

# ON FORTRESSES IN THE RIGVEDA, ATHARVAVEDA ŚAUNAKIYA AND (PRE)HARAPPA AND THE DATING OF THE SAMHITAS

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(Translated by Dileep Karanth)

This paper analyzes all mentions of fortresses in the Rigveda\* and the Atharvaveda Śaunakīya. Comparison with archaeological evidence demonstrates that neither Samhita was composed in the II Millennium BCE. Rigvedic hymns without references to fortresses being besieged or destroyed should be dated between 3300 and 2700 BCE. Rigvedic hymns with the descriptions of fortresses being attacked, demolished and burnt correspond to the period of martial expansion of the bearers of the Mature Harappan Culture of the Upper Sarasvati, Ravi Valley to the Indus Valley, and should be dated between 2700 and 2600 BCE. The Atharvaveda Śaunakīya was created mostly in the Mature Harappan Epoch (2600–1900 BCE) and reflected the flourishing town culture of the North-Western Hindustan.

**Key words:** Rigveda, Atharvaveda Śaunakīya, Early and Mature Harappa, fortresses.

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In the Rigveda (RV hereinafter), forts are mentioned:

- in the 1<sup>st</sup> Maṇḍala [1; 2] 24 times (I.11.4; I.33.13; I.51.5 and 11; I.53.7 and 8; I.54.6; I.58.8; I.61.5; I.63.2 and 7; I.102.7; I.103.3 and 8; I.109.8; I.112.14; I.130.7 and 10; I.131.4; I.149.3; I.166.8; I.173.10; I.174.2 and 8);
- in the II<sup>nd</sup> — 5 times (II.14.6; II.19.6; II.20.7 and 8; II.35.6);
- in the III<sup>rd</sup> — 6 times (III.12.6; III.15.4; III.34.1; III.45.2; III.51.2; III.54.15);
- in the IV<sup>th</sup> — 6 times (IV.16.13; IV.26.3; IV.27.1; IV.30.13 and 20; IV.32.10);
- in the V<sup>th</sup> — 4 times (V.19.2; V.30.11; V.41.12; V.66.4);
- in the VI<sup>th</sup> — 12 times (VI.2.7; VI.16.14 and 39; VI.18.5 and 8; VI.20.3, 7 and 10; VI.31.4; VI.32.3; VI.48.8; VI.73.2);
- in the VII<sup>th</sup> — 12 times (VII.3.7; VII.5.3; VII.6.2; VII.15.14; VII.16.10; VII.18.13; VII.19.5; VII.21.4; VII.26.3; VII.52.1; VII.95.1; VII.99.5);
- in the VIII<sup>th</sup> — 19 times (VIII.1.7, 8 — 2 times, 28; VIII.6.23; VIII.17.14; VIII.32.5; VIII.33.5 and 7; VIII.53.1; VIII.61.8 and 10; VIII.69.8; VIII.73.18; VIII.80.7; VIII.93.2; VIII.97.14; VIII.98.6; VIII.100.8);
- in the IX<sup>th</sup> — 4 times (IX.48.2; IX.61.1–2; IX.88.4; IX.107.10);
- and in the X<sup>th</sup> — 10 times (X.46.5; X.47.4; X.67.5; X.87.22; X.89.7; X.99.7 and 11; X.101.8; X.104.8; X.111.10).

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\* The popular spelling of the Rig Veda and its adjective has been retained in this paper. All other Sanskrit words have been transliterated.

In the Samhitā as a whole, forts are mentioned 102 times in all, 49 of the mentions being in the most ancient part of the text (Maṇḍalas II-VII, IX). In all chronological layers of the text, the form of the forts is described in more or less the same manner. From this evidence, we can draw the well-founded conclusion that forts were an inalienable part of the Rigvedic landscape from the most the ancient times, and at all stages of the composition of this collection of hymns.

The crucial feature of these mentions of fortresses in the RV is that in most instances, the forts are described as being destroyed or captured. We will systematically examine these mentions, Maṇḍala by Maṇḍala, using the method of indirect historical analysis of the text.

In the Ist Maṇḍala, Indra is named as the breaker of a fort (puraṃdara) (I.102.7), and of forts, (pūrāṃ dartaḥ indra (I.130.10), purāṃ bhindúr indro (I.11.4)) and the smasher of fortresses (indrāya arkāṃ juhúvā sám añje / vandādhyai purāṃ darmāṇam) (I.61.5). Indra rent a fort with the help of a sharp-horned bull (ví tigména vṛṣabhéṇā púro 'bhet indraḥ) (I.33.13). He broke Pipru's fort (tuvám pípror prárujaḥ púraḥ) (I.51.5), and shattered the hard fortress of Śuṣṇa (indro ví śuṣṇasya dṛṃhitā airayat púraḥ) (I.51.11. Indra breaks up fort after fort (purá puraṃ sám idāṃ haṃsi ójasā indra) (I.53.7). He shattered a hundred forts of Vaṅgr̥da (tuvám śatā váṅgr̥dasyābhinat púro) (I.53.8). He destroyed ninety-nine forts (tuvám púro navatīm dambhayo náva) (I.54.6). For Purukutsa, Indra drilled through seven forts in battle (tuvám ha tyád indara saptá yúdhyan púro purukútsāya dardaḥ) (I.63.7). He wandered around, cracking the forts of the Dasyus (sá púro vibhindánn acarad ví dāsīḥ) (I.103.3). He destroyed the forts of Śambara (sá púro vibhindánn acarad ví dāsīḥ) (I.103.3). He destroyed the forts of Śambara (ví púraḥ sámbarasya) (I.103.8). He smashed ninety-nine forts on behalf of Puru Divodāsa (bhinát púro navatīm indra pūrāve divodāsāya) (I.130.7). Indra destroyed the autumnal forts (dāno vísa indara mṛdhrāvācaḥ saptá yát púraḥ śárma śáradīr dārt) (I.174.2). Indra suppressed inimical tribes, and destroyed seven forts that were their shelters. Indra is beseeched to split up ungodly crevices as if they were forts (indara bhinát púro ná bhído ádevīr) (I.174.8).

Indra and Agni are together named as the breakers of forts (puraṃdarā indrāgnī) (I.109.8). The Aśvins supported Trasadasyu during the smashing of forts (yābhiḥ pūrbhidyē trasádasyum ávataṃ tábhir ū sú ūtibhir aśvinā gatam) (I.112.14).

According to the IInd Maṇḍala, the breaker of forts, Indra (indaraḥ puraṃdaró) (II.20.7), smashed a hundred of Śambara's forts (yāḥ śatāṃ sámbarasya púro bibheda pūrvīḥ indraḥ) (II.14.6). On behalf of Divodāsa, Indra destroyed ninety-nine of Śambara's forts (divodāsāya navatīm ca náva indraḥ púro ví airac chámbarasya) (II.19.6). Defeating the Dasyus, he overthrew their metallic forts (hatvī dásyūn púra áyasīr ní tārīt) (II.20.8).

According to the IIIrd Maṇḍala, Indra, the smasher of forts (indraḥ pūrbhíd (III.34.1), índram pūrbhídaṃ (III.51.2), indro puraṃdaró (III.54.15)) and blaster of forts (purāṃ darmó indro) (III.45.2), together with Agni, in a single act, shook ninety-nine forts under the Dasas' control (indrāgnī navatīm púro dāsápatnīr adhūnutam / sākám ékena kármaṇā) (III.12.6). The irresistible bull that is Agni is beseeched to shine forth, having conquered all the forts and their goods (áśālho agne vṛṣabhó didīhi púro vísvāḥ saúbhagā samjigīvān) (III.15.4).

According to the IVth Maṇḍala, Indra blew up a fort (púro ví dardaḥ) (IV.16.13). He smashed ninety-nine of Śambara's forts and a hundredth – for the sake of completeness, in the course of aiding Divodāsa Atithigva (ahám púro ví airaṃ náva sākāṃ navatīḥ śámbarasya / śatatamāṃ veśiyāṃ sarvātātā dívodāsam atithigvāṃ yád āvam) (IV.26.3). He smashed Śuśṇa's forts (śuśṇasya púro yád asya sampiṇák) (IV.30.13). For Divodaāsa's sake, Indra smashed a hundred stone forts (śatám aśmanmáyīnām purām índro ví āsiyat dívodāsāya) (IV.30.20). He attacked and destroyed the forts of the Dasas (yá árujaḥ púro dāsīr abhītiya) (IV.32.10).

The Vth Maṇḍala calls Indra a smasher of forts (puraṃdarāḥ índro) (V.30.11).

According to the data provided by the VIth Maṇḍala, the breaker of forts Agni (puraṃdarām) (VI.16.14) smashed forts as if he was a sharp-horned bull (tigmásṅgo ná váṃsagaḥ ágne púro rurójitha) (VI.16.39). Indra smashed Vala, revealed his forts, and all his gates (valám hánn ṛṇóḥ púro ví dúro asya vísvāḥ) (VI.18.5). The smasher of forts, Indra, (purām dartnám) (VI.20.3) rejected Pipra, Śambara, Śuśṇa, for shaking the forts so that they remained lying (vṛṇák pípruṃ śámbarāṃ śuśṇam índraḥ purām cyautnáya śayáthāya nú cit) (VI.18.8). He smashed Pipru's sturdy fort (ví pípror dṛḥhāḥ púro dardaḥ) (VI.20.7). Displaying favour towards Purukutsa, Indra killed the tribes of the Dasa and destroyed seven autumnal forts, which were their refuge (indra saptá yát púraḥ śárma śáradīr dárd dhán dāsīḥ purukútsāya śíkṣan) (VI.20.10). For the sake of Divodāsa and Bharadvaja, Indra overthrew hundreds of impregnable forts of the Dāsa Śambara (tuvām śatāni áva śámbarasya púro jaghantha apratīni dāsyoḥ dívodāsāya bharádvājāya) (VI.31.4). Smasher of forts, he destroyed sturdy forts (púraḥ purohá dṛḥhā ruroja) (VI.32.3). Bṛhaspati also smashes forts (bṛhaspatīr ví púro dardarīti) (VI.73.2).

According to the VIIth Maṇḍala, burning brightly for Puru's sake, the breaker of forts (puraṃdarāsyā) (VII.6.2) Agni flamed up, and blew up forts (pūrāve śósucānaḥ púro yád agne daráyann ádīdeḥ) (VII.5.3). In a single day, Indra destroyed all the strongholds of the leader of the Anus – seven fortresses in all (ví sadyó vísvā dṛṃhitāni eśām índraḥ púraḥ śahasā saptá dardaḥ / ví ánavasya tṛtsave gáyam bhāg) (VII.18.13). In a single day, Indra destroyed ninety-nine forts, and in the evening disposed of the hundredth (náva yát púro navatīm ca sadyāḥ nivésane śatatamāviveṣīr) (VII.19.5). Indra shook forts (índraḥ púro ví dūdhod) (VII.21.4). Indra powerfully drew to himself all the forts, as a common husband draws his wives to himself (jánīr iva pátīr ékaḥ samāno ní māmṛje púra índraḥ sú sárvaḥ) (VII.26.3). Indra-Vishnu destroyed ninety-nine of Śambara's sturdy forts (índrāvīṣṇū dṛṃhitāḥ śámbarasya náva púro navatīm ca śnathiṣṭam) (VII.99.5).

The VIIIth Maṇḍala informs us that best among the destroyers of forts is Indra (tvā pūrbhittamam indra) (VIII.53.1); he destroys all forts (tuvām hí śásvatīnām índra dartá purām ási) (VIII.98.6) (puraṃdara (VIII.1.7) puraṃdarāḥ (VIII.1.8), puraṃdaró (VIII.61.10)); Indra (índro pūrbhíd (VIII.33.5), puraṃdarām índraṃ (VIII.61.8)), smashes forts (bhinat púraḥ) (VIII.1.8). He smashed Śuśṇa's moving fort with a deadly weapon (tuvām púraṃ cariṣṇúvaṃ vadhaīḥ śuśṇasya sám piṇak indra) (VIII.1.28). With the strength of his arms, he shattered ninety-nine fortresses (náva yó navatīm púro bibheda bāhúojasā) (VIII.93.2). With great strength, he smashes forts (ayām yāḥ púro vibhinátti ójasā) (VIII.33.7); Indra knows how to devastate forts with force (tuvām púra indara cikíd enā ví ójasā nāśayādhyai) (VIII.97.14). Indra

is beseeched to break through the reinforcements as if they were a fort full of cows (á na indra mahím ísam púram ná darši gómatīm) (VIII.6.23). He is invoked to smash a corral of cows and Aśvas as if it was a fort (sá gór áśvasya ví vrajám púram ná daršasi) (VIII.32.5). A drop is the breaker of all forts (drapsó bhettá purám śásvatīnām) (VIII.17.14). An unknown brave man, besieged by black tribes, is requested to break the siege as if it was a fort (púram ná dhṛṣṇav á ruja kṣṇáyā bādhitó viśá) (VIII.73.18).

In the IXth Maṇḍala, it is said that the intoxication of Soma (asi soma pūrbhít) (IX.88.4), the smasher of forts, was capable of tearing down a hundred forts (mádam śatám púro ruruksānim) (IX.48.2), and that Indra smashed ninety-nine forts on Divodāsa's behalf in a single day (avāhan navatír náva // púraḥ sadyá dívodāsāya) (IX.61.1–2).

In the Xth Maṇḍala, Agni is named as a smasher of forts (purám darmāṇam) (X.46.5). The breaker of forts (pūrbhíd) (X.111.10) Indra is beseeched to grant wealth to the smashers of forts (pūrbhídám indra asmábhyaṃ rayím dāḥ) (X.47.4). He destroyed forts (rurója púro índro) (X.89.7) during the killing of the Dasyus (púro abhinad dasyuhátye) (X.99.7), and seized them in a modified guise (púra abhí várpasā bhūt) (X.99.11). Brihaspati cut asunder a fortress-lair (vibhídya púram śayáthem bḥhaspátir) (X.67.5).

Thus, in the Ist Maṇḍala of the RV, the storming or destruction of forts is mentioned 19 times, and

- in the IInd, 4 times,
- in the IIIrd, 6 times,
- in the IVth, 5 times
- in the Vth, once
- in the VIth, 10 times,
- in the VIIth, 7 times,
- in the VIIIth, 16 times,
- in the IXth, 3 times,
- and in the Xth, 8 times.

In total, in the Saṃhitā, there are 79 instances of the capture and destruction of forts, which constitute 77% of the total number (102) of mentions of forts in the ancient text. Let us consider the ratio of the number of instances of attacks on forts and their destruction, on the one hand, and “peaceful” mentions on the other, in each Maṇḍala of the RV:

- in the Ist Maṇḍala, 83% to 17 %, or 19/4 mentions respectively;
- in the IInd Maṇḍala, 80% to 20 %, or 4/1 mentions respectively;
- in the IIIrd Maṇḍala, 100% to 0 %, or 6/0 mentions respectively;
- in the IVth Maṇḍala, 83% to 17 %, or 5/1 mentions respectively;
- in the Vth Maṇḍala, 25% to 75 %, or 1/3 mentions respectively;
- in the VIth Maṇḍala, 83% to 17 %, or 10/2 mentions respectively;
- in the VIIth Maṇḍala, 58% to 42 %, or 7/5 mentions respectively;

- in the VIIIth Maṇḍala, 84% to 16 %, or 16/3 mentions respectively;
- in the IXth Maṇḍala, 75% to 25 %, or 3/1 mentions respectively;
- in the Xth Maṇḍala, 80% to 20 %, or 8/2 mentions respectively;

That is, the part of the hymns comprising 9 Maṇḍalas of the Rigveda out of 10 (I-IV & VI-X) was composed in the period of intensive storming and destruction of forts. To these facts, we must add two other pieces of information: one, that Indra gave Śambara many jolts – destroyed ninety-nine ramparts (índro purúṇi yás cyautaná śámbarasya ví navatím náva ca dehíyo hán) (VI.47.2), and second, that Agni compelled the ramparts to bow down by means of a deadly weapon (yó dehíyo ánamayad vadhasnair agnir) (VII.6.5). In another hymn, it is further said that the poet puts a Vajra into the hands of Indra, with which he drives enemies into numerous forts (á te vājraṃ jaritá bāhuvór dhāt / yénāviharyatakrato amitrān púra iṣṇási pūrvīḥ) (I.63.2).

In the same way, it must be said that the seized and destroyed forts of the RV are portrayed together with conflagrations which are said to have taken place in them (that is, with the participation of Agni): (púraṃdarā indrāgnī (I.109.8), indrāgnī navatím púro dāsápatnīr adhūnutam / sākám ékena kármaṇā (III.12.6), áśāḥho agne vṣṣabhó didīhi púro vísvāḥ saúbhagā samjigīvān (III.15.4), [about Agni:] puraṃdarám (VI.16.14), tigmásṛṅgo ná váṃsagaḥ ágne púro rurójiṭha (VI.16.39), [about Agni:] puraṃdarásya (VII.6.2), pūráve sósucānaḥ púro yád agne daráyann ádīdeḥ (VII.5.3), [about Agni:] purám darmāṇam (X.46.5)). This is the third fact of singular importance.

We can thus draw a well-founded conclusion that the composers of the RigVeda belonged to an ethnic-cultural group, who were familiar with the siege and seizure of forts and conflagrations within them.

At the same time, the forts were not rarities to the poets who composed the RV, since they used their imagery repeatedly, and in different chronological layers of the texts, in “peaceful” contexts. Let us consider them again, Maṇḍala by Maṇḍala.

In Maṇḍala I, Agni is beseeched to create for those who laud him wideness instead of narrowness with the help of metallic forts (ágne gṛántam áṃhasa uruṣya pūrbhír áyasībhiḥ) (I.58.8). Agni illuminated Narmini’s fort (á yáḥ púraṃ nármiṇīm ádīded) (I.149.3). The Maruts are invoked to protect forts against a hundred bends of evil and deceit (śatábhujibhis tám abhíhruter aghāt pūrbhí rakṣatā maruto yám ávata) (I.166.8). Seekers of allies approach the lords of forts (mitrāyúvo ná púrpatiṃ súśiṣṭau) (I.173.10).

According to the facts of the IIInd Maṇḍala, the forts of Apam Napat made of raw clay are not overtaken by ill-will or injustice (ámásu pūrsú paró apramṣyám nárātayo ví naśan nánṛtāni) (II.35.6).

According to the IVth Maṇḍala, Soma was guarded in a hundred metallic forts (śatám mā púra áyasīr arakṣann) (IV.27.1).

In Maṇḍala V mention is made of the penetration into a hard fort (á dṛḥám púraṃ viviśuḥ) (V.19.2), waters that are likened to hard shining forts (ápaḥ púro ná śubhrāḥ) (V.41.12); the

mystical meaning of the forts is revealed in a spiritual or symbolic study of the RV; “Lo, O wondrous! Through the strongholds of reason thanks to the insight of people, You perceive poetical insights, O you with Pure intellects!” (ádhā hí káviyā yuvám dákṣasya pūrbhír adbhutā / ní ketúnā jánānām cikéthe pūtakṣasā) (V.66.4).

In the VIth Maṇḍala, a joyful old man in a fort is described (raṇváḥ puríva júriyaḥ) (VI.2.7); Agni is beseeched to protect against the narrowness of a hundred forts (agne śatám pūrbhír páhi áṃhasaḥ) (VI.48.8).

In the VIIth Maṇḍala, Agni is beseeched to protect by means of a hundred metallic forts (no agne śatám pūrbhír áyasībhir ní páhi) (VII.3.7); he is asked to be a great metallic fort in a hundred bends for the protection of men (ádhā mahí na áyasī nṛpītaye pūūr bhavā śatábhujih) (VII.15.14), and to save them from the narrowness of a hundred forts (áṃhasaḥ pipṛhi śatám pūrbhír) (VII.16.10). Poets wish to be forts among the Devas and the mortals (siyāma pūr devatrā martiyatrā) (VII.52.1). Sarasvatī is called a metallic fort (sárasvatī áyasī pūḥ) (VII.95.1).

In the VIIIth Maṇḍala, Indra is called a fort (índra pūr asi) (VIII.80.7), and he is loudly praised as a fort (púram ná dhṛṣṇú arcata) (VIII.69.8). We are informed that the eagle broke through a metallic fort, reached the sky, and brought Soma to Indra (āyasīm atarat púram / dívam suparṇó gatváya sómam vajríṇa ábharat) (VIII.100.8).

In the IXth Maṇḍala, it is mentioned that a troop of warriors enters a fort (jāno purí viśad) (IX.107.10).

The poets of the Xth Maṇḍala desire to surround themselves with a fort of Agni (pári tvāgne púram vayám dhīmahi) (X.87.22), and desire to render metallic forts unapproachable (púraḥ kṛnudhvam áyasīr ádhṛṣṭā) (X.101.8).

In the most ancient part of the Atharvaveda Śaunaka (AVŚ hereinafter) forts of the living (jīvapurā) (II.9.3; V.30.6) and those of the gods (devapurā) (V.8.6; V.28.9) are mentioned; in particular, three forts of Devas (tistró devapurās) (V.28.10), which are amulets of gold, silver and copper/bronze: (divás tvā pātu háritam mádh<sup>h</sup>yāt tvā pātu árjunam / bhūmyā ayasmáyaṃ pātu // imás tistró devapurás tás tvā rakṣantu sarvátaḥ / tás tvám bíb<sup>h</sup>rad varcasvy úttaro dviśatám bhava) (V.28.9–10). A gold amulet is called the fortress of the Devas (púram devānām amṛtam híraṇyam yá ābed<sup>h</sup>é prat<sup>h</sup>amó devó ágre) (V.28.11). Poets wish to surround themselves with an Agni-fort (pári tvāgne púram vayám dhīmahi) (VII.74.1).

In the second chronological layer of the AVŚ, a desire is expressed to surround oneself with an Agni-fort (pári tvāgne púram vayám dhīmahi) (VIII.3.22). Indra is mentioned as splitting forts (índro puramdarāḥ) (VIII.8.1); a golden fort of Brahman enveloped in immortality is described (yó vaí tām bráhmaṇo védāmṛtenávṛtām púram) (X.2.29). There is a mention of the conquest of the golden forts of the Asuras-Dānavas by the moon (candráma ásurānām púro 'jayad dānavānām híraṇyáyīḥ) (X.6.10), and of the fact that the Angirasas destroyed the forts of the Dasyus (ángiraso dásyūnām bíb<sup>h</sup>iduh púras) (X.6.20). There is a mention of the forts of the Devas (devapurā) (XI.10.17), and forts created by the Devas (púro devákṛtāḥ) (XII.1.43).

In this part of the AVŚ a most important indication is repeated that man – Puruṣa – is named after the mystical fort of Brahman (púram yó bráhmaṇo véda yásyāḥ púruṣa ucyáte) (X.10.2.28=30), that is, the authors of the Samhitā understand by the word “man” (puruṣa) “a resident of a fort, a city dweller”. Such a perception is characteristic of an advanced city culture.

In the chronologically last block of the AVŚ there is a mention of the female Shiva, entering the fort of the Devas as a bride (anāvyaḍ<sup>h</sup>ám devapurám prapádyā śívā) (XIV.1.64). Poets call for making metallic forts impregnable (púraḥ kṛṇud<sup>h</sup>vam áyasīr ád<sup>h</sup>rṣṭā) (XIX.58.4). Agni (agnír mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.1), Vāyu (vāyúr mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.2), Soma (sómo mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.3), Varuṇa (váruṇo mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.4), Sūrya (sūryo mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.5), the waters (ápo mā pāntu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.6), Viśvakarman (viśvákarmā mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.7), Indra (índro mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.8), Prajāpati (prajāpatir mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.9), Brihaspati (bṛhaspátir mā pātu táṃ púram praími) (XIX.17.10), Mitra and Prithivī (mitráḥ pṛ<sup>h</sup>thivyód akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.1), Vāyu and Antariṅkṣa (vāyúr antárikṣeṇód akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.2), Sūrya and the sky (sūryo divód akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.3), the Moon and the lunar asterisms (candrāmā náksatrair úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.4), Soma and the herbs (sóma oṣad<sup>h</sup>ib<sup>h</sup>ir úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.5), the sacrifice with sacrificial rewards (dakṣiṇā) (yajñó dáksīṇāb<sup>h</sup>ir úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.6), the ocean and the rivers (samudró nadīb<sup>h</sup>ir úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.7), Brahman and Brahmacārīs (bráhma brahmacārib<sup>h</sup>ir úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.8), Indra and virility (índro víryeṇód akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.9), Devas and immortality (devā amṛtenód akrāmams táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.10), Prajāpati and his descendants (prajāpatih<sup>h</sup>ir úd akrāmat táṃ púram prá ṇayāmi vaḥ) (XIX.19.11) are identified with forts. The whole universe is conceived of by the composers of the hymns as an aggregate of forts, which again provides an indication that the composers of the AVŚ belonged to an advanced city culture.

In the whole AVŚ there are only three mentions of the storming and destruction of forts (VIII.8.1; X.6.10, 20), which indicates that the text was composed during a period of development of Vedic urban civilization, which was on the whole peaceful.

Let us now see which archaeological facts correspond to the analysis of mentions of forts in the RV and the AVŚ.

T.Y. Elizarenkova starts with an idea that is traditional for the theory of the invasions or settlement of the Aryans in India, the images of the Dāsas and Dasyus, defending the forts, are autochthonous tribes of India of non-Indo-European origin, whom the Indo-Aryans subdued in the course of their advances deep into South Asia from the north-west, in the second millennium BCE [5. pp. 195, 215]. However, none of the historical reconstructions in this respect cited by the translator of the RV into Russian (those of M. Wheeler, A. Parpola, E.E. Kuz'mina, V.I. Sarianidi, G.B. Zdanovich) take into account an unquestionable archaeological fact – that in the layers of the archaeological sites of the IIInd millennium BCE of northwest India, that is, the region inhabited by the composers of the RV (from the Yamuna (V.52.17; VII.18.19, X.75.5)

and Ganga (VI.45.31; X.75.5) Doab in the east, to the north-west tributaries of the Indus (IV.21.4; IV.43.6; V.53.9; V.61.19; VIII.24.30; X.75.6) in the west, and from the Himalayas in the north to the places where the Indus and Sarasvati rivers flow into the Indian Ocean (I.13.12; VII:95.2)), no traces of storming, destruction and burning of any kind of fortified settlements have been found. Thus, the RV (and also the AVŚ) cannot be dated to the II<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE judging by this criterion.

The first fortified settlements in the valleys of the Indus and the Sarasvati (the modern ephemeral river Sarsuti-Ghaggar-Hakra-Nara) appear between 3300 and 2900 years BCE. According to D. K. Chakrabarti, already at this stage, a number of “clearly outlined archaeological components” including settlements with outer walls, the construction of planned housing with standardized bricks, grid (planning of quarters, and division of the settlement into two fortified sectors appear. D. K. Chakrabarti points out that “urban society appeared in the Indian region as early as 3300 BCE, or around the middle of the fourth millennium BCE.” [6. Pp. 91-92].

R. Coningham and R. Young summarized the facts regarding the first fortified settlements of India, of the Kot Diji phase (circa 3200-2600 BCE), named for the eponymous site Kot Diji in the Rohri Hills north-east of Amri on the eastern bank of the Indus. This site gave evidence of a notable concentration of population inside formally planned settlements built with raw-brick behind fortifications or defensive walls. The extent of the Kot Diji site itself was 2.6 hectares, and its outer wall (whose remnants stood as tall as 1.65 m in some places) was built of raw bricks laid on a foundation of rough limestone blocks, and was additionally fortified with buttresses (one of which was 6.1 m wide, and 4-5 m high). Inside the walls were residential buildings made of raw brick on stone foundations. The same model of preplanned and fortified centres appeared in Harappa (on the river Ravi) in Punjab, Kalibangan on the river Sarasvati and in Rehman Dheri on the river Gomati west of the Indus in the south of the Pakistani province Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. At Harappa the sediments of the Kot Diji phase have a thickness of 1.5 m on an area of 26 ha in two mounds AB and E. In the northwest part of mound E, there is a series of massive parallel walls of raw brick, stretching for more than 50 metres from the north to the south, with a thickness of 2 m, built with bricks 10 cm by 20 cm by 40 cm in size, in the well-known standard ratio 1:2:4, which prevailed in the later Mature Harappan period. Along the western boundary of the mound AB, Kot Diji bricks have been observed beneath a massive wall, which indicates the simultaneous fortification of both hills by means of walls. The Kalibangan Phase of Kot Diji (Period I, 2920-2550 BCE) presents a settlement whose sides were oriented along the cardinal directions, of dimensions roughly 250 by 180 m, with a 1.9-m high wall made of raw bricks of size 30 X 20 X 10 cm, with an exit to the north, and whose outer and inner surface was lined. Inside the wall was a settlement of area 4.5 ha, with residential buildings made of raw brick of the same proportions, which were oriented along the cardinal directions, and drains made of burnt brick to protect against flooding. At the site Rehman Dheri, which was founded circa 3300 BCE, a surrounding defensive wall was built immediately, along with a well-planned city in the form of a rough parallelogram, with all canals dug for water following the same strict model of lines running parallel to the streets. The important streets ran from the north-west to the south-east. The main streets ran from the north-west to the south-east. In its



earliest stage, the 16 ha settlement had been surrounded by a wall made of lined blocks of clay slabs and raw bricks, built on a 5m wide foundation which was sunk 0.3 m into the ground. At later times, around 12,000 people lived in this settlement measuring 550 X 400 m (22 ha). [7. pp. 160-165] The Kot Diji Phase in Harappa is dated to 2800-2600 BCE by D.M. Kenoyer. [8. pp. 109 & 115].

At Dholavira in Kutch (Gujarat) the first fortress was built in Stage I (around 3000-2900 BCE). [9. p. 403; 10. Pp. 95 & 104-105]

Thus, it is possible to date the hymns of the RV to 3300-2900 BCE, when the first fortified settlements begin to appear in north-west India. Now let us determine the time when the composition of the RV was completed. This can be dated much more exactly, on account of the fact that in the pre-Achaemenid history of North-west India, there is only one archaeologically determined period of massive destruction and burning of fortified settlements, which was followed by a long period of peaceful existence of a network of fortresses.

Archaeologists have determined that the Sarasvati Valley became the nucleus of the unification of (a part of) the bearers of the Pre-Harappan and Early Harappan (Hakra, Amri-Nal, Kot Diji, Quetta, Damb Sadaat, Sothi-Sisval, Padri, Anarta, et al.) into a single Mature Harappan civilization at some time before 2600 BCE. According to the findings of B.B. Lal, the Mature Harappan civilization appeared in the region between Kot Diji (on the Indus) in the south-west, Banawali (on the Sarasvati) in the north-east, and Rehman Dheri (on the Gomal) in the north-west. Here two important patterns are observed. First, while in the Indus Valley relatively few Early Harappan sites have been found (44 in Sindh, and 6 in Pakistani Punjab), on the other hand, in the Ghaggar-Sarasvati Valley, 177 Early Harappan sites (excluding sites with the even more ancient Hakra ceramics) and 238 Mature Harappan sites have been discovered. Moreover, already in the Early Harappan period, in Cholistan (which is the part of Sarasvati Valley connecting it to the Indus Valley) there existed sizeable townships such as Jalvali (22.5 ha) and Gamanwala (27.5 ha), and in the Mature Harappan period, in the basin of the same river, there appear enormous settlements such as Ganweriwala (81.3 ha) and Rakhigarhi (on the Drishadvati, Hissar region, Haryana). Second, and more important for the purposes of our research, archaeologists identified traces of conflagrations in the western settlements of the formative stages of the Harappan civilization just before their settlement by the bearers of the Mature Harappan culture: at Kot Diji I on the lower left bank of the Indus, and especially to the west of the Indus – Nausharo ID and Gumla III; at Rana Ghundai III, the settlement was abandoned after being burned, but the large Mature Harappan settlement Dabar Kot arose nearby. However, no traces of conflagration have been identified in the settlements of the Sarasvati and Ravi valleys, a fact that clearly shows a movement of the creators of the Mature Harappan civilization from the east and north-east to the west and the south into the Indus basin, and the martial subjugation of these territories. [11. pp. 333-335]

G.L. Possehl draws attention to the break in cultural continuity or to the depopulation of sites) at the end of the Early Harappan period at the settlements at Balakot (in the Indus delta), Kot Diji (on the Indus) (in the Pakistani province of Sindh), Gumla (at the confluence of the Gomal and the Indus), Amri (on the Indus) (in Dadu district in the Pakistani province of Sindh)

and Nausharo (in Baluchistan). In Balakot, the settlement had been abandoned for a few centuries between Period I of the regional Amri-Nal culture and the Mature Harappan culture of Period II. At Kot Diji, clear traces of burning have been identified in the lower residential parts and on the upper hill, and a thick layers of ash and charcoal throughout the settlement completely separates the lower levels (Kot Diji I) from the higher (Mature Harappan). At Gumla, Period III (Kot Diji Phase I) is separated from the level of the Later Kot Diji by traces of burning and a layer of ash, charcoal, bones and shards, indicating violence. In Amri, Period II (Transitional Stage) ends with a great conflagration and the upper layers have been darkened by fire, and contain ash. In Nausharo, in Period I, during the Transitional Phase, two architectural complexes were severely burned and the walls were reddened by heat. According to Possehl, three facts of singular importance are evident: that the fires at these sites were great; they are related to the period of transition between the Early and the Mature Harappan phases; there are almost no, or absolutely no such traces of fires in these or other sites before or after the transition from Early to Mature Harappan. Besides, as Possehl observes, a large number of Mature Harappan sites were founded on virgin soil, whereas several Early Harappan sites were abandoned and not settled again during the Mature Harappan period. This may be regarded as yet another form of destruction of the usual way of life in the history of the settlements of the Greater Indian region. In Cholistan, 33 out of 37 settlements of the Early Harappan Kot Diji phase were abandoned; in the Mature Harappan period 132 out of 136 settlements were laid on virgin soil. In Sindh, in the lower stretches of the Indus, out of 52 Early Harappan settlements, 22 continued to exist in the Mature Harappan period; 29 of them were abandoned; out of 65 Mature Harappan settlements, 43 were established on virgin soil. This fact is an indication of the rupture between the two historical phases of the cultures of the Indus Age, and provides evidences of burning. [12. pp. 47-50]

At the site Gandi Umar Khan no evidence of a transition from the Kot Diji phase to the Mature Harappan phase has been found and there is a layer of ash 0.55 m thick between these two levels. [13. p. 135; 14]. In the lower stretches of the Drishadvati, at the Karanpur site (around Hanumangarh, Rajasthan), in the layer marking the end of the Early Harappan period, there are traces of a great fire in five tranches, and remains of buildings which have burned and collapsed along with their pillars. [15. P.19]

However, at Harappa on the river Ravi (Hakra ceramic culture (= Ravi Phase) → (proto)city of the Kot Diji Phase → city of Mature and Later Harappan Phases), and near the upper stretches of the Sarasvati and Drishadvati, the process of cultural change was gradual and showed no catastrophic ruptures.

Thus, the site Farmana in district Rohtak in the state of Haryana contains successive cultural layers from the Pre-Harappan period (Hakra ceramic culture) to the mature Harappan. At the Mitathal site in district Rohtak in the state of Haryana cultural continuity from the Pre-Harappan through the Mature Harappan to the Late Harappan periods has been discerned. [16. P.156]

In the Ghaggar-Sarasvati basin in Haryana, at the Kunal site in the Hissar district, at Bhirrana in Fatehabad district, at Giravad and Farmana in the Rohtak district, it has been

possible to trace the process of formation of the urban culture of the Mature Harappa period, based on the Early Harappan Regional Cultural Traditions of Hakra and Sothi-Sisval, which flourished in the IVth-Millennium to the first half of the IIIrd Millennium BCE. [17. P. 1]

Ceramic ware of the Eastern Hakra Phase (IVth millennium BCE) has been found together with residences sunk deep into the ground at Kunal and Bhirrana, as well as at many sites in the Hissar, Jhind and Rohtak districts in the state of Haryana. Out of the Hakra ceramic tradition emerges a second kind of ceramic ware of the Early Harappan period, which reflects a certain influence of elements from Kot Diji, and is called the Sothi-Sisval Complex (first half of the IIIrd millennium BCE). During this period, most wares of the Hakra ceramic tradition continue to exist. The third kind of ware to emerge is the Mature Harappan ceramic complex. At Mitathal there is no cultural break between Sisval B (the Early Harappan culture) and Later Sisval (Mature Harappan). In Period IIA in Mitathal appears the Mature Harappan culture, but wares of the Early Harappan Ceramic type continued to be recorded as before in the early and middle layers of the Mature Harappan period. A similar situation prevails in Farmana. In Bhirrana and Banawali, Sothi-Sisval elements (especially ceramic) are present in the Mature Harappan phase. [18. P.67, 72, 77, 82-83]

At Kanank-I, Kunal, Bhirrana, Farmana and Girawad, the Eastern Hakra Phase culture successfully evolved into the Sothi-Sisval stage. In the Sisval A Stage the characteristic traits of the Eastern Hakra Phase ceramic tradition continues to exist in the Manheru-I, Misra-I, Jhijhar and Morwal sites, which were founded circa 3200 BCE. In the Sisval B (Later Sisval) Stage, circa 2800 BCE, Mitathal and the surrounding sites were founded, in which the more ancient ceramic complex Sisval A is completely absent, but evolved forms of the Sisval B ceramic complex appear. In the course of the spread of the Sothi-Sisval Phase beyond the limits of the Sarasvati and Drishadvati valleys, many more settlements were founded. In the Mature Harappan Period, in the peripheral regions of the valleys of the two above-mentioned rivers, there were no sharp cultural changes; most Early Harappan sites continued to survive in rural conditions, and to retain most elements of Early Harappan culture; Mitathal and Manhera continued to function as regional centres, supplying raw materials and finished goods to larger Mature Harappan sites in the Sarasvati-Drishadvati valley. During the Mature Harappan period, Mitathal acquires the typical Harappan form of a double hill with a citadel, and a lower-lying city; mature Harappan pottery is found, and the material sediments attest to the economic efflorescence in comparison with the Early Harappan period. [19. P. 516-517, 520-521; 20. P. 48]

On the river Drishadvati (= Chautang) the site Rakhigarhi (biggest site in the Mature Harappan period) existed from the end of the Vth millennium to the end of the IIIrd millennium BCE. [21. P. 34; 22. P. 10]

The spatio-temporal distribution of Mature Harappan Painted pottery is remarkable. It has now been observed at 47 sites: 4 in Gujarat, 17 in the Ghaggar-Sarasvati Basin (including Indian Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana), 2 in Pakistani Punjab, 11 in Sindh and 12 in Baluchistan (including Baluchistan and the province of Khyber-Pukhtoonkhwa in Pakistan). The extensive spread attests to the rapid expansion of the afore-mentioned culture in the early part of the Mature Harappan period. Mature Harappan painted pottery used to be placed inside graves,

along with Mature Harappan unpainted pottery, and local pottery and dishes were used all over these settlements. This indicates that the spread of Mature Harappan pottery was simultaneous with the movement of the population. [23. P. 211 & 214]

The Mature Harappan era is characterized by a long period of peaceful existence of fortified settlements at Banawali on the Sarasvati, Kalibangan on the Sarasvati, Rakhigarhi on the Drishadvati, Balu (Haryana), Harappa on the Ravi, Mohenjo-Daro on the Indus, Kot Diji on the Indus, Dholavira (Kutch, Gujarat), Surkotada (Kutch, Gujarat), Desalpur (Kutch, Gujarat), Kuntasi on the river Phulki (Gujarat), Lothal on the Sabarmati (Gujarat), Sutkagen Dor on the Dasht (Makran) et al. [24. P. 26-62]

Comparison of the archaeological data and the references to forts in the RV and AVS allows us to draw the following conclusions. Hymns of the RV, which make no mention of forts being stormed or destroyed, must be dated between 3300 and 2700 BCE. Hymns of the RV which describe the capture, destruction and burning of forts are related to the period of martial expansion of the Mature Harappan culture from the upper stretches of the Sarasvati and the Ravi Valley into the Indus Valley, and must be dated to 2700-2600 BCE. The AVS is for the most part a product of an evolved urban civilisation during a relatively peaceful stage of its development, that is, the AVS must have been composed basically during the Mature Harappan period (2600-1900 BCE) at a stage of efflorescence of urban culture in north-west India.

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### **Translator's Dedication:**

The translator dedicates this translation to the memory of his dear departed teacher, Prof. Ganesh Marathe.

A successful Chartered Accountant, he changed his career in his mid-forties to learn Russian at Moscow State University. Upon his return from the Soviet Union, he taught Russian to Indian Navy trainees for about three years. Later he joined the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology-Mumbai, where he taught till his retirement. Prof. Marathe continued to teach Russian *gratis* in classes organized by the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society. Generations of students remember him not only for his dedication to the Russian language, but for his honesty and helpfulness. I regret being of no service to him during his illustrious lifetime, but I am glad to honour his memory this year, the centennial of his birth.