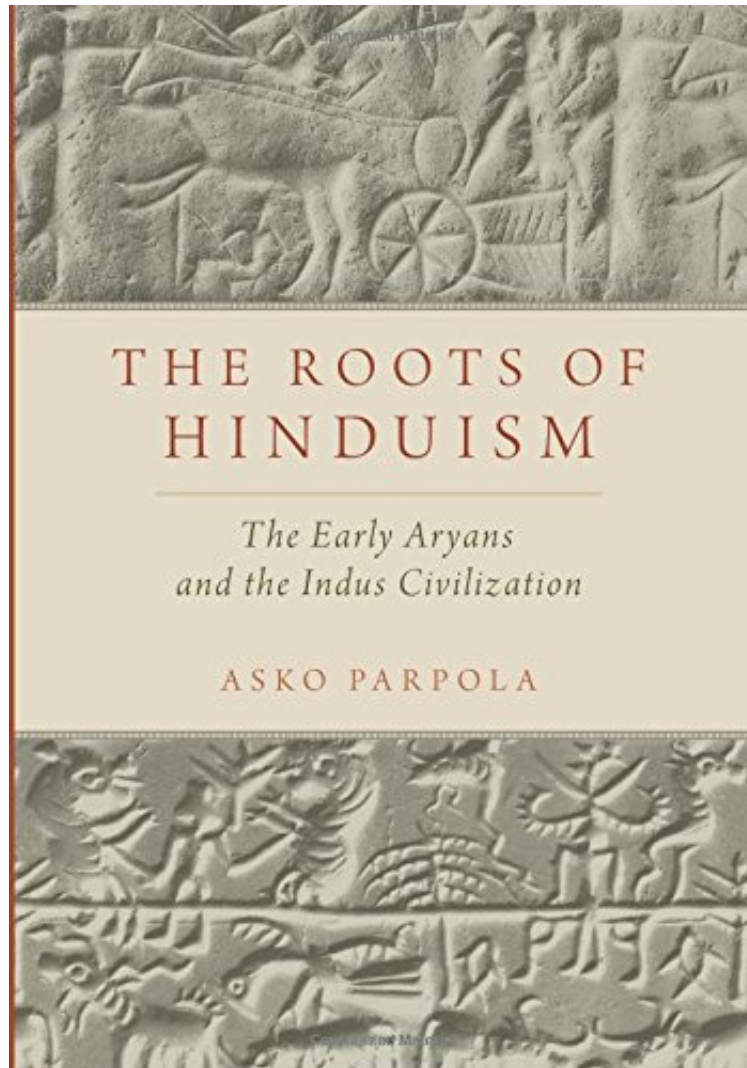


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# The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization

Asko Parpola

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**Asko Parpola : The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Aryan and Indus history for dummies..well almost..By Sudharshan gomadamThanks to Parpola for this eminently readable book on the arynes and indus script. I was bit skeptical when i bought this book as i thought the contents may go over the head of a lay person like me. However, the author has provided proper context and explained the prevalent view and his own view on various topics dealt in the book.His

purported decipherment of the Indus script sounds very plausible but it can only be an educated guess given the large number of assumptions that he makes. Overall a good book that leaves you yearning to know more about linguistics and ancient texts. The critical reviews seem to belong to a particular political hue and I would love to read a balanced review from an expert in this field.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An important book throwing new light on the provenance of the Aryans and the Dravidians. By GL This is an important book, one that attempts to cut through the mists that surround the Indo-Aryans and their provenance and the early Dravidians. Parpola uses archeological and linguistic evidence to trace the migrations of the Indo-Aryans and other IE groups in the second and third millennia BCE, and he puts forward some fascinating and cogent ideas about the settling of northwest South Asia by waves of Indo-Aryan speakers. He argues persuasively that the Indus Valley people were Dravidians, though unfortunately there is no evidence that clinches this. I would recommend this book highly, especially for the way it traces various Indo-European groups on their way to India and for Parpola's ideas about the Indus-Valley civilization. I found his ideas about the changing composition of northwest South Asia in the second millennium BCE especially enlightening and compelling.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Remarkable synthesis of ancient Indian society and religion: the twin classical heritages - Dravidian (Tamil) Aryan (Sanskrit). By Customer A great synthesis of Indian History using Archaeology, Vedic Philology and Linguistics. This work is a summary of 50+ years of the wide-ranging research that Prof. Asko Parpola has done and published in specialized articles and brings up to date his 1994 book. For unraveling of the ancient history of India, three significant discoveries are brought together: (1) Discovery of Indo-European languages and Sanskrit's place in it (2) Dravidian language family and its oldest texts, called Sangam literature of Tamil (3) Discovery of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) in the 1920s. This book shows an earlier form of Dravidian language was spoken by the authors and elites of IVC, even though like modern India, IVC was multi-lingual. This important book is an important contribution on par with Robert Caldwell's book on Dravidian language family (1856 CE) in demonstrating Tamil and other Dravidian languages' role in the formation of "Village Hinduism". A major factor in Indian society is Caste and the system which shows the formation is in Sangam texts [a]. The intertwining nature of the two classical languages of India - Tamil and Sanskrit - in the fundamental elements of ancient Indian society and religion is brought out beautifully. For example, Dravidian "niira" (water) becomes "niila" to denote blue/black color. Similarly, Parpola suggests Meru, the cosmic mountain's name is from Dravidian "Melu-" ('upper, top, peak'). Also, Vaac, cognate with Latin "vox", is Sanskrit. In Hinduism's concept, Vaac is a loan translation of Dravidian viL/veL, connected with vEL, a name of god Murukan, chieftains and land lords in Tamil. Genetics also proves the language shift in North India around 3000 years ago with small number of Indo-European speakers ingressing, just as it happened 400 years ago in Central and South Americas. Parpola's work discusses two major waves of Aryan language speakers entering via the Northwest of India from Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC). This happened around 1800 BCE ("Atharvavedic") and then ~1400 BCE ("Rgvedic"). The first wave of "Atharvavedic" folks connected with VaruNa worship merged with the earlier Harappan crocodile god [b c]. In the Post-Harappan phase, when BMAC folks moved in and the language shift in North India was going on, the continuity of Harappan religion can be shown using the bronze Anthropomorphic Axe sculptures found from Haryana to Uttar Pradesh. Yamuna and Ganga doab valley with Yamuna river name connected with Yaamai 'turtle' in ancient Dravidian and IVC's gharial god is the symbol of the Ganga river. Post-Harappan "Anthropomorphic Axe" sculptures are made as huge monolithic sculptures in south India during the Early Iron Age "megalithic" period. This continuity of crocodile worship from Indus civilization to Iron Age Tamil country shown from archaeology and Sangam era coins gives clinching evidence that the IVC authors were Dravidian language speakers. [a] Early Evidence of Caste from Sangam literature, <http://www.tamilnation.co/caste/hart.pdf> [b] Gharial god and Tiger goddess in the Indus valley, Some aspects of Bronze Age Indian Religion, 2007 [https://archive.org/stream/IVCReligionByNagaGanesan2007/IVC\\_religion\\_by\\_Naga\\_Ganesan\\_2007#page/n0/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/IVCReligionByNagaGanesan2007/IVC_religion_by_Naga_Ganesan_2007#page/n0/mode/2up) [c] A Dravidian Etymology for Makara - Crocodile, 2011 [https://archive.org/stream/MakaraADravidianEtymology2011/Makara\\_a\\_Dravidian\\_etymology\\_2011#page/n0/mode/2up](https://archive.org/stream/MakaraADravidianEtymology2011/Makara_a_Dravidian_etymology_2011#page/n0/mode/2up) [d] March 2016, Proceedings of 16th World Sanskrit Conference will be published in Bangkok, Thailand. In it, the following paper of mine discusses the Tamil country's early religion derived from IVC crocodile deity. Indus Crocodile Religion as seen in the Iron Age Tamil Nadu Abstract: This article is about some aspects of Indian religion in the Post-Harappan period providing a link to the Indus Valley Civilization seen in its Bronze Age seals. The meaning of the anthropomorphic axes found in the Indo-Gangetic doab plains of the Second Millennium BC as a ritual symbol of a Makara (crocodile) god will be presented. The characteristic fish sign pointing to the Dravidian language spoken by the elite Harappans has long been explored from the days of Fr. H. Heras, SJ. However, the importance of crocodiles in IVC culture is recently coming to light (A. Parpola, 2011). When this Crocodile cult disappears and gets forgotten in North India, it appears as large monolithic sculptures in the megalithic South. An interpretation of the Tamil Brahmi inscription at Tirupparankunram, near the ancient Pandyan capital Madurai, discovered by History department, Pondicherry University will be offered as mentioning the crocodile god and his spouse. The Asvamedha sacrifice on the banks of a Water Tank was performed for a crocodile as evidenced in Pandyan Peruvaluti and Chera coins. Graffiti symbols from Sanur and Sular as linguistic sign for the crocodile deity, and the crocodile couple in

Adichanallur burial urn (500 BCE) along with the battle-axe bearing great god in Sangam poetry will be used to illustrate the prevalence of the crocodile based religion until the Early Sangam period. The first stone sculpture made in south India at such places as Mottur, Udaiyarnatham, - monumental in size, over ten feet tall -, in the Iron Age will be linked to the earlier metallic Anthropomorphic Axes in the Yamuna-Gangetic doab, found in many Post-Harappan Ochre Colored Pottery sites of North India. The lecture will include etymology of Dravidian names such as ViTankar, Nakar, Ghaiaal, Makara, Karaa for the three species of Indian crocodiles. Finally, an interpretation of Gudimallam ViTankar (Lingam) as Varuna, rather than as Siva assumed by earlier scholars like A. K. Coomaraswamy, is offered. In the subsequent Pallava period, development of Tantric Saivism includes the tantric term ViTankar applied more broadly for the forms of Siva like naked Bhiksaaana and Somaskanda. N. Ganesan, PhD Houston, Texas, USA

The Roots of Hinduism: The Early Aryans and the Indus Civilization

Hinduism has two major roots. The more familiar is the religion brought to South Asia in the second millennium BCE by speakers of Aryan or Indo-Iranian languages, a branch of the Indo-European language family. Another, more enigmatic, root is the Indus civilization of the third millennium BCE, which left behind exquisitely carved seals and thousands of short inscriptions in a long-forgotten pictographic script. Discovered in the valley of the Indus River in the early 1920s, the Indus civilization had a population estimated at one million people, in more than 1000 settlements, several of which were cities of some 50,000 inhabitants. With an area of nearly a million square kilometers, the Indus civilization was more extensive than the contemporaneous urban cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Yet, after almost a century of excavation and research the Indus civilization remains little understood. How might we decipher the Indus inscriptions? What language did the Indus people speak? What deities did they worship? Asko Parpola has spent fifty years researching the roots of Hinduism to answer these fundamental questions, which have been debated with increasing animosity since the rise of Hindu nationalist politics in the 1980s. In this pioneering book, he traces the archaeological route of the Indo-Iranian languages from the Aryan homeland north of the Black Sea to Central, West, and South Asia. His new ideas on the formation of the Vedic literature and rites and the great Hindu epics hinge on the profound impact that the invention of the horse-drawn chariot had on Indo-Aryan religion. Parpola's comprehensive assessment of the Indus language and religion is based on all available textual, linguistic and archaeological evidence, including West Asian sources and the Indus script. The results affirm cultural and religious continuity to the present day and, among many other things, shed new light on the prehistory of the key Hindu goddess Durga and her Tantric cult.

"Written with scholarly rigor and great erudition, this volume will be warmly received by supporters of the views that the Indus Valley script is a proto-Dravidian language and that continuities exist between IVC and Hinduism. Highly recommended."--CHOICE "A highly innovative and welcome volume, bringing together the linguistic and archaeological evidence for the cultures that underlie Hinduism. Asko Parpola is uniquely well qualified to undertake this, through his major research on the Vedas and Vedic ritual and on the Indus Civilization, combined with an excellent understanding of the archaeological evidence beyond India itself. No one interested in any of these fields can afford to miss it." --J.L. Brockington, Emeritus Professor of Sanskrit, University of Edinburgh; Vice President, International Association of Sanskrit Studies "The Roots of Hinduism is undoubtedly a major contribution -- like Parpola's earlier book on deciphering the Indus script -- to the understanding of the Indus civilisation, the Aryan migrations into India, and the development of Hinduism." --Current World Archaeology About the Author Asko Parpola is Professor Emeritus of Indology and South Asian Studies at the University of Helsinki.