this verse being taken as a reference to a region that you write: “The fact that others take this as a name (Hopkins etc.) does not make it so”. Let me elaborate on “Hopkins, etc.” — in your second letter you suggested that “apart from Hopkins no other Westerner” but “only some Indian scholars did so” — Hopkins clearly writes that in this verse it means “the name of a country”, while in the other verses it means “seven streams”. He also cites Ludwig’s statements to the same effect. Both identify this “country” with the Avestan Haptahendu. Griffith, in his footnote to the verse, declares that it refers to “the land of the seven rivers”, and identifies it with the Punjab. Geldner, in his German translation, declared by Witzel to be the most perfect one to date, translates the phrase as “Siebenstromland”! Keith and MacDonnell, in their “Vedic Index”, in the entry on Sarasvati, write: “Again, the ‘seven rivers’ in one passage [fn.viii.24.27] clearly designate a district...”, and identify it with the Punjab. I do not know how Muller, Muir, Wilson, Roth, Benfey, Weber, Grassmann, Oldenberg, Bergaigne, Wallis, Kaegi, etc, etc. translated or interpreted this phrase in this verse. Can you, against the categorical assertions and translations cited by me, cite equally categorical assertions to the contrary from any of the above, or any others?

4.”A region’s name doesn’t change easily” is not a strong, much less conclusive, argument. Kikata, named in the Rigveda itself, certainly changed its name to Magadha; and, if we take Witzel’s location of the Rigvedic Kikata in northern Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh, the name seems to have left no traces anywhere. “There is no hint that a new name was used for the area in the RV”: how many *other* place names, old or new, do we find in the Rigveda, *even for the places inhabited by the Rigvedic Aryans (which the Punjab was not)*, beyond the names of the holy places in Kurukshetra? Outside this region, one Gandhari (and the related Gandharvas) and one Kikata. All subsequent extant literature for a long period was by people residing to the east of the Punjab, and people long migrated to the west. The drying of the Sarasvati led to the subsequent word “Punj-ab”.

5.“The point is unimportant (although statistics favour K)”!!! I am awaiting your paper with such statistics.

6.The “us” certainly refers to Bharadvaja’s tribe. But the very fact that the verse is addressed, not to some heavenly God like, say, Indra, but to the geographically specific river-Goddess Sarasvati, shows us the geographical location of the hymn: the hymn even

ends with “let us not go from thee to distant countries”. On the one hand, the hymn is a prayer for victories in battle, and, on the other, reflects lofty ideas in its praise of the river: how does a river make all the five tribes prosper (verse 12), unless *all* those tribes were to be actually living on its banks and getting the benefits of its waters? How can a river “spread” people (verse 9) “beyond” several other rivers running parallel to it at various distances? Taking the phrase “she hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her sisters” literally as a testimony to the implied spread of the Rigvedic Aryans over the whole of the Punjab, against the actual geographical data in the text, and by ignoring the reference to “foes” in conjunction with the “sisters”, is untenable.

7. About the five tribes, it is clear you have not cared to read again the pages from my book I cited in my last reply: pp. 142-143 for the Anus and Druhyus, and pp. 139-141, 145-160, for the Purus (and also ch.6, particularly p.202-208, and ch.7, particularly pp.254-260). You are only “replying” to stray sentences in my letter.

The word anarya is totally absent in the Rigveda. It is only later, when “arya” came to mean “noble” in general and not “we the noble tribe”, that a word anarya=ignoble was coined. Therefore, let alone the Purus, but even the Anus are never called “anarya” in the Rigveda: both the words Arya and Dasa are used for both friendly as well as hostile people, and for people who presumably behave nobly as well as ignobly.

Nowhere does the Rigveda refer to “5 Aryan peoples/tribes”. The “five tribes” are nowhere *even once* associated with the word “Arya”. Can you cite a single reference to this effect? On the contrary, read pp.154-160 of my book, “The Aryas in the Rigveda”.

Yes, 6.51.11 asks Indra to make the five tribes prosper, but this does not make them all Aryan or Vedic. Prayers asking the Gods to make the whole of mankind prosper would not indicate that the whole of mankind is “Aryan”, much less “Vedic”. See also VIII.51.9 (see p.157 of my book) where Indra is declared to be a God who is close to both Aryas *and* Dasas.

You write: “Only if one or other clan worshipped other gods and spoke some other language would they be not Aryans”. Firstly the difference between Aryas and others=Dasas is not religious: see pp.252-253 of my book, points b and e. As for language, I have repeatedly pointed out that the word Aryan as “Indo-European” is a modern use of the word. The Rigvedic composers did not employ the word to distinguish between speakers of Indo-European and non-Indo-European languages, but to distinguish between Purus and non-Purus. Again see pp. 206-207 of my book: it is not one more of those eerie coincidences that the only hymns where the word Dasa is used in a friendly sense happen to be also the only hymns with royal (camel donating) patrons having pointedly Iranian names: even the Iranians, the Indo-Europeans linguistically, geographically and culturally closest to the Rigvedic Aryans, and even in the most friendly references, are called Dasas and not Aryas. [Likewise, in the Zend Avesta, the Iranians call only themselves by the term Airya, and not the other peoples.]

7.8. My insistence on the above point is not strange at all. In the very first paragraph of your letter, you emphasise that our conclusions should be based on facts, and not on interpretations and emotional approaches (or appeals, as you put it). Your insistence on all

the Indo-European ancestral groups having actually been part of the Rigvedic culture by that name, your respect for the “Vedic Tradition which says that the RV was compiled[...]at 3102”, even your casual dismissal of Hopkins papers with “I don’t care much for them” (which really leaves me literally speechless), all seem to me more emotional than objective.

It would be all right to have arbitration by uninvolved people to resolve our differences on these issues, but what is really required is a broader discussion to discuss threadbare and resolve all differences among OIT supporters so as to reach a rational consensus and a united approach on all matters — as far as humanly possible. [Actually, of course, such amicable discussions aimed at reaching the Truth should be undertaken jointly by both AIT and OIT supporting scholars; but, given the dirty politics, vested interests and ego problems that would be involved, that can only be a dream.]

9.10.11. Farmer’s references to “implied” aras consisted simply of references to chariots (of the Asvins, Surya, etc.) moving “swiftly”, which to him *automatically* implied the presence of spokes in the wheels.

The point I wish to make here is that the distribution of words in the Rigveda, all of which fall into one single consistent pattern, is the most significant “fact” which helps in the logical analysis of the historical data. That all references to aras=spokes should be found only in the Late Mandalas, just like all references to camels introduced by Iranian-named kings, is part of a consistent pattern where things whose archaeology can be pinpointed to the very late third millennium BC are emphatically found (if at all) in the Late Mandalas, and equally emphatically not found in the Early and Middle Mandalas (except, if at all, in hymns or verses consensually accepted as late interpolated ones). The appearance of more and more western river-names, place-names and animal-names in the Rigveda in an east-to-west pattern is also similarly consistent. It is not logical to deny these facts on the basis of preconceived notions, emotional preferences, and indirectly “implied” inferences.

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G. Talageri

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**On 2 May 2005 ST wrote:**

Dear Dr.Kazanas,

Please read the attachment.

YOURS SINCERELY,

Shrikant G. Talageri

Dear Dr. Kazanas

Thank you for your very interesting letter of 20/4/2005. I append the letter below:

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**(letter from NK to ST 20 April 2005)**

Dear Shri Talageri,

Thank you for your surprising last letter. Here I shall have to stop our discussion as I have much work to catch up with. Besides we have a serious communication problem. You and I have, it seems, learnt different brands of English.

(a).T insists that K parodied him. So please, show how K applied T's view/method (in K's 3rd letter, point 6) "to ridiculously inappropriate subjects" and so ridiculed T. Why should there be one word/verb for "try to prove faulty"? It is well known that languages do not have word for word correspondences. Eg Gk has no equivalent word for English 'consideration' or 'concept'.

(b).T's pt 3 underlines "the most significant instance", also "better than any other citation" and "only"; strangely T ignores the adverb "probably" and the modal verb "could ... be", which suggest a mere possibility (hypothetical, not the assertive certainty of "is", which is not used); T then rejects "perhaps" for reasons unknown and ignores the modal "may" which again suggests a very remote possibility. Thus T finds a change (!) in K's line of argument when the latter says that the locative 8.24.27 can and does mean 'among, at, around, in, upon the 7 rivers'; T does not realize that this was already clearly implied in those adverbs and modal verbs, as K understands the English grammar.

(c).Now "mansion". Originally *mansion* (<MFr *mansion* < L *mansio*) meant any abode, even in open air, but from c1500 onward it came to mean "lord's manor, large and stately residence" (OED 1978). In his Victorian poetic expressions (free and often inaccurate), Griffith has used "mansions" but this in the RV is not the "large, stately residence" of the early Tudors (=2 and 3 floors): there were no such buildings in Harappan and Rigvedic times. As for K's brackets with 'human', they mean "and/or any other kind".

(d).Nor did K say or imply that the 5 tribes are called *arya/anarya* in the RV. His statement "are said [to be]..." means and refers to places in the Vedic Tradition. T criticizes K for emotionalism because of K's respect for the VT. But where would T's *anukramanis* and the RV be without this oral VT which remains unrivalled? Nowhere.

(e).It is possible that T forgot to include 8.24.27 in his first edition and in the second. But then he forgot it also even when K insistently referred to the 7 rivers in two letters. T's first reply (26/2) says s-s (in T's citations in the book) "is a name of Punjab". In his second (3/3) T is not explicit but implies again it is a name for Punjab whereas other phrases like *sapta yahvi* etc "have not been interpreted by anyone ... as names equivalent to s-s". Neither in the 1st nor the 2nd is there mention of 8.24.27. In T's third –

"s-s does specifically refer to the Punjab"; here the phrase is linked, at last, after K's mention of it, with 8.24.27. But recently, suddenly, all s-s references cease to be "name of Punjab" and become 7 rivers (as indeed should be) and only 8.24.27 is the name of the country. This is the change (so K) in T's line of argument: all previous citations from middle and late Bks are repudiated and T's entire argument (re rivers) stands only upon 8.24.27 which, in any case, being a locative means "among, etc the 7 rivers".

The fact that Hopkins et al see this as the name of a district does not make it such. Under the AIT spell they clutch at this straw (and many merely repeat mechanically) linking it with Avestan *Haptahendū* to bolster the "common Indo-Iranian period". None of them ever say that the Iranians left Saptasindhu and took with them the name as a memory. It is not possible that the name s-s (as per T) in 8.24.27 is used nowhere else in about 400 hymns (Bks I, 8, 9, 10); moreover the ordinary locative "among, at 7 rivers" makes perfectly good sense. K sees no reason whatever why 7 nadis, yahvis etc do not, just like s-s, refer to the same 7 rivers (or, all the rivers in the larger area).

At this juncture T reads K's English in T's way. In K's 3rd letter: "Some modern scholars use the name S-s for brevity and convenience avoiding 'N-W India & Pakistan'. It is a modern convention no more." In his 4th letter (25/3): "Apart from Hopkins no other Westerner used the name S-s. Only some Indian scholars did so before K started using it." Now, here, K in fact makes an error because he took T's word that Hopkins used S-s as a name; K had not yet seen the Hopkins papers.

But not even Hopkins uses S-s as a name for Punjab in his publications; Hopkins merely identifies 8.24.27 with Iranian *Haptahendū*. Please give references of Westerners who use S-s as a name for Punjab in their publications, as distinct from saying that 8.24.27 is the name for the Punjab-area. Useful.

(f).The stanza “She hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her sisters” is not a prayer. A prayer or wish is usually given with an imperative, optative, precative or subjunctive (do thou spread us; may you spread us, and the like). This is an assertive statement in past indicative showing that something has been done and is so. At least that is what K’s English and Vedic say. Then, Sarasvati is not just a river. When she is invoked with I.a or Bharati etc, she is obviously a goddess. So while she is a river she is also a mighty and benign goddess. Clearly it is the goddess (not the gross material river) that has done the spreading of the Aryans. Surely this is not incomprehensible? (Even the river could have done it by nourishing and invigorating the Aryans with abundant energy and numbers.)

I stop here. If we can’t agree on English we are not likely to agree on Vedic – which I gather now you don’t know. Our discussion will cease. But I have written to Agarwal and Prof Kak. I hope they have the time and the inclination to comment. It would be nice if you wrote similarly to Elst and Frawley. The latter respects your work but is not talking to me.

Finally let me stress that I don’t care for the writings of all the scholars you have cited and others (except Keith), though I do consult them often. For 150 years they have published lie after lie. E.g. they have been saying that *gravan* (in the RV) means ‘pressing stone’ – until in 2001 K. Thomson (Edinburgh Univ) demonstrated that it means ‘singer’. The same scholar sent me a draft showing that *purolas* has little to do with ‘ricecakes’. Kazanas demonstrated that rigvedic *pur* does not mean at all ‘fort, town’. So my good friend, I prefer the original text, not translations and secondary sources (especially these under the AIT). Do get on with your new work. I have to write a long paper on Gk philosophy apart from other matters. But we ’ll keep in touch.

Best wishes,  
N. Kazanas.

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You are perfectly right in stating that we have a serious communication problem, and that we (you and I) appear to have learnt completely different brands of English. I would genuinely welcome it if Vishal Agarwal or Subhash Kak, or Koenraad Elst or David Frawley, would have the time or inclination to comment. But I wouldn’t dream of asking, or expecting, any of them to do so: I don’t think anyone would want to step into what is increasingly giving the appearance of a cross-fire between egos rather than an objective discussion of academic facts and their interpretations. And I am sure each one of them feels distressed at such an exchange between two persons on the same side of the AIT/OIT divide, and particularly with me for what they probably consider as extreme tactlessness on my part. [No-one has said anything to me as yet. This is my own guess].

About your letter:

(a). You write: “T insists that K parodied him. So please, show how K applied T’s view/method (in K’s 3rd letter, point 6) “to ridiculously inappropriate subjects” and so ridiculed T. Why should there be one word/verb for “try to prove faulty”? It is well known that languages do not have word for word correspondences. Eg Gk has no equivalent word for English ‘consideration’ or ‘concept’.”

There need not be one word for “try to prove faulty”, but there *is* one word for the technique of “trying to prove faulty” by giving substitute examples in the way you have done, and that word is “parody”. I have similarly parodied an argument of Witzel on pp. 469 and 470 of my book. It does not amount to “ridiculing T.” or “ridiculing W.”, even if T.’s or W.’s particular argument were to stand exposed as ridiculous in its faultiness. It is perfectly legitimate in logical debate and criticism, and I see no reason to be allergic to the word.

It is a measure of the kind of discussion we have been having, that what should have been a discussion on the appropriateness or otherwise of the logic behind the arguments you have used in trying to prove my reasoning “faulty” has been successfully diverted to, or converted into, an endless discussion on the appropriateness or otherwise of the word “parody” to describe the said arguments!

(b). You write: “T’s pt 3 underlines “the most significant instance”, also “better than any other citation” and “only”; strangely T ignores the adverb “probably” and the modal verb “could ... be”, which suggest a mere possibility (hypothetical, not the assertive certainty of “is”, which is not used); T then rejects “perhaps” for reasons unknown and ignores the modal “may” which again suggests a very remote possibility. Thus T finds a change (!) in K’s line of argument when the latter says that the locative 8.24.27 can and does mean ‘among, at, around, in, upon the 7 rivers’; T does not realize that this was already clearly implied in those adverbs and modal verbs, as K understands the English grammar.”

Such adverbs and modal verbs are useful when one wants to eat one’s cake and have it too. Your earlier letter pointed out that this is “the most significant instance”, “better than any other citation”, and the “only” one — in short, you clearly distinguished this particular citation as a distinct one from all others — and now you suddenly do an about turn, and insist that this is *no different* from other s-s citations, which, in their turn, are *no different* from other phrases meaning “seven rivers”. This *is* a diametrically opposite line [and *this* is where “T finds a change (!) in K’s line of argument”, not in “K.’s” grammatical statement “that the locative 8.24 can and does mean ‘among, at, around, in, upon the 7 rivers’”: another diversion from the relevant issue] and you are now pursuing it single-mindedly — citing adverbs and modal verbs as evidence that this is what you meant from the beginning! And the *only* reason there can be for this militant about turn is that your original line is in consonance with what I am saying: far from having had any new evidence placed before you which could have led to a change of opinion, you have in fact been presented with numerous authorities who have said the same thing that you had originally said (authorities whose testimony you were largely unaware of when you first said it)!

All this is distressingly like Witzel’s about-turn on hymn VI.45 and the Ganga reference in this hymn. It makes all discussion seem futile.

(c). You write: “Now “mansion”. Originally *mansion* (<MFr *mansion* < L *mansio* ) meant any abode, even in open air, but from c1500 onward it came to mean “lord’s manor, large and stately residence” (OED 1978). In his Victorian poetic expressions (free and often inaccurate), Griffith has used “mansions” but this in the *RV* is not the “large, stately residence” of the early Tudors (=2 and 3 floors): there were no such buildings in Harappan and Rigvedic times. As for K’s brackets with ‘human’, they mean “and/or any other kind”. ”

Another diversion. To recapitulate, you had written: “The hymns evince no knowledge of large buildings ... and so many other elements of the Indus-Saraswati (or Harappan) Civilisation in contrast to post-rigvedic texts that do so”; and I had pointed out that “the Rigveda *does* refer to mansions with a hundred doors or pillars”. Neither you nor I had referred to the residences of the Tudors, which, in any case, were clearly neither elements of the Indus-Saraswati Civilisation nor things referred to in post-rigvedic texts. And the point under discussion was “large buildings”, not Tudor mansions or the etymology or history of the word “mansion”.

(d). You write: “Nor did K say or imply that the 5 tribes are called *arya/anarya* in the *RV*. His statement “are said [to be]...” means and refers to places in the Vedic Tradition. T criticizes K for emotionalism because of K’s respect for the VT. But where would T’s *anukramanis* and the *RV* be without this oral VT which remains unrivalled? Nowhere. ”

Well, here are your exact words: “The 5 Aryan are said to be Anu, Druhyu, Puru, Turvaśa and Yadu. If they are Aryan, they are Rigvedic. Yes, in some hymns the Anus or whoever were hostile or behaved in *anarya* ways. But then so did the Purus according to Vasistha in Bk 7.”

Nowhere do you say or imply, either in the words I have quoted above or in the rest of that paragraph, that your above comments are not based on the Rigveda but on other “places in the Vedic tradition”. About the word *anarya*, in fact, it seems you are saying that in some *hymns* (of the Rigveda, surely) the Anus are supposed to have “behaved in *anarya* ways”. The next sentence is even more specific: it may be the different (or faulty) brand of English that I have learnt, but it seems to me that since the earlier sentence has two verbs, “were [hostile]” and “behaved [in *unarya* ways]”, and the second sentence is “But then so *did* the Purus [behave in *unarya* ways] according to Vasistha in Bk 7” and not “But then so *were* the Purus [hostile] according to Vasistha in Bk 7”, you are talking about what Vasistha says in the *RV* and not about other “places in the Vedic tradition”.

In any case, I would be very interested in knowing exactly which Vedic, Puranic or any other Sanskrit text or commentary or other tradition, actually tells us that the “five Aryan” (tribes or whatever) are the Anu, Druhyu, Puru, Turvaśa and Yadu; or that in some hymns of the *RV* the Anus behaved in *unarya* ways; or that the Purus behaved in *unarya* ways (whether according to Vasistha or otherwise) in Bk 7 of the *RV*.

(e). I will not repeat your point e in full here because it is very long, and has been quoted by me in full above. I went through your above point several times to see what exactly you were trying to say. Until your last sentence struck me: “Please give references of Westerners who use S-s as a name for Punjab in their publications, as distinct from saying that 8.24.27 is the name for the Punjab-area. Useful.” I simply cannot believe this: so now you concede [since this seems to be your answer to my question: “Can you, against the categorical assertions and translations cited by me, cite equally categorical assertions to the contrary from any of the above, or any others?”] that practically all scholars say “that 8.24.27 is the name for the Punjab-area” (in effect, “that S-s is the name for the Punjab-area”, since it is the S-s phrase, and not any other word or phrase, in that verse, that refers to the Punjab-area), and you draw a distinction between this and the “use” of “S-s as a name for Punjab in their publications”. Does it matter what word they use in their publications, when they concede that it is “the name for the Punjab-area”?

Further, on this point, you write: “Now, here, K in fact makes an error because he took T’s word that Hopkins used S-s as a name; K had not yet seen the Hopkins papers. But not even Hopkins uses S-s as a name for Punjab in his publications; Hopkins merely identifies 8.24.27 with Iranian *Haptahendū*.” — now I wonder if you have really read my earlier letters. As soon as I saw what I thought was an inadvertent misunderstanding on your part in this matter, I wrote to you “Of *course*, Saptasindhu, used exactly with this spelling, is a neologism — even Hopkins has *not* used it ... Hopkins was only stating the consensus on this issue [read also Griffith’s translation, where in the footnotes, he clarifies that this phrase in this verse refers to “the Land of the Seven Rivers”] when he stated (in his article “Pragathikani”, JAOS, 1896, p. 87), that while all other references to “seven rivers” mean “seven streams”, VIII.24.27 alone refers to the name of a country, and that this country is the same as the one referred to as Haptahendū in the Avesta.” — So, if K “makes an error here”, it is not because “he *took* T’s word”, but because he *did not read* T’s words.

As to the rest of this point, I have already answered everything in full in my earlier letters, and I do not want to continue quibbling and repeating myself again and again. If I did not mention this citation in my first two letters, it was because the distribution of the phrase is sufficient evidence in itself, because I did not want to introduce a “something-I-omitted-in-my-book” element into the discussion, and because I never suspected that the omission of a solid piece of evidence in my favour could be presumed to be used against me. And if the discussion has now become centred around this one citation, it is because you brought it into the discussion, because it *is* the only *direct* reference to the Punjab, and because you executed an about-turn on it. What I have to say about the other, indirect, references to the Punjab is still exactly the same as it was in my book [pp. 113-114: “The Punjab is known in the Rigveda as ‘Saptasindhu’. There are other phrases in the Rigveda which mean ‘seven rivers’; but these do not constitute references to the Punjab ... If Afghanistan is directly or indirectly referred to only in the Late Mandalas, The Punjab is referred to only in the Middle and Late Mandalas”] and in my earlier letters, so your comment, “all previous citations from middle and late Bks are repudiated and T’s entire argument (re rivers) stands only upon 8.24.27” is completely misplaced: where, when and how have I “repudiated” it?

(f). You write: “The stanza “She hath spread us beyond all foes, beyond her sisters” is not a prayer. A prayer or wish is usually given with an imperative, optative, precative or subjunctive (do thou spread us; may you spread us, and the like). This is an assertive statement in past indicative showing that something has been done and is so. At least that is what K’s English and Vedic say. Then, Sarasvati is not just a river. When she is invoked with Ila or Bharati etc, she is obviously a goddess. So while she is a river she is also a mighty and benign goddess. Clearly it is the goddess (not the gross material river) that has done the spreading of the Aryans. Surely this is not incomprehensible? (Even the river could have done it by nourishing and invigorating the Aryans with abundant energy and numbers.)”

Whatever grammatical forms may usually be used in prayers, the stuti, in which all kinds of deeds and achievements are credited to the deity of the hymn or prayer, is a regular feature in Hindu, and no doubt all other religious, hymnology. Taking the verb “spread” which refers to the sun “spreading” out the days, interpreting the whole as “As the sun has stretched/ spread out days, so she (=Sara°), the Divine-Order One, [has extended/spread] us (=Aryans) beyond/over (=ati) all foes and her other (=seven) sisters’ ”, literally taking this as a reference to the Vedic Aryans physically “spreading” over the region of the seven rivers, and finally concluding “that there are at least 7 rivers and the Aryans live among them all (and



beyond) ” is quite a chain of presumptions. This (apart from the point about “Aryans” discussed elsewhere) clashes sharply with the last line of the hymn “let us not go from thee to distant countries”, which shows that the poet and his clan/tribe are firmly located on the banks of the physical river Sarasvati with no particular desire to “spread” or “live” anywhere else; as well as with the whole mass of geographical and historical references in the Rigveda. The verse obviously only wishfully proclaims the supremacy of the Purus over all their enemies living on the banks of the other rivers.

In conclusion, you write: “If we can’t agree on English we are not likely to agree on Vedic – which I gather now you don’t know ... So my good friend, I prefer the original text, not translations and secondary sources (especially these under the AIT).” I am so inured to Witzel falling back on the “T. does not know ... ” “T. has not read ... ” tactic whenever logic fails him, that this kind of insinuation does not faze me at all. If, to give just one example, thousands of scholars knowing Vedic can go on for over two centuries interpreting a word as “‘pressing stone’ – until in 2001 K. Thomson (Edinburgh Univ) demonstrated that it means ‘singer’”, and if the translations of umpteen Vedic-knowing scholars can be dismissed so summarily, I wouldn’t be too sure that “T. does not know Vedic” is any argument at all — it is a poor, and last-ditch, substitute for logical argument and objective criticism.

It may sound hypocritical, after all that I have written above, to reiterate that I do have great respect for you and your writings, but it is true nevertheless. But this respect cannot induce me to ignore, or accept without question, illogical statements and arguments. It is unfortunate when the search for truth gets enmeshed in egos, emotions and pointless quibbling.

As you have much work to catch up with, including your paper on Gk. Philosophy, and your secretary is also busy, and you have already told me that our discussion will cease now, I am sure I will not be receiving any further continuation of this discussion from your side.

Let me therefore end with my sincerest best wishes in all your writings. But we will certainly keep in touch.

Yours sincerely

Shrikant G. Talageri

**Also on 25 April NK wrote to ST**

Dear Shri Talageri,

I trasmitt Kak's comment. You don't need to accept it. Kak is always laconic but I suspect this time he read only our last exchanges. Best wishes.

N. Kazanas

**(S.Kak’s message)**

Dear Nicholas,

I'm doing well. Our teaching for the semester is coming to an end. I

don't have any specific travel plans for the summer; in most likelihood, I

will remain here.

I forwarded you by another e-mail an invitation from Christine Pellech to write for "Migration and Diffusion." The Journal seems to have a high hit count on Google, which is a good thing.

I'm sorry about T's misunderstanding of your notes. I agree with your advice to him to refer to the original texts and not consider secondary or tertiary sources as authoritative.