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HORSES AND HORSEMANSHIP IN THE *RIGVEDA*

by

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This thesis is submitted for
the degree of Master of Arts
(Asian Studies) in The Australian
National University.

January 1981

This thesis was written by the undersigned
as a research scholar of the Department of Asian
Civilizations at The Australian National University.

J. Blompton

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
AfB	Archiv für Bienenkunde
AFHB	Archiv für Hygiene und Bakteriologie
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AFR	Archiv für Religionswissenschaft
AIOC	All India Oriental Congress: Summary of Papers
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AJP	American Journal of Philology
AJS	American Journal of Surgery
AMH	Annals of Medical History
ANF	Arkiv for Nordisk Filologie
AO	Acta Orientalia
AO	Archiv Orientalni
AR	Leopold von Schröder's <u>Arische Religion</u>
BJ	Bonner Jahrbücher
BSR	Papers of the British School at Rome
CJ	Classical Journal
DWG	Die Welt als Geschichte
GR	Greece and Rome
GRM	Germanisch-Romanische Monatschrift
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly
IJJ	Indo-Iranian Journal
IMS	Industrial Medicine and Surgery
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JHS	Journal of Hellenic Studies
JISOA	Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Arts
JKDAI	Jahrbuch des Kaiserlich Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
JLHSHL	Jahrbücher für die Landeskunde der Herzogthümer Schlesweg, Holstein und Lauenburg

JOI	Journal of the Oriental Institute Baroda
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
JRASB	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bombay
JUB	Journal of the University of Bombay
JWH	Journal of World History
KEW	M.Mayrhofer's Kurzgefasstes Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen
KZ	Kuhn's Zeitschrift
LQ	Linzer Quartalschrift
MAGW	Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien
MASI	Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India
MDVG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft
MHJ	Middlesex Hospital Journal
MSGFV	Mitteilungen der Schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde
MUVM	Monatsschrift für Unfallheilkunde und Versicherungsmedizin
NM	Natur und Museum
OAA	Orthopaedic Appliance Atlas
OHRJ	Orissa Historical Research Journal
PAOS	Proceedings of the American Oriental Society
PBA	Proceedings of the British Academy
PRIA	Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy
PZSL	Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London
RDSO	Revista degli studi Orientali
RL	Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde
SPHC	Sitzung der philosophisch-historischen Classe
SW	Sanskrit-Wörterbuch of O.Böhtlingk and R.Roth
WBKL	Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik
WzRV	Wörterbuch zum Rgveda of H.Grassmann
ZB	Zoologiska Bidrag
ZDMG	Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

ZDWS	Zeitschrift für Deutsche Wortforschung Sprache
ZfDP	Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie
ZfE	Zeitschrift für Ethnologie
ZFKP	Zeitschrift für Klassische Philologie
ZfV	Zeitschrift für Volkskunde
ZfVS	Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung
ZTZ	Zeitschrift für Tierzüchtig und Zuchtbiologie

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a very pleasant duty to acknowledge before the text of this thesis those individuals who have assisted me in its production. This varies from the occasional inspired suggestion and unintended help to extensive criticism and discussion. I thank you all very much.

My first thanks must go to my first supervisor, Professor A.L. Basham. The topic which he originally suggested was the horse sacrifice. I started on this, but my interests soon expanded and I began to deal with the Indo-European knowledge of the horse. The Rgveda is the principal source material that I use, and this is supplemented with literature from other branches of that extensive family.

From the outset Professor Basham has always been willing to help me with any problem. His advice and guidance on all matters I have presented to him have been most helpful. He encouraged me to come here in the first place, and was instrumental in securing for me an Australian National University Master's scholarship. If this thesis can in any way express the gratitude which I owe to Professor Basham for the labours which he has undertaken for me, then I shall be satisfied.

After Professor Basham left for a position overseas, Dr. Jordens took over responsibility as my chief supervisor. To him I am greatly indebted for all the things he has done for me. I always knew that I could go and see him about any problem and he would do his best to help me.

Invaluable help also came from other quarters. The people who handled the inter-library loans, namely, Mr. A.Bennett, Mr.G.Morris, Mrs.S.O'Reilly, and Mrs.P.Turner, have been very helpful throughout.

All the material that I have needed from libraries either in Australia or overseas I have secured through the generous assistance of these people. They were pleased to help me at all times, and I was always pleased to deal with them.

If it was not for a scholarship provided by the Australian National University I would not have been able to come to Canberra. To the University, therefore, I am greatly indebted and thank all concerned. I believe I have gained much from my stay here, and I will always remember Canberra with deep affection.

I would now like to say a few words about this thesis. I have searched for many an hour for material relevant to my subject. The search has not been easy. The material is there but it is widely scattered. All that material I have included in the bibliography. I hope that it forms a useful supplement to the main text. I also hope that the reader finds as many gems in the literature as I have found when I read through it all.

In addition, I have included a few sketches as an aide in understanding the structure of the chariot and the harness. When reading the chapter on chariotry it may serve as a useful addition.

Should anyone accuse me of being an alien to the subject, may I say that I have ridden and handled horses before. I have never been a professional, but I am acquainted well enough with the horse to be able to speak with some authority.

Because of my interest in horses, I have found this topic of considerable interest. A dedication to the horse, therefore, may seem ridiculous, and it may well be. To the lasting friendship, however, that has endured the ravages of time, between man and horse,

a dedication of thanks may not be that much out of place.

To all those people who have stood by me during these two years, 1979-1980, and have awaited this history, I say thank you. Many names besides those I have already mentioned could be named, but I believe that if they receive as much pleasure in observing or studying the history of man and horse as I have, then I could expect no better reward. And I hope that the reader obtains as much enjoyment from the subject as I have, and I hope will continue to for many more years yet.

INTRODUCTION

Few animals have had such a profound effect on the course of history as the horse. It still finds a use today despite mankind's unsurpassed involvement with and reliance upon machines. The horse may continue to be even more popular simply because of this. Thus what may seem a setback to the horse's continued involvement with mankind could well turn to the horse's favour. Fortunately, there still remains among nearly all peoples a certain fascination for this creature.

Books about horses are readily available today. They cover nearly every imaginable point on the subject from breeds to management and from the horse mind to dressage. What most have in common is that they concern horses and horse management of today: the present. Few consider the horses of yesterday: extending back to humanity's first association with the horse.

There is a wealth of information about horses in mankind's early history. Perhaps the only hindrance is a lack of interest or inability to find it, search through it, and then present the information.

It is perhaps true to say that each age steps on the shoulders of the ages that have gone before. Thus the value of what we have today in large measure reflects our debt to our forerunners. Certainly each age has a different weight to bear, but if we can in any way show our appreciation of the labours of the peoples of antiquity who have bequeathed much to us, it is in the least to record what they did. How they used the horse and the developments revolving around it, including the revolution in land transport and its numerous results, is only a small but singly important development in mankind's attempts to improve both himself and those around him.

Our ancestors had a unique relationship with that noble animal the horse for a long time. Traces of it remain and can be reconstructed.

We can learn about the lives of the people- how they travelled, what religion they had, their economy- by studying their closest companion, the horse. Early peoples' lives were tied with that of the horse because they were dependent on it.

Few people have attempted research on mankind's early association with the horse. Those that do exist are for the most part about horses in the classical civilizations and were written during the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. What is more, most are written in German. It is a regret that the Indo-Europeans' dealings with horses have scarcely received the attention that they deserve. The text that contains the myths and customs of the Āryans-a branch of the Indo-Europeans- is a vast treasure that abounds with information on horses. Why this information has not been fully utilized before is a mystery.

This thesis hopes to reestablish the R̥gveda as an important and vital piece of source material for the early history of the Āryans' use of the horse. Without it, our knowledge and appreciation of the Indo-European indebtedness to and relationship with the horse is diminished. With it, however, our appreciation will increase and a large gap in the history of man's dealings with horses will be filled in.

From the pages of the R̥gveda much can be learnt about the horses of the Āryans. Important to consider is why the horse features so prominently. This question has never really been answered before. The reason is simply because it is regarded as an important animal, if not the most important. It played a role so great that few texts can parallel the lavish praises bestowed on the animal. The Āryans became so dependent on it for their survival that it should be little wonder that it becomes a god.

Once we understand how important the horse is, this deification can be easily understood. The deification of the horse is always important to

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 bear in mind, for it ^{is} the key in understanding much about early horse-lore. In addition, the horse possesses certain qualities that magnify its grandeur. It is a teachable animal and obedient to the master whom it knows well. Many heroes both ancient and modern have had their favourite horse that accompanies them through the thick and thin of battle, or takes their rider to another victory in the race.

As the Āryans became acquainted with horses so too did their knowledge increase. Of this knowledge they have left us much. The horses that draw the chariot or which are ridden would need to have been trained. Kikkuli's horse-training manual -a Hittite document- contains elaborate day-by-day instructions that could have served as a model for the Āryans' horse-trainers in north-western India.

Few areas in horse-lore are lacking in the R̥gveda. For the researcher it is merely a case of what he chooses to include. This thesis is really only a beginning, since much more could be said on the subject. The chapters here have been chosen because they will fill in many gaps on the Āryan and Indo-European contribution to early horse-lore. While the subjects differ sometimes to a great extent, they share in common the single theme of this thesis-, that is, to show the exalted position of the horse that contributed much to the life of a vital people. If any people have come close to acknowledging the horse as the most noble of beasts it is surely the Āryans. To them no other animal could be compared or equalled in nobleness. If only our appreciation of the service and dedication of the horse to humanity can be furthered, then the effort of enquiry will be worthwhile.