

The Rigveda: A Historical Analysis

The Rigveda: A Historical Analysis is a book by Shrikant G. Talageri. It was published by Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi (India) in 2000. It is a contribution to the "Aryan invasion debate". The book gives Talageri's examination and interpretation of the Rig Veda. In the eighth chapter Talageri discusses the interpretations of the Rig Veda Vedantic thinkers such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, B. R. Ambedkar, Vivekananda, Dayananda Sarasvati and Aurobindo. In the ninth chapter he gives a critique of Michael Witzel's interpretation of the structure and the history depicted by the Rig Veda.^[1] Witzel responded in a later review while the debate was reviewed by Koenraad Elst in his book "Update on the Aryan Invasion Debate" (1999; ISBN 81-86471-77-4).^[2]

The Rigveda: A Historical Analysis



Author	Shrikant G. Talageri
Country	India
Language	English
Publisher	Aditya Prakashan
Publication date	2000
ISBN	81-7742-010-0
OCLC	44167583
Dewey Decimal	294.5/9212046 21
LC Class	BL1112.56 .T35 2000

Contents

Contents and Outline

Controversy and review of controversy

References

External links

Contents and Outline

- Preface
- I. The Rigveda
 - 1. The Anukramanis
 - 2. The composers of the Rigveda
 - 3. The chronology of the Rigveda
 - 4. The geography of the Rigveda
 - 5. The historical identity of the Vedic Aryans
- II. Beyond the Rigveda
 - 6. The Indo-Iranian homeland
 - 7. The Indo-European homeland
- III. Appendices
 - 8. Misinterpretations of Rigvedic history
 - 9. Michael Witzel—an examination of western Vedic scholarship
 - 10. Sarama and the Panis—a mythological theme in the Rigveda

Talageri gives also his views on unsettled topics like the chronological order of the Mandalas. Differing from mainstream scholars, Talageri's order for the earliest seven Mandalas is as follows: 6, 3, 7, 4, 2, 5 and 8, or: Early period Books 6,3,7 early I: 3400 – 2600 BCE; Middle period – Books 4,2, middle 1: 2600–2200 BCE; Late period – Books 5,8,9,10, rest of 1: 2200-1400 BCE.^[1]

Talageri argues that the Indo-Iranian Airyanem Vaejah lies in Kashmir. He states that the Indo-Iranians migrated from there to the Punjab and later to Central Asia. According to Talageri, the Rigvedic Aryans lived in Haryana, from where they migrated to the Sarasvati River region, and then westward to Iran and Europe.^[1]

Controversy and review of controversy

Talageri's first book (1993) was strongly criticized by the archaeologist George Erdosy and, in his wake, by the Indologist Michael Witzel in 1995, as being "devoid of scholarly value", and it was characterized as belonging to a "lunatic fringe".^[3] Talageri retorted saying that Erdosy and Witzel criticized the book without having read or seen it, showing the mis-citation of his book's title and name.^[4] Talageri asserts that "this strong condemnation of a book", as he characterizes "unread and unseen by them, is both unacademic and unethical."^[5]

Talageri wrote a critique of a number of scholars such as Griffith, Pargiter, Tilak and Aurobindo in his book on the Rig Veda.^[6] In Chapter 9, he singled out Michael Witzel's (1995) interpretation^[7] of the structure and history of the Rig Veda. In this chapter, Talageri alleges ^[8] "Professor Witzel inventing evidence, suppressing inconvenient data, following an inconsistent methodology, retrofitting data into pre-conceived notions, contradicting himself again and again, and using misleading language". Witzel later wrote a review of Talageri's book.^[9] He based it on Talageri's alleged ignorance of the long-established structure of the Rigveda (Oldenberg 1888, English 2003.^[10] Talageri also uses the purportedly late Vedic Anukramani (a list of poets, deities and meters) in analyzing the text of the Rigveda that is, per current scholarly consensus, and challenged by Talageri, hundreds of years earlier. Both items combined render, in Witzel's view, the book entirely erroneous, and he therefore did not find it necessary to write a lengthy rebuttal of chapter 9, stating that it is "a long and confused 'analysis'" and that, therefore, the "angry assault on my 1995 paper ... can thankfully be passed over here". It should be noted that Talageri's central thesis is to recast the chronology of the Rg Vedic texts. His conclusions (revision of Aryan Invasion theory, etc.) follows from this alternative history. Talageri considers his evidence unaddressed by Witzel, and the debate seems to have taken on the aspect of two scholars talking ~~pa~~ each other.

Talageri later considered his criticism of other scholars as unnecessary (but then repeated it forcefully in his next book, 2008), and he wrote that other writers like N.S. Rajaram "reprimanded" him for chapters 8 and 9, which Rajaram "felt were superfluous and unnecessary and detracted from the value of my [Talageri's] work."^[11]

After the publication of his book on the Rig Veda (2000), Talageri was proposed (by Witzel) (email on 17 June 2000) to do advanced study or a Ph.D. at Harvard, "provided he is open-minded and flexible in his views, and does not show himself to be intransigent or predisposed to certain ideas".^[11] Talageri declined this offer "for purely personal reasons as much as in view of the blatantly fishy proviso".^[11]

The debate was reviewed by Koenraad Elst in his book "Update on the Aryan Invasion Debate" (1999; ISBN 81-86471-77-4), points out that the review added little new to the discourse, with Witzel mostly rehashing his original scholarship. Talageri's arguments have since been largely unaddressed, and it is difficult to find a direct scholarly affirmation or contradiction of his argument.^[2]

References

1. as published in two articles in G. Erdosy (ed.) The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia. Berlin/New York 1995
2. WESTWARD HO ! (<http://www.ejvs.laurasianacademycom/ejvs0702/ejvs0702article.pdf>) Michael Witzel, Harvard University
3. The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia: Language, Material Culture and Ethnicity edited by George Erdosy, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-New York, 1995. Page x. Cf. also pp. xviii, 111, 116, 123, criticizing Talageri's book along with a number of contemporary writers including Paramesh Choudhury
4. (see Talageri 2000: chapter 9)
5. Talageri 2000. Talageri points out that Witzel and Erdosy cite the work incorrectly using data earlier used in a review of the Times of India (see Elst 1999, Talageri 2000)
6. (2000: Chapter 8)
7. in two articles in G. Erdosy (ed.) The Indo-Aryans of Ancient South Asia. Berlin/New York 1995
8. (2001: Chapter 2)
9. EJVS 7 (2001), Issue 2 (<http://www.ejvs.laurasianacademycom/issues.html>), ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF VEDIC STUDIES, [ejvs.laurasianacademycom](http://www.ejvs.laurasianacademycom)

10. Hermann Oldenberg, Prolegomena on Metre and Textual History of the Rgveda, New Delhi: Motilal 2005. Talageri has responded by persisting with his alternative, and still controversial, rendering of Rgveda's structure in his next book, The Rigveda and the Avesta, Delhi 2008
11. (Talageri 2001: Chapter 1)

External links

- [Online version](#)
-

Retrieved from 'https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Rigveda:_A_Historical_Analysis&oldid=813340262

This page was last edited on 3 December 2017, at 04:45.

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.