

Is There Vedic Evidence for the Indo-Aryan Immigration to India?

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Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Earlier Criticisms of Michael Witzel's translation of BSS 18.44-45
3. Translation of Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44 by other Scholars
4. Pururava Uruvasi legend in Vedic texts
5. Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.45 and Kurukshetra
6. Satapatha Brahmana 11.5.1 on the Pururava-Urvashi legend
7. Vadhula Anvakhya version of the Narrative
8. Hertha Krick's Study on Agnyadheya rite
9. The location of 'Aratta' in Baudhayana Kalpasutra
10. Conclusions

1. Introduction:

The complete lack of mention of an Aryan immigration into India in the vast Vedic literature has been considered a moot point by historians for several decades. Recently however, some scholars have claimed that a Vedic text finally provides evidence for the migration of Indo-Aryan speakers from Afghanistan into India.

In a lecture delivered on 11 October 1999 at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), historian Romila Thapar said¹:

“...and later on, the Srauta Sutra of Baudhayana refers to the Parasus and the arattas who stayed behind and others who moved eastwards to the middle Ganges valley and the places equivalent such as the Kasi, the Videhas and the Kuru Pancalas, and so on. In fact, when one looks for them, there are evidence for migration.”

Another historian of ancient India, Ram Sharan Sharma considers this passage as an important piece of evidence in favor of the Aryan Migration Theory (AMT). He writes² -

“More importantly, Witzel produces a passage from the Baudhayana Srautasutra which contains ‘the most explicit statement of immigration into the Subcontinent’. This passage contains a dialogue between Pururava and Urvashi which refers to horses, chariot parts, 100 houses and 100 jars of ghee.

Towards the end, it speaks of the birth of their sons Ayu and Amavasu, who were asked by their parents, to go out. ‘Ayu went eastward. His people are the Kuru-Pancalas and the Kasi-Videhas. This is the Ayava kin group. Amavasu stayed in the west. His people are the Gandharas, the Parsavas and the Arattas. This is the Amavasava kin group.’”

Sharma is so confident of the ‘evidence’ of the AMT produced by Witzel that he even goes to the extent of co-relating these two groups with various pottery types attested in the archaeological record. He says³ -

¹ Romila Thapar's lecture titled “*The Aryan Question Revisited*” is available on-line at <http://members.tripod.com/ascjnu/aryan.html>

² Pages 87-89 in Sharma, Ram Sharan. *Advent of the Aryans in India*. Manohar: New Delhi (1999)

³ *ibid.*, page 89

“Perhaps members of the Amasava kin group used grey pottery and those of the Ayava kin group used Painted Grey Ware and Northern Black Polished Ware.

Possibly the former spoke the r- only dialect of the Indo-Aryan language of the north, and the latter spoke its r- and –l dialect in the north eastern part of north India.”

In his chapter on the conclusions of his book, Sharma finally adds⁴:

“Some later Vedic texts clearly speak of a migration from the west.”

It is quite apparent that all these claims of alleged Vedic literary evidence for an Indo-Aryan immigration into the Indian subcontinent are informed by the following statements made by Harvard philologist Michael Witzel⁵ –

“Taking a look at the data relating to the immigration of the Indo-Aryans into South Asia, one is stuck by the number of vague reminiscences of foreign localities and tribes in the Rgveda, in spite repeated assertions to the contrary in the secondary literature. Then, there is the following direct statement contained in (the admittedly much later) BSS (=Baudhayana Shrauta Sutra) 18.44:397.9 sqq which has once again been overlooked, not having been translated yet: “Ayu went eastwards. His (people) are the Kuru Panchala and the Kasi-Videha. This is the Ayava (migration). (His other people) stayed at home. His people are the Gandhari, Parsu and Aratta. This is the Amavasava (group)” (Witzel 1989a: 235).”

That the above passage of the Baudhayana Srautasutra is the only ‘direct’ evidence for an Indo-Aryan immigration into India is clarified by Witzel in the same article later⁶ –

“Indirect references to the immigration of Indo-Aryan speakers include reminiscences of Iran....”

The reference (Witzel 1989a: 235) at the end of the above citation pertains to an earlier article⁷ by Witzel, where he has elaborated it further –

“In the case of ancient N. India, we do not know anything about the immigration of various tribes and clans, except for a few elusive remarks in the RV (= Rigveda), SB (= Shatapatha Brahmana) or BSS (= Baudhayana Shrauta Sutra). This text retains at 18.44 :397.9 sqq. the most pregnant memory, perhaps, of an immigration of the Indo-Aryans into Northern India and of their split into two groups: pran Ayuh pravavraja. Tasyaite Kuru-Pancalah Kasi-Videha ity. Etad Ayavam pravrajam. Pratyam amavasus. Tasyaite Gandharvarayas Parsavo ‘ratta ity. Etad Amavasavam. “Ayu went eastwards. His (people) are the Kuru-Pancala and the Kasi Videha. This is the Ayava migration. (His other people) stayed at home in the West. His people are the Gandhari, Parsu and Aratta. This is the Amavasava (group)”.

Witzel further comments (*ibid*):

⁴ *ibid.*, page 99

⁵ pages 320-321 of Witzel, Michael. ‘Rgvedic History: Poets, Chieftains and Politics’. in *The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia* ed. by Erdosy, George Walter de Gruyter, Berlin: 1995

⁶ *Ibid*, page 321

⁷ Witzel, Michael. ‘Tracing the Vedic Dialects’. In *Dialectes dans les literatures indo-aryennes; Publications de l’Institute de Civilization Indienne, Serie in-8, Fascicule 55*, ed. by C. Caillat, Diffusion de Boccard: Paris (1989)

“...the text makes a differentiation between the peoples of the Panjab and the territories West of it on one hand, and the “properly Vedic” tribes of Madhyadesa and the adjacent country East of it.”

Witzel then brings in a discussion on Eastern Vratyas and I leave it to the reader to refer the original article by Witzel for further details.

Finally, this mistranslation is found in an even older publication of Witzel⁸ as well, where he says –

“The other passage tells the origin of two groups of Aryans, the Amavasu “who stayed at home” and who include the Gandhari, the Parsu and Aratta, and that of the Ayava “who moved eastwards”: the Kuru-Pancalas and the Kasi-Videhas.”

This article intends to show how this Sutra passage actually says the reverse of what Witzel intends to prove, because Witzel’s translation is flawed.

2. Earlier Criticisms of Witzel’s Translation of Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44:

In a review of Erdosy’s volume where Witzel’s article appeared, Koenraad Elst⁹ took issue with Witzel on the precise translation of the Sanskrit passage. He stated -

“This passage consists of two halves in parallel, and it is unlikely that in such a construction, the subject of the second half would remain unexpressed, and that terms containing contrastive information (like “migration” as opposed to the alleged non-migration of the other group) would remain unexpressed, all left for future scholars to fill in. It is more likely that a non-contrastive term representing a subject indicated in both statements, is left unexpressed in the second: that exactly is the case with the verb pravavrâja “he went”, meaning “Ayu went” and “Amavasu went”. Amavasu is the subject of the second statement, but Witzel spirits the subject away, leaving the statement subject-less, and turns it into a verb, “amâ vasu”, “stayed at home”. In fact, the meaning of the sentence is really quite straightforward, and doesn't require supposing a lot of unexpressed subjects: “Ayu went east, his is the Yamuna-Ganga region”, while “Amavasu went west, his is Afghanistan, Parshu and West Panjab”. Though the then location of “Parshu” (Persia?) is hard to decide, it is definitely a western country, along with the two others named, western from the viewpoint of a people settled near the Saraswati river in what is now Haryana. Far from attesting an eastward movement into India, this text actually speaks of a westward movement towards Central Asia, coupled with a symmetrical eastward movement from India's demographic centre around the Saraswati basin towards the Ganga basin.”

Elst further commented (*ibid*):

“The fact that a world-class specialist has to content himself with a late text like the BSS, and that he has to twist its meaning this much in order to get an invasionist story out of it, suggests that harvesting invasionist information in the oldest literature is very difficult indeed. Witzel claims (op.cit., p.320) that: “Taking a look at the data relating to the immigration of Indo-Aryans into South Asia, one is struck by a number of vague reminiscences of foreign localities and tribes in the Rgveda, in spite [of] repeated

⁸ Page 202 in Witzel, Michael; On the Localisation of Vedic Texts and Schools; pp. 173-213 in “India and the Ancient World” ed. by Gilbert Pollet; Departement Orientalistiek; Keuven; 1987

⁹ pages 164-165 of K. Elst, 1999. *Update the Aryan Invasion Debate*. Aditya Prakashan: New Delhi

assertions to the contrary in the secondary literature." But after this promising start, he fails to quote even a single one of those "vague reminiscences".

If Elst's critique is correct, the solitary direct literary evidence cited by Witzel for the AMT gets annulled¹⁰.

Dr. S. Kalyanaraman, referred the matter to Dr. George Cardona- an international authority in Sanskrit grammar, and author of numerous definitive publications on Panini's grammar. Cardona clearly rejected Witzel's translation, and upheld the objections of Elst on the basis of rules of Sanskrit grammar¹¹. He stated¹²:

"The passage (from Baudha_yana S'rautasu_tra), part of a version of the Puruuravas and Urva'sii legend concerns two children that Urva'sii bore and which were to attain their full life span, in contrast with the previous ones she had put away. On p. 397, line 8, the text says: saayu.m caamaavasu.m ca janayaa.m cakaara 'she bore Saayu and Amaavasu.' Clearly, the following text concerns these two sons, and not one of them along with some vague people. Grammatical points also speak against Witzel's interpretation. First, if amaavasu is taken as amaa 'at home' followed by a form of vas, this causes problems: the imperfect third plural of vas (present vasati vasata.h vasanti etc.) would be avasan; the third plural aorist would be avatsu.h. I have not had the chance to check Witzel's article again directly, so I cannot say what he says about a purported verb form (a)vasu.h. It is possible, however, that Elst has misunderstood Witzel and that the latter did not mean vasu as a verb form per se.

Instead, he may have taken amaa-vasu.h as the nominative singular of a compound amaa-vasu- meaning literally 'stay-at-home', with -vas-u- being a derivate in -u- from -vas. In this case, there is still what Elst points out: an abrupt elliptic syntax that is a mismatch with the earlier mention of Amaavasu along with Aayu. Further, tasya can only be genitive singular and, in accordance with usual Vedic (and later) syntax, should have as antecedent the closest earlier nominal: if we take the text as referring to Amaavasu, all is in order: tasya (sc. Amaavaso.h). Finally, the taddhitaanta derivatives aayava and aamaavasava then are correctly parallels to the terms aayu and amaavasu. In sum, everything fits grammatically and thematically if we straightforwardly view the text as concerning the wanderings of two sons of Urva'sii and the people associated with them. There is certainly no good way of having this refer to a people that remained in the west."

The noted archaeologist B. B. Lal¹³ has also stated out that Witzel's translation is untenable and is a willful distortion of Vedic texts to prove the non-proven Aryan migration theory (AMT). Lal's criticism is along the same lines as that of Elst.

¹⁰ Elst's revelation generated a very bitter controversy involving accusations of a personal nature, and we need not detail these here because the controversy is documented in my online article '*The Aryan Migration Theory, Fabricating Literary Evidence*' (2001), available at <http://vishalagarwal.voiceofdharm.com/articles/indhistory/amt.htm>

¹¹ Message no. 3 (dated April 11, 2000) in the public archives of the Sarasvati Discussion list. The website of the discussion list was <http://sarasvati.listbot.com/>. The list is now defunct and messages are no longer available.

¹² In the original message, the word aayu was spelt incorrectly advertently as 'saayu'. This error was pointed out by Dr. Cardona himself, and has therefore been incorporated in the citation in the present article.

¹³ Lal, B. B. 1998. *India 1947-1997, New Light on the Indus Civilization*. Aryan Books International: New Delhi

3. Translations of BSS 18:44 by other Scholars:

Let us consider the few publications where the relevant Baudhayana Srautasutra (BSS) passage has actually been studied, or has been translated -

Willem Caland's Dutch translation: It is he who first published the Baudhayana Srautasutra from manuscripts.¹⁴ In an obscure study¹⁵ of the Urvashi legend in Dutch, he focuses on the version found in Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44-45 and translates the relevant sentences of text as (p. 58)-

“Naar het Oosten ging Ayus; van hem komen de Kuru's, Pancala's, Kasi's en Videha's. Dit zijn de volken, die ten gevolge van het voortgaan van Ayus ontstonden. Naar het Westen ging Amavasu; van hem komen de Gandhari's, de Sparsu's en de Aratta. Dit zijn de volken, die ten gevolge van Amavasu's voortgaan ontstonden.”

Translated into English¹⁶, this reads –

“To the East went Ayus; from him descend the Kurus, Pancalas, Kasis and Videhas. These are the peoples which originated as a consequence of Ayus's going forth. To the West went Amavasu; from him descend the Gandharis, the Sparsus and the Arattas. These are the peoples which originated as a consequence of Amavasu's going forth.”

The text, as reconstituted by Caland (and also accepted by Kashikar – see below) reads ‘Sparsus’, which apparently stands for the peoples who are known as ‘Parshus’ elsewhere in the Vedic literature, and are often identified as the ancestors of Persians (or even of Pashtuns). Clearly, Caland interpreted the passage to mean that from a central region, the Arattas, Gandharis and Parsus migrated west, while the Kasi-Videhas and Kuru-Pancalas migrated east. Combined with the testimony of the Satapatha Brahmana (see below), the implication of this version in the Baudhayana Srautasutra, narrated in the context of the Agnyadheya rite is that that the two outward migrations took place from the central region watered by the Sarasvati.¹⁷

C. G. Kashikar's English translation: Very recently, Kashikar has published the critical text of the Baudhayana Srautasutra with an English translation in four volumes¹⁸. The

_____. 2005. *The Homeland of Aryans, The Evidence of Rigvedic Flora and Fauna & Archaeology*. Aryan Books International: New Delhi; pp. 85-88

¹⁴ In three volumes, from 1903-13, by Bibliotheca Indica (Calcutta)

¹⁵ Caland, Willem. 1903. “Eene Nieuwe Versie van de Urvashi-Mythe”. In *Album-Kern, Opstellen Geschreven Ter Eere van Dr. H. Kern*. E. J. Brill: Leiden, pp. 57-60

¹⁶ The passage was translated from Dutch to English by Koenraad Elst upon my request.

¹⁷ It is a long established scholarly tradition in Indology to collect scattered important articles of venerable Indologists and publish them in accessible volumes for the convenience of scholars who wish to refer to them in one place. Such volumes are called ‘Kleine Schriften’. At the beginning of each volume is appended a list of all the publications of that Indologist, including those which are not included in that volume. Naturally, the Kleine Schriften volume of Caland lists this Dutch paper as well. The reader would be surprised to know that Caland's Kleine Schriften have been collected as by none other than Michael Witzel [1990. *Kleine Schriften*, Willem Caland. Stuttgart: F. Steiner]. Therefore it is all the more surprising that in this entire controversy, Witzel does not allude to Caland's translation of the passage at all!

¹⁸ Kashikar, Chintamani Ganesh. 2003. *Baudhayana Srautasutra* (Ed., with an English translation). 3 vols. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass/IGNCA

blurb on jacket cover says “The text is revised here in the light of the variant readings recorded by W. Caland in his first edition (Calcutta, 1906) and is presented in a readable form.”

In volume III of his translation, on p. 1235, Kashikar translates the relevant sentences of the text as follows-

“Ayu moved towards the east. Kuru-Pancala and Kasi-Videha were his regions. This is the realm of Ayu. Amavasus proceeded towards the west. The Gandharis, Sparsus and Arattas were his regions. This is the realm of Amavasus.”

This is again a straightforward translation of the passage in accordance with the rules of Sanskrit grammar.

D. S. Triveda’s English translation: In an article¹⁹ dealing specifically with the homeland of Aryans, he titles the concluding section as “Aryans went abroad from India”. He commences this section with the following words (p. 68)²⁰ –

“The Kalpasutra asserts that Pururavas had two sons by Urvashi – Ayus and Amavasus. Ayu went eastwards and founded Kuru – Pancala and Kasi – Videha nations, while Amavasus went westwards and founded Gandhara, Sparsava and Aratta.”

Therefore, Triveda also takes the passage to mean that Amavasus migrated westwards, rather than staying where he was.²¹

Toshifumi Goto’s German Translation:

In his recent study²² of the parallel passages dealing with the Agnyadhya rite, Goto translates the Sutra passage in the following words (p. 101 sqq.) –

“Nach Osten wanderte Ayu [von dort] fort. Ihm gehdrie genannt werden: "kurus und pancalas, kazis und videhas." {87} Sie sind die von Ayu stammende Fortfuehrung. {88} Nach Westen gewandt [wanderte] amavasus [fort]. Ihm gehoeren diese: "gandharis, parzus, {88} arattas". Sie sind die von amavasus stammende [Fortfuehrung]. {90} {87}iti kann hier kaum die die Aufzaehlung abschliessende Partikel (Faelle bei OERTEL Synt. of cases, 1926, 11) sein. In den beiden Komposita koennte der Type ajava'h' [die Gattung von] Ziegen und Schafen' vorliegen: pluralisches Dvandva fuer die Klassifikation, vgl. GOTO Compositiones Indigermanicae, Gs. Schindler (1999) 134 n. 26. {88} Gemeint ist hier wohl die Erbschaft seiner Kolonisation ("Fortwanderung"); mit bekannter Attraktion des Subj.-Pronomens in Genus und Numerus an das Pr {89} Mit WITZEL, Fs. Eggermont (1987) 202 n. 99, Persica 9 (1980) 120 n.126 als gandharayas parsavo statt -ya sparsavo aufgefasst, wofuer dann allerdings im rezenten

¹⁹ Triveda, D. S. 1938-39. “The Original Home of the Aryans”. In *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, vol. XX, pp. 49-68

²⁰ In a footnote, the author gives the source as ‘Baudhayana Srautasutra XVIII. 35-51’. The address is wrong, but it is clear that Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44 is meant.

²¹ It may be noted however, that Triveda believes that the Aryans originated on the banks of river Devika, a tributary of Ravi in Panjab, and they spread towards east and west from there. A detailed discussion of his views, with which I do not subscribe, is beyond the scope of the present note.

²² Toshifumi Goto. ‘Pururavas und Urvashi’ aus dem neuentdecktem Vadhula-Anvakhyana (Ed. Y. Ikari). pp. 79-110 in Tichy, Eva and Hintze, Almut (eds.). *Anusantatyai*; J. H. Roll: Germany (2000)

BaudhSrSu die Schreibung gandharayah parsavo zu erwarten wals -SP- ausgesprochen wurde (wie z.B. in der MS, vgl. AiG I 342) und noch kein H (fÖr das erste s) eingefuehrt wurde. -yaspa- entging einer (interpretatorischen) {90} Dahinter steckt wohl die Vorstellung von Ayu' als normales Adjektiv 'lebendig, beweglich' und entsprechend, wie KRICK 214 interpretiert, von amavasu-: "nach Westen [zog] A. (bzw.: er blieb im Westen in der Heimat, wie sein Name 'einer, der Gueter daheim hat' sagt."."

Loosely translated²³ into English, this reads –

“From there, Ayu wandered Eastwards. To him belong (the groups called) ‘Kurus and Panchalas, Kashis and Videhas’ (note 87). They are the branches/leading away (note 88) originating from Ayu. From there, Amavasu turned westwards (wandered forth). To him belong (the groups called) ‘Gandharis, Parsus (note 89) Arattas’. They are the branches/leading away originating from Amavasu. (note 90).”
 {90}: It appears that the notion of ‘Ayu’ as an normal adjectival sense ‘living’, ‘agile’ underlies this name. Correspondingly, Krick 214 interprets Amavasu as – “Westwards [travelled] A. (or: he stayed back in the west in his home, because his name says –‘one who has his goods at home’”).

We will discuss the views of Hertha Krick in greater detail later. What is important here is that Goto also interprets the passage to mean that both Ayu and Amavasu traveled in opposite directions from a central region. In summary, we see that four scholars have translated the disputed passage in the same manner as Elst, and differently from Witzel.

4. Pururava-Uruvasi Legend in Vedic Texts:

The Pururava-Uruvasi legend is found in numerous Vedic and non-Vedic texts. In the former, the couple and their son Ayu are related to the Agnyadheya rite. Some passages in Vedic texts that allude to this rite/tale are – Rigveda 10.95; Kathaka Samhita 26.7 etc.; Agnyadheya Brahmana (in the surviving portions of the Brahmana²⁴ of Katha Sakha) etc.; Maitrayani Samhita 1.2.7; 3.9.5; Vajasneyi (Madhyandina) Samhita 5.2; Satapatha Brahmana (Madhyandina) 11.5.1.1; Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.44-45; Vadhula Anvakhyana 1.1-2 etc.

Many of the above textual references, as well as those in Srutasutras (not listed above), do not throw much light on the historical aspects of the legend. Several passages cursorily mention Uruvasi as mother, Pururava as father, Ayu (equated to Agni) as their son and ghee as (Pururava’s) seed in a symbolic manner in connection with various rites.²⁵ Elsewhere, Uruvasi is enumerated as an Apsara and prayers are directed towards

²³ Notes 87-89 are irrelevant to this present discussion and are therefore left untranslated here.

²⁴ The Kathaka Brahmana exists only in short fragments, which have been collected together by the following two scholars –

Suryakanta. 1943. *Kathaka-sankalanam*. Lahore

Susan Rosenfield. 2004. *Katha Brahmana Fragments – A Critical Edition, translation and study*. PhD thesis, Harvard University

The *agnyadheya brahmanam* portion survives (and included in Suryakanta’s collection), but it does not shed any light on the question at hand.

²⁵ Taittiriya Samhita 1.3.7.1; 6.3.5.3; Kathaka Samhita 3.4; Kapisthala Samhita 2.11; 41.5; Kanva Samhita 5.2; Maitrayani Samhita 2.8.10

her for protection.²⁶ At least in one ritual context, Uruvasi is taken to represent all Devis.²⁷ Kathaka Samhita narrates the tale in brief.²⁸ In addition, some passages of Srutasutras mention them in the context of caturmasya rites.²⁹ The texts that are of most use for the present purpose are Rigveda 10.95, Satapatha Brahmana 11.5.1; Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.44-45 and Vadhula Anvakhyana 1.1-2.

Dozens of published secondary studies examine the legend from the data scattered in Vedic, Puranic and Kavya texts.³⁰ Most of these studies do take into account the information contained in Rigveda and Satapatha Brahmana. Very few however analyze the information in the Baudhayana Srutasutra. Even Volume I.1 of the Srutakosa³¹, which studies in detail the Agnyadehya rite with a special emphasis on the Baudhayana Srutasutra, ignores these sections. To my knowledge, only Willem Caland (1903), Hertha Krick (1982) and Yasuke Ikari³² have studied the relevant sections of the Baudhayana Srutasutra in detail.

5. Baudhayana Srutasutra 18:45 and Kuruksetra:

A very strong piece of evidence for deciding the correct translation of Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.44 is the passage that occurs right after it, i.e., Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.45. I am reproducing the translation of Kashikar (2003) with minor modifications that do not affect the issue at hand -

“The Apsaras Purvacitti was her Uruvasi’s sister. She thought, “My sister has been living among human beings for a long time. I shall meet her.”

(Even after) Coming to her, she could not meet her. She resided with the herd of sheep in her (Uruvasi’s) possession because such was the appearance of old ladies.^[1] She assumed the form of a wolf and caused a violent stir up (in the herd of sheep). A young ram, still sucking its mother was tied to a foot of her (Uruvasi’s) bed. She (Purvacitti) snatched it away. As it was stolen away, (Uruvasi) wept, “My ram is stolen”. Hearing it, the king jumped up.

He approached her (Purvacitti). He met (came close to) her. Transformed as a female ichneumon, she went to him. She deprived him of his inner garment. She (Purvacitti) generated lightning. She (Uruvasi) saw him naked in the light of the lightning. The king came and said, “I could not help; my ram had indeed disappeared.”(2) (Uruvasi said-) “I shall leave thee.”

²⁶ Kathaka Samhita 17.9; Kapisthala Samhita 26.8, Taittiriya Samhita 4.4.3.2; Maitrayani Samhita 2.8.10

²⁷ Taittiriya Samhita 1.2.5.2

²⁸ Kathaka Samhita 8.10 could be paraphrased as: “Uruvasi was the wife of Pururava. She left Pururava and returned to the devas. Pururava prayed to the devas for Uruvasi. Then, devas gave him a son named Ayu. At their bidding, Pururava fabricated aranis (fire stick and base used for the fire sacrifice) from the branches of a tree and rubbed them together. This generated fire, and Pururava’s desire was fulfilled. He who establishes sacrificial fires this attains progeny, animals etc.”. Thus, this passage also equates Ayu with Agni.

²⁹ E.g., Katyayana Srutasutra 5.1.24-25

³⁰ We need not dwell upon the versions available in Brhaddevata, Sarvanukramani, Puranas etc., here. A survey of a few of these is given in Prem Chand Shridhar. 2001. *Rgvedic Legends*. Delhi: Kalinga Publications. pp. 311-345

³¹ *Srutakosa*, Volume I, Part I, English Section. Poona: Vaidik Samsodhana Mandala. English section edited by R. N. Dandekar (1958)

³² Ikari, Yasuke. 1998. “A Survey of the New Manuscripts of the Vadhula School – MSS. of K₁ and K₄” In *ZINBUN*, no. 33: 1-30

(Pururava said-) "What is happened?" (Urvasi replied-) "I saw you naked." After her departure the king, with the harm already done, and suffering from grief, wandered. Brhaspati, son of Angiras said to him, "I shall cause you to perform the *Sada* sacrifice. I shall help thee in the wandering." Brhaspati made him perform the *Sada* sacrifice.

After having returned from the *Avabhrta* (the king) saw her (Urvasi). The sons approached her and said, "Do thou take us there where thou are going. We are strong. Thou hast put our father, one of you two, to grief."^[2]

She said, "O sons, I have given birth to you together. (Therefore) I stay here for three nights. Let not the word of the *brahmana* be untrue." The king wearing the inner garment lived with her for three nights. He shed semen virile unto her.

She said, "What is to be done?" "What to do?", the king responded. She said, "Do thou fetch a new pitcher?" She disposed it into it. In Kurukshetra, there were ponds called Bisavati. The northern-most among them created gold. She put it (the semen) into it (the pond). From it (the banks of the pond) came out the *Asvattha* tree surrounded by *Sami*. It was *Asvattha* because of the virile semen, it was *Sami* by reason of the womb. Such is the creation of (*Asvattha* tree) born over *Sami*. This is its source.

It is indeed said, "Gods attained heaven through the entire sacrifice."^[3]

When the sacrifice came down to man from the gods, it came down upon the *Asvattha* (tree). They prepared the churning woods out of it; it is the sacrifice. Indeed, whichever may the *Asvattha* be, it should be deemed, as growing on the *Sami* (tree).

When it is said, "Thou art Urvasi, Ayu and Pruvasas," one utters the names of the father and the sons. This may also be taken in general sense. After her departure, the king, with the harm already done, and suffering from grief, wandered. Brhaspati, son of Angiras said to him, "I shall cause thee perform the *Aupasada* sacrifice; thereby thy harm will disappear." Brhaspati, son of Angiras made him perform the *Aupasada* sacrifice. Thereby his harm disappeared. The *Sadaupasada* (sacrifices) are also known as *Paururavasau*. One who desires to obtain wealth, him should one cause to perform he *Sada*. In his sacrifice the *Bahispavamana* is in ten Stomas.

^[1] The wording *aviyuthamupasthapadasa* is not clear to me. The translation is tentative.

^[2] Doubtful word and meaning.

^[3] Taittiriya Samhita I.7.1.3"

From this text, it is clear that Urvasi, Pururava and their two sons were present in Kurukshetra in their very lifetimes. There is no evidence that they traveled all the way from Afghanistan to Haryana (where Kurukshetra is located), nor is there any evidence that she took her sons from Kurukshetra to Afghanistan after disposing off the pitcher. The passage rather only to indicate that the family lived in the vicinity of Kurukshetra region. Therefore, the possibility that Amavasus, one of the two sons of Pururava and Urvasi lived in Afghanistan from where Ayu, the other son, migrated to India is totally negated by this passage. Rather, BSS 18.45 would imply that the descendants of Amavasus, i.e., Arattas, Parsus and Gandharis migrated westwards from the Kurukshetra region³³.

From a historiographical perspective, the deduction of an eastward migration of Indo-Aryans from Afghanistan to India from Baudhayana *Srautasutra* 18.44 is problematic. The very mention of Videha and Kasi should make the passage a very late one from an Aryan invasionist (AIT) or AMT perspective because these regions were *terra incognita*

³³ It may be pointed out that in Taittiriya Aranyaka 5.1.1, the Kurukshetra region is said to be bounded by Turghna (=Srughna or the modern village of Sugh in the Sirhind district of Punjab) in the north, by Khandava in the south (corresponding roughly to Delhi and Mewat regions), Maru (= desert, noting that the Thar has advanced eastward into Haryana only in recent centuries) in the west, and 'Parin' (?) in the east. This roughly corresponds to the modern state of Haryana in India.

for the Rgvedic peoples. Therefore, under these paradigms, the BSS passage would be much later than the period when the Indo-Aryan speakers were restricted to Afghanistan, and as a result, it cannot be taken as credible proof for the AMT or AIT.

6. Satapatha Brahmana and Pururava- Uruvasi Narrative:

The Shatapatha Brahmana XI.5.1 is very clear that the wanderings of Pururava, the reunion with Uravashi (and from context, their initial cohabitation) were all in the Kurukshetra region. (And not in W Punjab or anywhere further west). Another point to note is that Pururava is said to be the son of Ila, a deity again closely linked to the Kurukshetra region and Sarasvati.

Let me reproduce the passage from the Satapatha Brahmana XI.5.1, as translated³⁴ by Julius Eggeling [1903(1963): 68-74]³⁵ –

“The nymph Uruvasi loved Pururavas, the son of Ida. When she wedded him, she said, ‘Thrice a day thou shalt embrace me; but do not lie with me against my will, and let me not see thee naked, for such is the way to behave to us women.’ XI.5.1.1

She then dwelt with him a long time, and was even with child of him, so long did she dwell with him. Then, the Gandharvas said to one another, ‘For a long time, indeed, has this Uruvasi dwelt among men: devise ye some means how she may come back to us.’ Now, a ewe with two lambs was tied to her couch: the Gandharvas then carried off one of the lambs. XI.5.1.2

‘Alas,’ she cried, ‘they are taking away my darling, as if I were where there is no hero and no man!’ They carried off the second, and she spake in the selfsame manner. XI.5.1.3

He then thought within himself, ‘How can that be (a place) without a hero and without a man where I am?’ And naked, as he was, he sprang up after them: too long he deemed it that he should put on his garment. Then the Gandharvas produced a flash of lightning, and she beheld him naked even as by daylight. Then, indeed, she vanished: ‘Here I am back,’ he said, and lo! She had vanished. Wailing with sorrow he wandered all over Kurukshetra. Now there is a lotus-lake there, called Anyatahplaksha: He walked along its bank; and there nymphs were swimming about in the shape of swans. XI.5.1.4

And she (Uruvasi), recognizing him, said, ‘This is the man with whom I have dwelt.’ They then said, ‘Let us appear to him!’ – ‘So be it!’ she replied; and they appeared to him.

XI.5.1.5

He then recognized her and implored her...”

At this stage, the text reproduces some verses from Rgveda X.95, which contain the Pururava-Uruvasi dialog, ending with Rgveda X.95.16. The narrative continues then –

“This discourse in fifteen verses has been handed down by the Bahvrikas. Then her heart took pity on him. XI.5.1.10

She said, ‘Come here the last night of the year from now; then shalt thou lie with me for one night, and then this son of thine will have been born.’ He came there on the last night of the year, and lo, there stood a golden palace! They then said to him only this (word), ‘Enter!’ and then they bade her go to him. XI.5.1.11

She then said, ‘Tomorrow morning the Gandharvas will grant thee a boon, and thou must make thy choice.’ He said, ‘Choose thou for me!’ – She replied, ‘Say, Let me be one of yourselves!’ In the morning the Gandharvas granted him a boon; and he said, ‘Let me be one of yourselves!’ XI.5.1.12

³⁴ Footnotes in Eggeling’s translation are omitted here.

³⁵ EGGELING, Julius. 1900. *The Satapatha-Brahmana according to the Text of the Madhyandina School, Part V*. London: Clarendon Press. Repr. By Motilal Banarsidass (Delhi), 1963.

They said, 'Surely, there is not among men that holy form of fire by sacrificing wherewith one would become one of ourselves.' They put fire into a pan, and gave it to him saying, 'By sacrificing therewith thou shalt become one of ourselves.' He took it (the fire) and his boy, and went on his way home. He then deposited the fire in the forest and went to the village with the boy alone. [He came back and thought] 'Here I am back;' and lo! It had disappeared: what had been the fire was an Asvattha tree (*ficus religiosa*), and what had been the pan was the Sami tree (*mimosa suma*). He then returned to the Gandharvas. XI.5.1.13

They said, 'Cook for a whole year a mess of rice sufficient for four persons; and taking each time three logs from this Asvattha tree, anoint them with ghee, and put them on the fire with verses containing the words "log" and "ghee": the fire which shall result therefrom will be that very fire (which is required).' XI.5.1.14

They said, 'But that is recondite (esoteric), as it were. Make thyself rather an upper arani of Asvattha wood, and a lower arani of Sami wood; the fire which shall result therefrom will be that very fire.' XI.5.1.15

They said, 'But that also is, as it were, recondite. Make thyself rather an upper arani of Asvattha wood, and a lower arani of Asvattha wood: the fire which shall result therefrom will be that very fire.' XI.5.1.16

He then made himself an upper arani of Asvattha wood, and a lower arani of Asvattha wood; and the fire which resulted therefrom was that very fire: by offering therewith he became one of the Gandharvas. Let him therefore make himself an upper and a lower arani of Asvattha wood, and the fire which results therefrom will be that very fire: by offering therewith he becomes one of the Gandharvas." XI.5.1.17

The mention of a lotus pond at Kurukshetra in the Satapatha Brahmana needs to be noted because it is consistent with the information provided by Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.45. The latter text also refers to the presence of Pururava and Urvasi by a lotus pond surrounded by Peepul trees in Kuruksetra, and performance of rituals at the site. It is clear then, that Urvasi and Pururava themselves were present in Kuruksetra according to the author of Satapatha Brahmana and Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.44-45.

7. Vadhula Anvakhyana Version of the Narrative:

One can hardly blame scholars for ignoring the Vadhula Anvakhyana version because the relevant portion of the text has been published only recently, first by Y Ikari (1998:19-23), and more recently by Braj Bihari Chaubey³⁶. Based on Ikari's text, Toshifumi Goto (2000) has studied the legend in detail, comparing it with parallel passages in Vedic texts, in particular Baudhayana Srutasutra 18.44-45. Chaubey (2001: 34-35) too has presented a loose translation of Vadhula Anvakhyana 1.1-2.

The Vadhula Anvakhyana Brahmana 1.1-2 (Chaubey 2001: pp. 34-35, 1-3 of *devanagari* text) does not add any additional geographical information except stating that Pururava and Urvasi traveled to Urvasi's father's home for the birth of their son Ayu. This might again be interpreted by Aryan Invasionists as proof that Ayu was born in Afghanistan. This is because Urvasi was an *apsaraa*, and therefore, she belonged to the Gandharvas who are sometimes placed in Afghanistan by scholars still believing in the Aryan

³⁶ Chaubey, Braj Bihari. 2001. *Vadhula-Anvakhyanam, Critically edited with detailed Introduction and Indices*. Hoshiarpur: Katyayan Vaidik Sahitya Prakashan

Several decades ago, Caland had published large extracts of the Vadhula Anvakhyana in three articles in the journal *Acta Orientalia*, but the initial portions of the text containing the sections on Agnyadheya were apparently missing in the manuscripts/transcripts available to him.

Invasion Theory (AIT)³⁷. The Vadhula text does not mention the separation of Pururava and Urvasi. It does not mention Amavasu or his birth at all, and states instead that Pururava left the home of his in laws with his son Ayu, and with the knowledge of *yajna*. The section 1.1.2 explicitly equates Ayu with Agni, that eats food for both humans and the Devas³⁸.

An over-arching theme in the versions of the Pururava-Urvasi legend in the Vedic texts is the semi-divine origin of the Vedic ritual. The *yajna* is said to have reached mankind through Pururava, who got it through semi-divine beings, the Gandharvas, via the intervention of Urvasi, who herself was an *apsaraa* and belonged to the Gandharvas. Coupled with the Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44-45 passage, we may interpret the names of Ayu and Amavasu to mean that the former represents the ancestor of peoples (Kuru-Panchalas and Kasi-Videhas) who are ‘alive and bright’, and ‘vibrant’ or ‘moving’³⁹ because they sacrificed to the Devas. In contrast, the Gandharis, Parsus and Arattas did not perform Vedic sacrifices for Devas and hoarded their ‘possessions in their homes’, due to which they were ‘stationary’ or ‘dead’ and ‘devoid of light’, like the ‘amavasya’ or moonless night. This interpretation would be completely consistent with later traditions concerning the conformity to orthopraxy by the Kurus etc., and the lack of the same in the case of Arattas etc.

8. Hertha Krick’s study⁴⁰ on the Agnyadheya Rite

Hertha Krick presents her translation, or rather an interpretation of Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44 in the following words (p. 214) –

“ Ayu zog nach Osten weiter: Von ihm stammen diese Völker: die Kurus und Pañcalas, die (Bewohner von) Kasi und Videha. Das ist der Wanderzug (die Ausbreitung des Stamms) des Ayu. Nach Westen (zog) Amavasu (bzw.: er bleib im Westen in der Heimat, wie sein Name ‚einer, der Güter daheim hat sagt): Seine Bachkommen sind die Gandharis, Sparsus und Ara ~~W~~s, das ist der (Stammbaum) des Amavasu⁵³⁶ .

³⁷ For instance, Malati Shengde [1977. *The Civilized Demons*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications]. She suggests (p. 111) that the Gandharvas were the priests of people who resided in the Kabul valley. Such speculations however are very tentative and tenuous, and do not constitute evidence of any type. They certainly cannot over-ride rules of Sanskrit grammar in interpreting Sanskrit texts such as Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44.

Moreover, the Vadhula text 1.1.1 also clarifies that she was also of the same lineage as Pururavas but had been adopted by Gandharvas as their daughter.

³⁸ “...aayurasi iti jaatam abhimantrayate sa vaa esha aayuh pauraavasa ubhayeshaan devamanushyanaam annaado agnibhagavaan ubhayeshaam...”

³⁹ Vadhula Anvakhyaana 1.1.1 explicitly declares that before the birth of Ayu, humans did not perform Yajna properly due to which they had developed only the trunk part of their body and not their limbs- “...naanyaani kaani chanaangaani...”

⁴⁰ Krick, Hertha. 1982. *Das Ritual der Feuergründung*. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Vienna.

The book deals not only with the external form and intricacies of the rite, it also studies the rite from a variety of sources – cultural, philological, anthropological, social and so on. Krick has spared no pains to bring together tiny pieces of data from diverse sources to weave her narrative. The author died in January 1979 at a young age of 33 years, and her PhD thesis was published in book form posthumously by Gerhard Oberhammer in 1982.

For her obituary, refer: Parpola, Asko. 1980. ‘Hertha Krick (1945-1979) In Memoriam’. In *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasiens*, vol. 24, pp. 5-12

⁵³⁶ Dieser Stammbaum ist offenbar von alten Sternsagen (Gestirnkult) beeinflusst. Die ersten Kinder Urvasis sind wohl ‚Sternenkinder‘, deren Leben nur eine Nacht dauert und die darauf ‚verlöschen‘. Das Zwillingsspaar Ayu und Amvasu erinnert dem Namen nach an Vollmond und Neumond bzw. lichte und dunkle Monatshälfte (vgl. *yavah?* ‚lichte Monatshälfte‘, *amavasi* ‚Neumondnacht‘, *ayu* – wird auch als ‚wandernd‘ interpretiert). Auch später steht Ayu in der Soma-dynastie (Hariv. 21,1 ff.). Die Ayus im RV sind stets als Somaopferer genannt, wobei die Soma (:Agni, :Ayu) – Mond-Symbolik (oft von der Sonnen-Symbolik nicht unterscheidbar) bereits im Aufkommen ist. Im MBh (I 70, 22 ff.) hat Pururavas mit Urvasi sechs Söhne (Ayu, Dhiman, Amvasu, Dr̥ḍḍayu, Vanayu, Srutayu), die im Hariv. 21, 10 um zwei (Visvayu, Satayu) vermehrt werden. Als Ayus Sohn gilt Nahusā (Stamm im RV), von dem Yayati (die weitere Linie führt über Yadu zu Vasudeva) stammt.”

In her translation⁴¹, Krick (as also noted above) first suggests that the descendants of Amvasu migrated westwards, but then proposes an alternate interpretation that Amvasu stayed west in his home, and only Ayu migrated eastwards. Later on too, she refers (page 218-219) to her interpretation that the descendants of Ayu migrated to Kurukshetra region and thence to other parts of Madhyadesha where Vedic orthodoxy/orthopraxy was established eventually by Brahmins, whereas the Amvasus stayed back in western regions of Gandhara etc.

It should be noted that the entire work of Krick is written under the AIT paradigms. Her argument for situating Uruvasi in the Gandhara region is that Uruvasi resided with sheep and goats and rearing of these animals was especially important for residents of Afghanistan and its adjoining areas⁴². But such an argument is not conclusive because sheep and goat herding have been important occupations not just in Afghanistan and North Western Frontier Province of Pakistan, but also in much of Punjab and parts of Haryana down to present times.

Not surprisingly, scholars who still adhere to AIT and its euphemistic interpretations (such as AMT) continue to torture Vedic texts and see evidence for Indo-Aryan migrations into India. Parpola (1980:10) remarks sympathetically –

“Such feasts dedicated to gandharvas and apsarases have been celebrated at quite specific lotus ponds surrounded by holy fig trees in the Kuruksetra. The analysis cited above suggests, however, that the original location of the legend was a country like Gandhara, where shee-raising was the predominant form of economy. This eastward shift, which is in agreement with the model of the Aryan penetration into India, starting from the mountains of the northwest, is corroborated. Hertha Krick points out, also by the geneology of the peoples as given in the Baudhayana-Srautasutra (18,44-45): while Amvasu stayed in the west (Gandhara), Ayu went to the east (Kuruksetra).”

⁴¹ She links Ayu and his descendants with symbolism related to Moon and Soma, and reproduces passages from later Sanskrit texts on the progeny of Pururava and Urvashi. None of this really sheds light on our problem at hand.

⁴² “Urvasi calls them (pair of sheep) her children, and becomes desperate when they are robbed, while Pururavas boasts of having ‘ascended the sky’ through the recapture of the ram. This shows that the generative and fertility power of the royal family and thereby the whole kingdom was dependent upon these sheep. This component of the tale should be based upon the actual old customs and cultic conceptions of a country subsisting in sheep raising, such as Gandhara....(P. 160)”. Translated in Parpola 1980 (p. 8)

In a later publication for instance, Witzel draws solace⁴³ from the fact that Krick interprets ‘Amavasū’ as one who ‘keeps his goods at home’, and ‘Ayu’, as ‘active/agile/alive’. Not surprisingly, Krick’s interpretations have also found support in her obituary written by Asko Parpola, another scholar who till this day believes not just in one but in multiple Aryan invasions of India.

According to Witzel, Hertha Krick and Asko Parpola, BSS 18.44 designates the homeland of Gandharis, Parsus and Arattas as ‘here’ (‘ama’ in ‘amavasū’). *Prima facie*, this suggestion is illogical, because the territory inhabited by these three groups of people is a vast swathe of land comprising a major portion of modern-day NWFP/Baluchistan provinces of Pakistan, and much of Afghanistan. To denote such a vast territory by ‘here’, while contrasting it with supposed migrations of Kurus and other Indian peoples from ‘here’ to ‘there’ (= northern India) is somewhat of a stretch. Baudhayana (or whoever wrote BSS 18.44) was definitely a resident of northern India, and for him, Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan would be ‘there’, and not ‘here’ or ‘home’.

9. The Location of ‘Aratta’ of Baudhayana Kalpasutra:

In an online paper, Witzel tries to minimize the importance he placed earlier on BSS 18.44 as the only important direct evidence for an Indo-Aryan immigration. He also argues⁴⁴ –

“...However, the passage plays, in the usual Brahmana style, with these names and their Nirukta-like interpretations and etymologies. They are based (apart from Ayu: ayus ‘full life span’), on the names of the two sons of Pururavas, Amavasi: ama vas ‘to dwell at home’, as opposed to Ayu: ay/i ‘to go’, contrasting the ‘stay home’ peoples in the west (Amavasyavah: Gandhara, Parsu, Aratta) with those (Ayavah: Kuru-Pancala, Kasi-Videha) who went/ went forth (ay/i + pra vraj) eastwards, as the text clearly says.

A note of caution may be added: The missing verb in the collocation pratyam Amavasus allows, of course, suppletion of pravavraja. If one follows that line of argument, one group (the Ayavah) ‘went east’, the other one (the Amavasyavah) ‘went west’, both from an unknown central area, to the west of the Kuru lands. The Kuruksetra area is excluded as the Kurus went eastwards (i.e., toward it!), apparent from somewhere in the Punjab, (e.g., from the Parusni, the place of the Ten Kings’ Battle, RV 7.10).....The passage in question is just one point in the whole scheme of immigration and acculturation...

The Gandhari clearly are located in E. Afghanistan/N. Pakistan, the Parsu in Afghanistan and the Aratta seem to represent the Arachosians (cf. Witzel 1980); note the Mesopot. Aratta, the land of Lapis Lazuli (cf. Possehl 1996b, Steinkeller 1998).”

We may easily dismiss Witzel’s attempt to impose **his** Nirukta like etymologies in this Sutra passage for the simple reasons that they are opposed to the rules of Sanskrit grammar (as elaborated by George Cardona cited by me above), and because the parallel passages from Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.55, Satapatha Brahmana XI.1.5 and Vadhula Anvakhyana 1.1.1-2 clearly pre-suppose the Kuruksetra region as the scene of action involving Pururava and Uruvasi. Witzel refers to his publication ‘Witzel (1980)’ as proof that Arattas were ‘Arachosians’ (= residents of Helmand valley in S W Afghanistan), but

⁴³ Michael Witzel. 2001. ‘Addendum to EJVS 7-3, notes 45-46’, in Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies, Vol. 7, issue 4, available online at <http://users.primushost.com/~india/ejvs/ejvs0704/ejvs0704.txt>

⁴⁴ Michael Witzel. 2001. ‘Autochthonous Aryans? The Evidence from Old Indian and Iranian Texts.’ In *Electronic Journal of Vedic Studies*, vol. 7, issue 3. See footnote 45 on page 16 at online paper available at <http://users.primushost.com/~india/ejvs/ejvs0703/ejvs0703article.pdf>

when that publication was checked⁴⁵, it was found to place the Arattas in the Badakhshan area in extreme N E Afghanistan!

Witzel's views on this 'central area' echo the views of Triveda (cited by me above) who posits the Devika river (a tributary of Ravi = Parusni) as that central place from where the Vedic peoples migrated in opposite directions. However, Witzel's arguments for ruling out Kurukshetra as the central region are specious. Kurukshetra in Sanskrit texts is not just the modern day district of that name in northern Haryana, but covered almost the entire present state of Haryana, and later (closer to the period of the Baudhayana text), the northern parts of the Ganga-Yamuna doab east of the Yamuna river. If the progeny of Ayu were to migrate from the banks of Sarasvati to this region, it would still constitute an eastward migration.

Witzel's interpretations are valid only if Aratta can be removed from W. Punjab (which is where the entire length and breadth of Indian literature places it) and transplanted in Arachosia (S W Afghanistan), as Witzel has done above, without any proof⁴⁶. This alone would leave W. Punjab as a 'central area' from which some people move east and some move west. However, we may reject this possibility because as a natural corollary, it would imply that W Punjab itself did not receive any progeny of Pururavas and Uruvasi, even though regions to the east and west of it did so.

Secondly, and more important, the other occurrences of the word 'Aratta' in the Vedic texts⁴⁷ indicate that these people were residents of W. Punjab (north of Multan, just as in the historical period) and not of Helmand valley as proposed by Witzel and others. The Baudhayana Srautasutra is a not stand-alone text of its particular Sakha of Krishna Yajurveda. It is in fact a (major) part of a larger text – the Baudhayana Kalpasutra. The various parts of the Kalpasutra are the Srautasutra, the Hautrasutra, Grhyasutra, Sulbasutra and the Dharmasutra. Hindu tradition attributes all the portions of the Sutra to

⁴⁵ See footnote 3 in Witzel, Michael. 1980, 'Early Eastern Iran and the Atharvaveda', in *Persica*, vol. IX, pp. 86-128.

⁴⁶ A Czech scholar Václav Blažek relies on the mistranslation of the passage in Witzel [1995: 320-321] to reinforce his conclusion that the Arattas were localized in the Helmand basin. See Blažek, Václav. 2002. 'Elamo -Arica'. In *The Journal of Indo-European Studies*, Vol. XXX, Nos. 3-4 (Fall/Winter 2002): pp. 215-242 (see page 216).

Interestingly, in the 'Acknowledgements' section on page 235 of the paper, the Blažek says – "I wish to thank Michael Witzel for providing an opportunity to present the first version of this paper at the conference held at the Department of Indic Languages at Harvard University in May 2002...."

⁴⁷ The word 'Aratta' is conspicuous by its absence in Vedic literature proper, i.e., in the Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and in the older Upanishads. The oldest text where it occurs for the first time is Baudhayana Srautasutra. In all later Sanskrit literature, the word denotes western and central Punjab. 'Aratta' is also mentioned as a source of Lapis Lazuli in a Mesopotamian text. Since this mineral was obtained from extreme northern regions of Afghanistan, as well as from regions just north of Quetta, some scholars have often assumed that it denoted the Helmand valley. See for instance – Hansman, J. F. 1978. 'The Question of Aratta'. In *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 331-336

However, even if this identification in Mesopotamian texts is correct, we need not assume that the Aratta in Baudhayana Kalpasutra also meant the same region because the Mesopotamian text and this Kalpasutra are separated from each other by great distance and time. In my opinion, it is more appropriate to interpret this Kalpasutra using data from successor Hindu traditions, rather than data from distant Mesopotamian traditions!

the same person, viz. Muni Baudhayana. To modern scholarship however, the Kalpasutra appears to be a stratified text.⁴⁸ It is not relevant here to discuss the merits of these various views related to the authorship of Baudhayana Kalpasutra here. Even if the entire Kalpasutra is not from the same author, the later parts nevertheless reflect the understanding of the older tradition by the later-day Baudhayaniyas.

Even if we assume that ‘Brahmana-like’ portion BSS 18.44 is an older part of the text, it is worthwhile investigating what the words Aratta, Parshu and Gandhara mean in other portions of the Kalpasutra text. Parsu does not appear to occur elsewhere in Baudhayana Kalpasutra. Aratta and Gandhara however are found mentioned in BSS 18.13 and in Baudhayana Dharmasutra (= BDS).

Let us consider BDS⁴⁹ first. Sutra 1.1.2.10 defines Aryavarta as the land west of Kalakavana (roughly modern Allahabad), east of ‘adarsana’ (the spot where Sarasvati disappears in the desert), south of Himalayas and north of the Vindhya. An alternate definition of Aryavarta in sutra 1.1.2.11 restricts Aryavarta to the Ganga-Yamuna doab. The text then enumerates the following peoples who are of ‘mixed’ origins, and therefore whose traditions are not worthy of emulation by the residents of Aryavarta –

“Avanti (-Ujjain), Anga (= area around modern Bhagalpur in Bihar), Magadha, Surashtra (= modern Kathiawar), Upavarta, Sindhu (= modern Sindh), Sauvira (= modern Bahawalpur, and Pakistani Panjab south of Multan) are (i.e., the residents of these regions are) of mixed origin.” BDS 1.1.2.14

“Aratta, Karaskara (=Narmada valley?), Pundra (=northern Bengal), Sauvira, Vanga (= southern Bengal), Kalinga – whosoever visits these areas should perform Punastoma or Sarvaprshthi sacrifices as an expiation.” BDS 1.1.12.15

Clearly, all these regions lie outside the Aryavarta where Vedic orthopraxy prevailed. What needs to be noted here is that all these ‘impure’ regions lie on the periphery of Aryavarta. Distant regions such as Gedrosia, Arachosia (Helmand valley), Kashmir, Kabul Valley etc., are so far that they are not even mentioned. Again, BSS 18.13 also mentions that whosoever visits Sauvira, Aratta, Kalinga, Karaskara and Gandhara, should perform ritual expiations.

In both these cases from the Baudhayana Kalpasutra, the word ‘Aratta’ denotes a region or peoples who live on the periphery of Aryavarta, or close to Aryavarta but outside it. Witzel’s interpretation (Witzel 1995: 320-321) of BSS 18.44 however requires Arattas to be in the Helmand valley in Arachosia (south-west Afghanistan), from where they then migrated into South Asia. Much of ancient Sanskrit and Vedic literature considers the people and region of central and western Punjab as impure and outsiders. But equating

⁴⁸ A major portion of the Kalpasutra is attributed to Baudhayana himself, the Dvaidhasutra is said to be an addition by his direct disciples (or near immediate disciples), portions of Grhyasutra are attributed to him with the Grhyapariseshas being a late addition. The Dharmasutra is considered a very late addition. Patrick Olivelle [2000. *Dharmasutras, annotated text and translation*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 10] assigns a date of 150 B.C.E. to Baudhyana dharmasutra, a date which is ridiculously recent in my opinion.

⁴⁹ I have used the edition by Umesh Chandra Pandey. 1971. *Baudhayana Dharmasutra* (with Govindswami’s commentary, and a gloss by Chinnaswami Shastri). Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series: Varanasi

Aratta with Arachosia would mean that there is no region or people corresponding to central and western Punjab that is considered polluting in the Baudhayana Kalpasutra.

10. Conclusion: Rather than insisting on seeing evidence for ‘movement’ or ‘migration’ in the word ‘Ayu’, and correspondingly ‘remaining in their home’ in the word Amavasu, it is perhaps less tortuous to interpret this passage figuratively in a different manner that is more consistent with the Indian tradition. Indian tradition holds that the Kuru-Panchalas, and later Kashi-Videhas followed Vedic orthoproxy (i.e., they performed fire sacrifices to the Devas) and therefore were ‘alive’, whereas the progeny of Amavasu did not sacrifice to the Devas and hoarded their wealth in their homes.

Whatever be the interpretation, there is no convincing way to uphold Witzel’s mistranslation or over-interpretation of Baudhayana Srautasutra 18.44. One must be extremely wary of using at least the Vedic versions of this legend to construct real history of human migrations, otherwise we would have to deduce an emigration from India in the direction of Central Asia. There is absolutely no need to read modern and colonial Aryan invasion and migration theories into ancient ritual texts.

Therefore, we may conclude there still exists no Vedic evidence for an Aryan immigration into India.

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