

Review of :

*Indoaryan Origins and other Vedic Issues*, N. Delhi, Aditya Prakashan – written by N. Kazanas.

Reviewer : David Stollar, BA Atc, London.

Dr N. Kazanas is a noted Greek Sanskritist and the Director of a Cultural Institute in Athens, Greece. Apart from multifarious studies in Greek, he has published numerous articles in English in Indian and Western Journals and has participated in many Conferences in India and in the West.

In this book are collected ten essays of his, all dealing with different aspects of Indology and particularly the ancient Vedic Tradition. The second paper examines exclusively the religiophilosophical thought of the Indoaryans from the *R̥gveda* to the Upanishads and shows that, despite some differences in terminology and emphasis, the main thread remains one and unchanged – i.e. the full realization that one's true Self (*ātman*) is the same as the Self of the universe (*brahman*).

The other nine essays revolve round a double axis. One axis is that the bulk of the hymns of *R̥gveda* were composed before 3100 BCE and enshrine an old oral tradition which remained alive well into the 20th century. The Indus-Sarasvatī (or Harappan) culture is but a phase, a material expression, of that ancient oral culture that is known as Vedic Tradition. The other axis is that there is no evidence whatever for the mainstream notion of the Aryan Invasion/Immigration Theory which is a dogmatic assertion that the Indoaryans entered N-W India c 1700-1500 BCE. On the contrary, the essays present various types of evidence and argue that the Indoaryans were settled in their historical habitat since, at the very latest, c 5000 BCE. The archaeological evidence itself shows that the material culture, present and developing from the seventh millennium onward in that wider area, received no intrusion from another culture of a size that would alter the existing native one (and turn it into the Indoeuropean culture of the Indoaryans).

The essays utilize all the latest evidence from the fields of Anthropology Archaeology, Genetics, History and Literature; also from Comparative Mythology and from Comparative Philology with its linguistic games.

Mainstream theory on these issues is highly speculative but its conjectures are presented by scholars of this persuasion as facts and perpetuated through mechanical repetition. These essays pose a direct and bold challenge to the mainstream views. How come, for instance, that the *R̥gveda* knows nothing of ruins (from abandoned Harappan towns), of bricks (the chief building material of the Indus-Sarasvatī Civilization and of cotton (cultivated and exported by Harappans) but knows of a mighty river Sarasvatī which dried up c2000-1900 BCE?

Some essays examine also the cultures of the Near East and the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, always in relation to the Vedic Tradition. Herein it is argued that, contrary to general belief, the influence does not run from the Near East to India but rather the opposite direction. The evidence adduced is quite strong.

This is a book that every serious indologist, whether sanskritist, comparativist, archaeologist or historian, ought to consult.