



Open Letter to Prof. M. Witzel.

Dear Michael,

Thank you for drawing attention to my *Indoaryan Origins and Other Vedic Issues* published by Aditya Prakashan, N. Delhi (Dec 2009).

It has been said that greed and dishonesty are the scourges of modern times (i.e. Kaliyuga). I do not think you suffer from the first. But you certainly suffer from the second (= lying and lampooning). You display a most unsubtle capability to present distorted evidence and mislead the brave few who follow you.

Why do you state with such nonchalant disregard for the facts that I was “admitted, regrettably, without peer review in the JIES (vol 30-31, 2002-3)”? Your statement merely corroborates your bigotry.

I pointed out in the course of that 2002-3 debate in my ‘Final Reply’ that the referees accepted my paper with two comments: –

a) “[T]he author gives different arguments against recent works by Witzel (and some other scholars) who oppose the idea of an autochthonous character... Some of these critical thoughts are quite interesting.”

b) “Maybe the age of the first arrival of Indo-Europeans... in India should be pushed further back.”

Please, consult Mallory for independent testimony on this – unless you think he too is up to his ears in “Hindutva”.

For further details, see JIES, vol 31, 1-2, 2003, p 193. It is §6 of my reply to you(!) and the other critics in that debate. But, in usual fashion, having said your sloppy, scurrilous piece, you did not bother to examine my reply to it.

But your dishonesty goes beyond simple social behaviour and corrodes your scholarship. You prefer to read Geldner’s translation (which is misleading in many respects) rather than the original, which does present difficulties. Thus you go on blabbering about ‘horses and chariots’ instead of meeting and explaining other, more obvious points. I note you have now stopped referring to Genetics and gene flow, as you did some years back, since this area no longer holds hopes for the mainstream view and shows that the movement is Out of India.

What’s so remarkable about horses and chariots?

You know perfectly well that the presence of horses in India goes back to 17000 BP.

You also know that remains of horse in a human environment in N-W India (from the Seven-river land to the Gangetic plain) are very scarce at all periods from c4500 BCE to the early centuries CE. Will you announce to the world that after 1500 or 1200 BCE the quantity of equine remains increases so significantly that it indicates a massive entry of horses as well as the IndoEuropeans? If you can’t do this (and archaeologists certainly won’t allow it), then stop dragging in horses bedazzling the ignorant.

If the horse remains at, say, 700 BCE are not significantly more than, say, 2300, then this much trumpeted argument is merely a red herring.

Chariots are even more damning. No traces of your cherished chariot from Egypt (c 1300) or Andronovo (c 1800 BCE) are found after 1500/1200 down to, say, 700. The only indications come with rock-drawings in the period from 4000 to 1700 BCE where carts are drawn by antelopes (!) bulls and horses (Lorblanchet¹ 1992/2001: 319-335) and, of course, from Mauryan depictions! Your strident cry about chariots is another red herring. But there is more.

Is it possible you don't know that the Rigvedic *ratha* 'vehicle' is said to be not only *pr̥thu* 'broad' (1.123.1) and *br̥hat* 'tall, big' (6.61.13), but also *variṣṭha...vandhura* 'widest... box/seating space' (6.47.9), *trivandhura* 'three seated' (1.41.2; 7.71.4; etc) and *aṣṭavandhura* 'eight seated' (10.53.7)! The only real-life, not mythological, *ratha* in a race we know is mentioned in 10.102 and this is pulled by oxen. Nowhere in the 1000 hymns of the *R̥gveda* is there one single mention of a real-life battle with horse-drawn *rathas*. Nor is there mention of a slim, light, two- or one-seated vehicle. (Even the Aśvins' car, *anas* in 10.85.10,12, takes at least three!)

The scholars of the 19th century translated the Rigvedic *ratha* (or *anas*) as 'chariot' thinking of Greece and Rome, and the notion stuck. Surely it is obvious that this *aṣṭavandhura* mini-bus has nothing to do with your imaginary chariots?

So please, get off your high horse and/or battle-chariot!

You are obviously unaware that the climate re the AIT is changing not only in India but also in the ivory towers of the West. In 2009 the Institute for the Study of Man (Washington DC) brought out in the Journal of Indo-European Studies Monograph Series, No 55, a book by Prof Angela Marcantonio (ed) *The Indo-European Language Family: Questions about its Status*. All papers were thoroughly examined by referees. The longest one (60 pages) is by N. Kazanas, 'Indo-European Linguistics and Indo-Aryan Indigenism'. (Yes, I know, this event too is to be deeply regretted by you and other bigots.)

And now my *priyatamaśatru*, I too regret that I won't bother to read anything you or your braves write about this issue in the future – until you offer a rational (not science-fiction) explanation why the *RV* knows nothing of bricks, cotton, iconic representations, ruins and other common Harappan features, but the Sarasvatī is a mighty river, while in later, post-Rigvedic texts these features are frequently present and the Sarasvatī is a dried-up river.

Best wishes,
N. Kazanas,
Director

1. In the original letter sent to Prof M. Witzel the word 'Lorblanchet' was wrongly typed as 'Lordblanchet'.