

Meeting 5: The Aryan fusion

Examining the non-IE substratum in Vedic

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WhatsApp group

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/IXCQEkhfrcwHI7CNY8Fgat>

Meeting agenda

- (Re)introduction to discussion group
- Today's meeting topic
- Free discussion

Why a Vedá discussion group?

- What is Vedic literature?
 - Sáṁhitā-s
 - Bráhmaṇa-s
 - Others?

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- Vedá-s vs. Vedánta & Upaniṣád-s
 - Later monism (ádvāita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitá)
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature

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 - Later monism (ádväita) vs. earlier dualism (dvāitá)
- Modern (religious, scholarly) fixation upon later literature
- What is there to discuss?
 - History & linguistics
 - Metaphysics of religion
 - Exegesis (e.g. countering western narratives)
 - Moral principles
 - Nuances of Śrāutá ritual

Our plans

- Weekly meetings
- Different topic/aspect/angle discussed in depth every meeting
- Format:
 - Præsentations
 - Free-form discussions
- Eventually something more?

Let's introduce ourselves!

- Name
- School (if student)
- How you found this group
- Background/interest in Hinduism & Vedic literature

Some questions to consider

- What types of loanwords are present in the Vedic period?
 - from which language families (ostensibly)?
- How extensive is loanword adoption in Vedic?
- Why and how were these loanwords adopted from (ostensible) enemies of the Aryans? Were they enemies?
- What sort of substrata are present besides loanwords? e.g. religious, cultural?
- How much evidence is there that these words and religious ideals are loanwords (as opposed to innovations)?
- Metaphysically, is the substratum contradictory to the Vedic religion?

What is a substratum?

- Usually result of power imbalance
 - e.g. conquest
- Different types:
 - Religious–ideological
 - Social structures
 - Linguistic
- Substrate vs. superstrate: e.g. Mitanni

Religious substratum

- Aryan superstrate influence on Dravidian (obvious)
 - on others?
- Dravidian influence (possibly = IVC influence)?
 - Unlikely: conflict between traditions
 - e.g. *śiśná-deva*
- Other candidates?
 - BMAC
 - (Para-)Munda

Religious substratum

■ Munda?

- Dæmons, e.g. *kimīdín*, *káran̄ja*
- *kīstá*

■ BMAC?

- Sóma
 - Archæological “evidence”
- Índra: total speculation (like a lot of this)

General linguistic substratum

- Very early: Central Asian
 - Animals (camel, lion), technologies (bricks, channel, lute)
- BMAC
 - Methodology: commonality between Iranian and Aryan
- Dravidian
 - Witzel (1999): not as much as originally thought
 - Agricultural (threshing floor, etc.)
 - Placenames
- Munda or Para-Munda
 - kV prefix
- “Language X”
 - Gemination

Vedic identity

- What does the existence of a substratum mean for the Vedic religion?
- Indo-European vs. uniquely Indic identity
- Absence of key aspects of Vedic religion in other religions
 - e.g. Índra, sóma
- Composition of the Vedá-s grounded in subcontinental geography

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