Gandhāra Graves and the Gharma Pot, the Nāsatyas and the Nose: In Pursuit of the Chariot Twins

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Introduction

In September 2004, the veteran Greek-Russian archaeologist Viktor I. Sarianidi is 75. I am grateful to Professor Nadezhda A. Dubova for giving me this opportunity to congratulate my respected and dear friend on his jubilee day. Disregarding his age, Viktor Sarianidi continues his labour of love, indefatigable research into the past of Central Asia. During his long career, Viktor Sarianidi has made many remarkable discoveries, including the royal cemetery of the Kuṣāṇas at Tillya Tepe in Afghanistan, but above all he will be remembered for his disclosing the Bronze Age oasis culture in northern Afghanistan and southern Turkmenistan, "the Bactria and Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC)", as he chose to call it. In 1990, I had the pleasure of visiting Viktor Sarianidi's excavations at Gonur, the ancient capital of Margiana, where he has continued digging all these past 15 years, the last years exposing thousands of graves in the necropolis of Gonur.

The spring season of 2004 culminated in yet another triumph, when Viktor Sarianidi unearthed a royal vehicle burial, the first of its kind in Viktor's career.[1] The vehicle found is a four-wheeled wagon, not yet completely exposed when this paper was finished (in July 2004). It has a seat built of at least four but possibly five planks each measuring 20 x 90 cm. This seat is largely placed over the rear axle. The length of the axle is at least 1,8 m, and the distance between the two axles is 1,1 m. The wheels have a diameter of 70 cm. They were made of wooden planks and the whole surface of the rim was covered with 3 cm broad and (including the 'ears') altogether 5 cm high 'shoes' made of bronze (each covering 1/6 of the circle). Each shoe had three 'ears' on either side, these 'ears' measuring 3.5 cm in height and 3 cm in breadth; for fixing the 'shoe' to the wooden wheel, each 'ear' accommodated a bronze rivet 1 cm thick and 8 cm long, including the bronze 'hats' on either side with a diameter of 1.8 cm. Just behind the wagon, with its head on one of the wheels, was the skeleton of a young horse, and next to another wheel was the complete skeleton of a camel. There were skeletons of three people: a woman over 60 years old and two youths aged around 14-16 (Sarianidi 2004.)

A wheel with the diameter of 105 cm and the rim covered with six such bronze 'shoes' and another wheel with the diameter of 75 cm and four such 'shoes' have previously been discovered at Susa, but apparently nowhere else, and they are assumed to date from the end of the third millennium (cf. Nagel 1986: 22, with further references on p. 361). The new wagon find from Gonur thus agrees with a large amount of other evidence pointing to Elam and Susa as one of the principal sources of cultural influence upon the BMAC (cf. Amiet 1986; also Potts 2001 suggesting that the name of the goddess Nānā worshipped by the Kushans in Afghanistan came to BMAC via Susa at the end of the third millennium BC).

As noted by Sarianidi (2004), the vehicle now found in a royal grave at Gonur is not a chariot used for war or sport, but a more archaic type of conveyance that may have survived to the second millennium in the funeral function. Sarianidi himself, believing that the BMAC people spoke an Indo-Iranian language, had rather expected a chariot with spoked wheels to be found in Gonur, for he recently enumerated evidence of various kins to show that the BMAC knew the domesticated horse and the chariot (Sarianidi 2001: 434-5). Particularly important in this connection are (1) a grave in Gonur containing the body of a headless young horse and (2) the aristocratic grave that came to light at Zardcha Khalifa near the site of Sarazm in the Zeravshan Valley of Tajikistan a few years ago (cf. Bobomulloev 1997). The Zardcha Khalifa grave contained typical BMAC pottery and other artefacts of the Sapalli-Dzharkutan phase of the BMAC on the one hand, and a horse-topped bronze scepter, two horse-bits of bronze, and fragments of four cheek-pieces made of bone on the other hand. Sarianidi (2001: 430) thinks that the Aryans of the BMAC came from the Near East. But the linguistic evidence consisting of Proto-Indo-European and (Pre-) Proto-Aryan loanwords in Finno-Ugric languages rather suggests that the Proto-Aryan homeland was in southern Russia (see Carpelan & Parpola 2001; Parpola 2002a: 79ff.).

Whether the light spoke-wheeled chariot drawn by two horses was first developed in the ancient Near East or in the South Russian steppes is still a debated issue. Stuart Piggott (1983: 27; 1992: 48-49), pointing to the fact that the natural habitat of the wild horse was on the Eurasian steppes and that it was first domesticated there, suggested that the steppes were also the area where the horse was first used to pull light spoke-wheeled vehicles, while organized chariotry and chariot-warfare was developed in the sophisticated political setting of the ancient Near East. The cheek-pieces of Zardcha Khalifa are of the same type as the bone cheek-pieces found in situ upon horse skulls in chariot burials at Sintashta in the southern Urals (cf. Gening et al. 1992: I, photo 20 and 133: fig. 57). This seems to indicate that the Zardcha Khalifa chariot came from the Sintashta-Arkaim culture (c. 2200-1800 calBC)[2] (cf. Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 95-98, 131-132, 136-138; Parpola 2002b: 242-3).

A well-known cylinder seal with the image of a horse-drawn chariot from Tepe Hissar III B suggests that these Uralic type chariots simultaneously spread to northern Iran as well; the following III C phase of Tepe Hissar (c. 1900-1750 BC) is nowadays considered to represent a BMAC extension from Bactria-Margiana to northern Iran, and Tepe Hissar III C in turn has been considered as the source of those Proto-Indo-Aryan speaking nobles who took over the rule of the Hurrian-speaking Mitanni kingdom of Syria c. 1500 B.C. as masters of chariotry (cf. Parpola 2002a: 74-79, 86-90, with further material and references).

Though I disagree with my friend in the question of the "Aryan homeland", I agree with Viktor Sarianidi in thinking that at least a part of the BMAC people spoke an Indo-Iranian language during the first half of the second millennium and that these Aryan speakers went from Margiana and Bactria further to South Asia. In this respect, Sarianidi (2001: 430-3) has recently drawn attention to close connections between the BMAC and the Gandhāra Grave culture of Swat, including "similar ceramic complexes which represent the late variation of the BMAC". Sarianidi noted in this connection that "the Swat Valley is unanimously considered to be the only suitable way through which the Indo-Aryans could have reached the Indus Valley". The paper with which I would like to felicitate my friend on his 75th birthday deals with these two themes that have interested him recently: the horse-

drawn chariot and the Andhra Graves of the Swat Valley. It also deals with the common past of the Proto-Aryans and the Proto-Greeks. In my view, the speakers of Proto-Greeks lived as the western neighbours of the Proto-Aryans in the Pontic steppes (cf. Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 68-70) — yet another association with Viktor Sarianidi who hails from the 'Pontic Greeks'.[3]

The Gandhāra Grave Culture, the domesticated horse, and the coming of the Ṛgvedic tribes

The Gandhāra Grave culture[4] has been found from Buner, Chitral, Dir and Indus Kohistan in the north down to the Salt Range[5] in the south, and from the Panjkora River on the Afghan border in the west to Hathial at Taxila in the east. The Gandhāra Grave culture is divided into two phases, named according to the corresponding layers at the rock shelter of Ghalegay in Swat. These two phases date from about 1600-1300 BC (Ghalegay IV) and from about 1300-800 BC (Ghalegay V). The intrusive black-grey, burnished pottery is related to the late phase of the BMAC culture (cf. Stacul 1987: 121-2).

The grave burials have been compared to those of the graveyards of Bishkent and Vakhs in south Tajikistan (cf. Müller-Karpe 1983). In Viktor Sarianidi's opinion, however, "the Swat monuments should be compared with the BMAC ones rather than with the sites of the Bishkent culture (as the old theory proposes). As a matter of fact, the Bishkent culture can be taken as a late spreading of the BMAC farther up to the north and its further assimilation with the local steppe tribes of the Andronovo type. Equally, the Swat culture is a result of the late spreading of the BMAC farther towards the east where it partly assimilated with the local population of the Harappa culture, the latter having the 'H' type necropolis on the Indian subcontinent" (Sarianidi 2001: 433).

Giorgio Stacul (1987: 122-3), the principal excavator of the Gandhāra Grave sites, principally agrees in both respects: "The hypothesis that these new features in the Swat Valley may have been the result of immigrations, could be supported by the evidence from the Kherai graveyard in Indus Kohistan, where the inhumed bodies are placed on their sides with the knees drawn up in pronounced hocker position, a burial custom very similar to that characteristic around the mid 2nd millennium in graveyards of Southern Bactria (... Sarianidi 1976: figs. 41, 44) and in Margiana (Askarov 1981: 262)... the painted-red pottery appears alongside the grey-burnished ware (Late [Ghalegay IV] Period, c. XVI-XV centuries B.C.). This context links the valley with the plains area, as is shown by the emergence of objects and iconographic motifs which, in some cases, are derived from the tradition of the Indus urban civilisation, and in some others more specifically recall the culture of Cemetery H of Harappā". In the course of the Ghalegay V period, the cremation burial inspired by the Cemetery H culture of the Punjab plains became the dominant mode of burial in the Gandhāra Grave culture, while in the beginning inhumation was the rule.[6]

The Gandhāra Graves are rectangular pits, often surrounded by a ring of stones. About two thirds of them are internment burials with the bodies in a flexed position, men lying on their right sides and women on their left sides. There are skeletons in an anatomically intact position, but also a large number of graves where the bones were secondarily placed in heaps, yet with the head always in the upmost position. These inhumation graves are covered with stones. Both inhumation and

cremation burials — and there are even some graves mixing the types of disposal of the dead — contain both single individuals and — quite often — two individuals, usually couples that mostly seem to have been buried at different times. (Cf. Müller-Karpe 1983: 29-51.)

There is some evidence for a violent introduction of the Ghalegay V phase at Bīr-Kōṭ-ghwaṇḍai. A new type of plain pottery, with a grey or red surface and a characteristic button base spread in both Swat and Dir. "The new course of events brought stability and uniformity to a wide area (in the Swat Valley, local differences tend to diminish or disappear), and led to a further increase in settlements and a growth in farming activities. Yet, at the same time, 'one has the impression of observing a gradual process of isolation' (Tusa 1979: 693), which set in as a result of this same course of events, progressively sealing off this area from its surrounding regions, particularly the western plains of the subcontinent" (Stacul 1987: 126).

The subsequent Ghalegay VI phase of Swat belongs to the Iron Age and wheel-turned red and grey ceramic with remarkably thin walls becomes the dominant type of pottery. This cultural change, after which Swat becomes rather isolated, is almost certainly connected with the introduction of iron and the Painted Grey Ware into the plains of the Punjab and the Doab. Some archaeological links between the Ghalegay V-VI culture and the Painted Grey Ware culture have actually been recorded. The culture characterized by the Painted Grey Ware (c. 1000-400 BC) had both iron and the domestic horse. Its temporal, geographical and cultural horizons strongly suggest equation with the Middle Vedic culture of the post-Ṛgvedic Samhitā, Brāhmaṇa and Sūtra texts and the appearance of the Kuru dynasty (cf. Parpola 2002a: 48 & 67f.).

The Ghalegay IV culture is the very first in the northern Indus Valley known to have had the domesticated horse. The horse is attested in motifs on several sherds of painted on pottery (cf. Stacul 1987: 106-9; and fig. 1), in sculpted terracotta figurines (fig. 2) and metal objects (fig 3) as well osteological finds: at Kātelai (Swat), on the surface of stratum (3) were found two well-preserved skeletons of a horse (Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972: I, 288, T. 40 and pl. CLIV b & c; and 291, T. 45 and pl. CLIV a = fig. 4).

Sir Aurel Stein (1927: 424) and Giuseppe Tucci (1977: 47) assumed that the archaic Dardic group of Indo-Aryan languages still spoken in northern Pakistan and Kashmir has its roots in the languages of the people who lived in these regions in the times of classical antiquity, called Dadíkai by Herodotus (3,91) and Darada 'mountain people' in the Indian Purāṇa texts. Bridget and Raymond Allchin (1982: 303) in turn assumed that the ancestors of the Dardic speakers came with the Ghalegay IV culture. (Cf. Stacul 1987: 13; 122f.).

Traces of the specifically Ṛgvedic Sanskrit gerund in -*tvī* in the Gāndhārī Prakrit and in Modern Dardic strongly suggest that the Indo-Aryan tribes which introduced the Ṛgvedic poetry to the Punjab entered the subcontinent through Gandhāra, and that some of these early tribes remained in these regions and in their relative isolation preserved their language with remarkable archaisms. I have proposed connecting the Gandhāra IV phase with the coming of the first wave of Ṛgvedic tribes. The early Yadu and Turvaśa tribes are associated with the poetic tradition of the Kāṇva family (Books VIII and I of the *Ṛgveda*, connected with the beginnings of the Sāmaveda). Part of this first wave would have continued to the plains, some eventually settling in the Mathurā region (the Yādava tribe of the epics) and some in the Gangetic Valley (the Kāṇva school of White Yajurveda

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and the Kāṇva dynasty of Magadha). The Kāṇva hymns of the *Ṛgveda* are the only ones to preserve proper names (such as Mitrātithi) that agree with eight Mitanni Aryan proper names of the type 'having god X as his guest'. It is true that the Kāṇva hymns of the *Ṛgveda* have been codified relatively late, but this does not prevent their tradition from having arrived in Gandhāra before the second wave, which in my opinion is connected with the poems of the 'family books' (*Ṛgveda* II-VII) and with the Ghalegay V phase. Geographic names, economic circumstances and dialectal features combine to show that the poets of one family book — the Atri family of *Ṛgveda* V — stayed in Gandhāra and became associated with the Kāṇva family. (See Parpola 2002a: 72 and 57-61 with further references.)

Among the singer families of the *Ṛgveda*, the Kāṇvas and the Atris are very prominent worshippers of the Aśvins, the divine horseman twins who drive the heavenly chariot around the sky. "Next to Indra, Agni, and Soma, the twin deities named the Aśvins are the most prominent in the Ṛ[g-]V[eda] judged by the frequency with which they are invoked. They are celebrated in more than fifty entire hymns and in parts of several others, while their name occurs more than 400 times" (Macdonell 1897: 49). Out of the 54 complete hymns addressed to the Aśvins, 16 are in Book I, 12 in Book VIII, 6 in Book V and 5 in Book X; of the family books, there are 8 complete Aśvin hymns in Book VII, but only 1 hymn in Book II, 1 in Book III, 3 in Book IV, and 2 in Book VI (cf. Zeller 1990: 1; also 163f. for a detailed listing of hymns, verses and references). The early importance of the Aśvins is underlined by the fact that Mitra-and-Varuṇa, Indra and the Nāsatyas are the only Proto-Indo-Aryan gods mentioned among the Mitanni oath deities in the treaty between the Mitanni king Sātivāja and the Hittite king Shuppiluliuma c. 1380 BC. Their worship of the Aśvins is thus a further point connecting the Kāṇvas and the 'late' books of the *Ṛgveda* with the Mitanni Aryans (cf. Parpola 2002a: 61). Even the Yādavas of Mathurā seem to have preserved their worship of the Aśvins (associated with the day and night sides of the sun, see below) until epic times in their special deities Baladeva and Kṛṣṇa — brothers of whom one is white and the other black: these two heroes can be connected with the horse chariot through what seem to be their epic hypostases: the 'white' chariot warrior Arjuna and his 'black' charioteer Kṛṣṇa (cf. Parpola 2002c).

The archaeological evidence cited above demonstrates the importance of the horse in the Gandhāra Grave culture. From Alexander's historians (Arrian, Anabasis 4,25-28; Indica 1 & 4-5; Strabo 15,1,8 & 27; Curtius 8,9-10) it is clear that this importance of horse continued until the historical times. In 327-6 BC, Alexander met in the valley of the Swāt river (Sóastos in Greek, corresponding to Suvāstu in the *Ṛgveda*) a fiercely fighting tribe, whose name Assakēnoi corresponds to the Sanskrit proper name Āśvakāyana 'descendant of the horse' (mentioned in the Gaṇapāṭha on Pāṇini 4,1,99). Alexander's troops conquered their capital Massaga and the towns Ora and Bàzira. Near Bàzira was the enormous rock fort of Aórnos, mostly taken to be Pir-Sar. The name Màssaga (variants Màssaka, Masóga, and Mazagae as the name of the people) has been compared to Sanskrit Māśakāvatī (mentioned as a river in the *Mahābhāṣya* on Pṣṇini 4,2,71). Bàzira is the excavated Bīr-Kōṭ-ghwaṇḍi 'mound of the Bir fort', where Bīr < *Baira < *Bayira < Bàzira < Vajīra-sthāna[7] (mentioned in an inscription of King Jayapāladeva found in the village of Barikot situated next to the mound, *Epigraphia Indica* XXI, p. 301, cf. Stein 1927: 426ff.; Tucci 1963: 27-28). At this site Indo-Greek coins, pottery sherds inscribed with Greek letters and western-style pottery has been found (cf. Karttunen 1997: 49, with further references.)

Even after Alexander, the horse remained important in Gandhāra and the rest of the Indus Valley. "For the Indo-Aryans, the horse was important, and as far as the literary evidence is concerned, Indians have always employed horses. However, India proper has always been unable to breed good horses, and therefore depended on import. But the northwestern country, for a long time known in the West as the India, was famous for its horses. This Indo-Iranian borderland was for a long time the main supply of horses for India; only in the second half of the first millennium A. D. did Arabian competition come to overshadow it, at least in the Deccan (Gupta 1984, 198f.). According to the *Arthaśāstra,* the best horses came from the countries Kāmboja, Sindhu, Āraṭṭa and Vanāyu. The horse-dealers, too, were known as Northerners or Northwesterners" (Karttunen 1997: 178).

The 'face urn' of the Gandhāra Graves and the gharma vessel of the Aśvin cult

One artefact very characteristic of the Gandhāra Graves is the 'face urn', also called 'visage urn', a cinerary vessel with decoration imitating the human face (figures 5-8). This face urn functions as an ossuary into which select bones were collected in cremation burials – these constitute about one third of the Gandhāra Graves.

Attempts have been made to trace parallels to this distinctive artefact from other archaeological cultures in Eurasia, particularly by Giorgio Stacul (1971). Stacul suggested a connection with the anthropomorphically inspired 'face urns' with cremation remains that have been found in the final phase of the Middle Danubian culture of Baden-Pécel (c. 2000 BC). However, he is careful to note that "we should not underestimate the fact that in the area of the Balkans and the Middle Danube the use of anthropomorphic vases traditionally goes back to the late Neolithic period, when the use of this kind of container does not as yet seem to have been related to burial rites" (Stacul 1971: 12). In spite of the several other parallels between the Gandhāra Graves and the cultures of the Great Hungarian Plain noted by Stacul, it has not been possible to confirm their historical relationship. Could the 'face urns' of Swat owe their existence to a local development? Their great variation is an argument in favour of such a hypothesis. The face urns of the Ghalegay IV phase (see fig. 5) usually have just perforated 'eyes' and 'mouth', but not a protruding 'nose', which is characteristic of the Ghalegay V phase (cf. figs. 6-7, 10). In fact, a parallel to the face urns of Swat can be found in the gharma vessel. The texts call this vessel "Makha's head" and it plays a central role in the Vedic cult of the Nāsatyas alias Aśvins, the divine horseman twins who drive a heavenly chariot around the sky and who are worshipped in the morning together with the goddess of Dawn.

The Vedic pravargya rite centres on an earthen pot called *mahāvīra* 'great hero' or "Makha's head". The principal acts of this rite consist of making the pot, heating it in fire until it glows red-hot, pouring milk of a goat and a cow into it, offering this heated "gharma of bee's honey" to the Aśvins (especially in the morning at sunrise), and finally disposing of the pot.[8]

The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (14,1,2,17) describes the preparation of the gharma vessel thus:

> "He then takes a lump of clay and makes the Mahāvīra (pot) with [the mantra], 'For Makha thee! for Makha's head thee!' ... a span high, for the head is, as it were, a span high;

– contracted in the middle, for the head is, as it were, contracted in the middle. At the top he then draws it out [*unnayati*] (so as to form) a spout [*mukham* 'mouth']⁹ of three thumb's breadths (high): he thereby makes a nose [*nāsikām*] to this (Mahāvīra, or Pravargya)" (transl. Eggeling 1900: V, 453f.)

This pot is singular among all the vessels described in the Vedic literature in having a protruding 'nose' *(nāsikā)* expressly called so.¹⁰ It offers a striking counterpart to many of the face urns of the Gandhāra Grave culture, which have a prominent three-dimensional nose, mainly in the Ghalegay V phase (fig. 5-7, 10). The Ghalegay V phase seems to correspond to the time when the Atri family of the *Ṛgveda* had settled in Gandhāra. It must be noted, however, that the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* is the only Vedic text mentioning the nose of the Mahāvīra or gharma vessel. Although the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* in its present two redactions is younger than the Black Yajurveda, it goes back to an earlier version, and its contents "in some respects ... differ entirely from all the other texts" (Caland 1926: I, 93), and in such cases it may have preserved very archaic traditions. The Kāṇva redaction of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* belongs to the priestly family of *Ṛgveda* VIII and I, which is likely to have prevailed in the Ghalegay IV phase of the Gandhāra Grave culture.

In the *Ṛgveda*, Sage Atri is the person most closely connected with the gharma or 'hot offering' of milk and ghee to the Aśvins. Later called *pravargya*, this offering became a part of the *soma* sacrifice connected with the cult of Indra, but was originally an independent rite. The oldest evidence related to the *gharma / pravargya* found in the *Ṛgveda* has been recently examined by Jan Houben (2000a; 2000b). Houben finds the mythical origin of the *gharma* rite in the legend of ṚV 1,180,4 and 5,73,6, in which the Aśvins, who generally are the *recipients* of the gharma drink, *give* the gharma to Atri, whom they rescue from the hot pit called *ṛbīsa*: in commemoration of this rescue, Atri and his descendants offer the Aśvins this hot and sweet drink. Further on I shall try to substantiate my suspicion that Atri's hot pit might be the place of funeral cremation.

The earliest development of the *gharma* rite takes place in the Atri clan of the fifth book of the *Ṛgveda*. At this stage, when a metal vessel was used, the rite was already associated with the soma sacrifice. "After the development in the Atri clan, the Gharma ritual apparently spread to other families as well, and remained in connection with a sacrificial worship to the Aśvins" (Houben 2000a: 17). This "late-Ṛgvedic form is already quite similar to the Pravargya of the Śrauta Sūtras", "with clay-implements, with a developed milking ritual, closely associated with both the Soma-offering and the horse-sacrifice" (Houben 2000a: 17).

The cult of the Aśvins has become fully accepted in the *Ṛgveda*. This is proved by the fact that hymns or at least some verses addressed to them, or at least some references to them are found in all the ten books of the collection (cf. Zeller 1990: 163f.). Yet there are clear indications that the cult of the Aśvins is an intruder in the religion of the Indra worshippers: the Aśvins were originally excluded from the *soma* sacrifice, which centres on the preparation and offering of soma, the drink sacred to Indra. Post-Ṛgvedic texts relate that the Aśvins asked to get a share of the soma sacrifice, but Indra refused this; finally, however, the Aśvins got the Āśvina cup of *soma* (offered in the morning outside the actual place of sacrifice) as a reward for healing the originally 'headless' *soma* sacrifice. (Cf. Zeller 1990: 123, 126.) The Aśvins healed the sacrifice by providing it with a head in the form of the *pravargya* rite, which originally belonged to them and was not liked by Indra. In accordance with this "historical" model, the Vedic sacrificer is not supposed to perform

the *pravargya* rite in his first *soma* sacrifice, but only from his second sacrifice onwards (cf. *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 14,2,2,44; *Kauṣītaki-Brāhmaṇa* 8,3).

The gharma vessel as the head of the decapitated hero Makha and the sun

There are several preserved versions of the myth of origin associated with this pot. That of the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (14,1,1) may be summarized as follows (cf. Kramrisch 1975: 222-3):

> The gods − including Agni, Indra, Soma, Makha-Viṣṇu, and the Viśve Devāḥ, but excluding the two Aśvins − performed a sacrificial session in Kurukṣetra in order to attain excellence, win glory and become eaters of food. They agreed that whoever amongst them through austerity, fervour, faith, sacrifice and oblations would first encompass the end of the sacrifice would be the most excellent among them and the glory should then be common to them. Viṣṇu obtained it, and became the most excellent of the gods (1-5).

Viṣṇu is the sacrifice and the sun. But Viṣṇu was unable to contain his love of glory (6). Taking his bow with three arrows he stepped forth and rested his head on the bow. The gods did not dare to attack him. Then the ants, receiving a boon from the gods, gnawed the bowstring. When it was cut, the ends of the bow, springing asunder, cut off Viṣṇu's head (7-9). It fell and became the sun. The rest of the body lay stretched out with the top part towards the east (10).

The gods said: Our all-encompassing great hero (*mahān vīraḥ*) has fallen. Therefrom the Mahāvīra vessel was named, and the vital sap (that flowed from him) they wiped up with their hands *(sam-mrj)*, whence the Mahāvīra is the Samrāj (the emperor) (11). The gods rushed forward to him, eager to gain his glory. Indra reached him first, applied himself to him, limb to limb, encompassed him and became possessed of his glory (12). Makha 'sacrifice' is Viṣṇu, hence Indra became Makhavat 'possessed of Makha', which is mystically the same as Indra's epithet Maghavat 'possessed of booty'. (13) The gods gave the ants food, as they had promised (14), divided Viṣṇu's body. i.e. the sacrifice (of Soma) into three parts among themselves (15-16) and went on worshipping with that headless sacrifice (17). [However, they did not succeed, because the sacrifice was headless.]

Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa knew this *śukra* [i.e. the secret knowledge of the Pravargya], how the head of the sacrifice is put on again, how the sacrifice becomes complete again (18). Indra threatened to cut off the head of Dadhyañc if he divulged the secret to anyone else [for Indra had obtained only the glory of the headless body] (19). The Aśvins heard that Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa knew this secret knowledge and offered themselves as his disciples (20-21), but Dadhyañc refused them, telling of Indra's threat (22). The Aśvins, however, promised to protect Dadhyañc by the following scheme: when Dadhyañc has received them as pupils, they shall cut off his head, set it aside elsewhere, and put a horse's head on Dadhyañc instead; Dadhyañc will teach them through this horse's head, which Indra will cut off, whereafter the Aśvins will put Dadhyañc's own head back again (23). This scheme was then realized (24), as told in *Ṛgveda* 1,116,12 (25).

The version of the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (5,1) is closely parallel: here Makha Vaiṣṇava is beheaded, but in the *Kaṭha Āraṇyaka* (3), it is Rudra whose head is cut off. Houben (1991: 27), who has called attention to this "remarkable difference", reminds us "in this connection that the twin gods that are intimately connected with the Pravargya, the Aśvins, are closely related to Rudra".[11]

Makha = Rudra

The reference to the horse-headed Dadhyañc Ātharvaṇa whose head was cut off in the myth about the origin of the pravargya suggests that this rite and the horse sacrifice may have been closely linked with each other.[12] Ṛgveda 1,162,9 speaks of the blood of the sacrificial horse sticking to the sacrificial post (*svàru*) and to the slaughtering knife (*svàdhiti*), which means that in Ṛgvedic times, the horse victim was decapitated and not strangled as in the later horse sacrifice. On the other hand, the *Vādhūklasūtra* (11,21 ed. Chaubey) testifies that in olden times it was the custom to let the sacrificial horse be slaughtered by a son of a noble bard (*sūta*); when this virginal (*asiktaretas*) youth (*kumāra*) was brought to the place, decorated with a garland, people used to lament (*rud-*) him, because he was to die: the head of him would fall off who first cut into pieces the sacrificial horse. As the Brāhmaṇa texts derive Rudra's name from the verb *rud-* 'to cry, lament', and as Kumāra 'youth' is another name for Rudra, I have suggested that this slaughterer of the horse represents Rudra. The Dadhyañc legend further hints to an exchange of the heads of the human and equine victim as a part of their ritual revival, "putting the head of the sacrifice (=sacrificed victim) back again". (Cf. Parpola 1983: 62-65.) Such a ritual seems to be attested in a culture which had the horse-drawn chariot and where Pre-Proto-Indo-Aryan may have been spoken (cf. Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 93-98), for a grave belonging to the Sintashta-Arkaim related Potapovka culture in the mid-Volga region, dating from about the beginning of the second millennium BC, contained a human skeleton provided with a horse's skull (fig. 8) (cf. Anthony & Vinogradov 1995).[13] As noted above, the Gonur cemetery contained a BMAC grave with a headless young horse.

An exchange of equine and human heads generates the two kinds of classical Hindu demigods mentioned by Māgha in his Śiśupālavadha (4,38): the *kiṃpuruṣa* with a horse's head and a human body, and the kinnara with a man's head but a horse's body, famed for being divine musicians and playboys. In *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra* 2,5, weeping or lamenting (*roda*) (often connected with Rudra, cf. above) is asked to leave the sacrificer and to enter a *kiṃpurua*. In descriptions of the Vedic fire altar rite, the human victim (*puruṣa*) among the five 'domestic animals' corresponds to the kiṃpuruṣa among the five 'wild animals' connected with the forest (*araṇya*). The wilderness is often associated with violence, robbery, and Rudra. If the kiṃpuruṣa was a bard, he could be compared to the war bard (*māgadha*), who followed the vrātya band worshipping Rudra to their warring expeditions, and had sexual intercourse with a prostitute in the mahāvrata festival, just as the sacrificial horse or human victim united with the queen in the horse or human sacrifice. (Cf. Parpola 1983: 62-65.)

In one of the principal Vedic myths connected with Rudra (for its different variants see Deppert 1977), creator god Prajāpati lusts after his own unwilling daughter, who flees the father by changing her shape into a female deer (*rohit*), to be pursued by Prajāpati in the shape of a male deer, and the two take on the shape of many animal couples until all the species have come into existence. From the seed emitted by Prajāpati is instantly born the fierce god Rudra, who punishes his father for the sin of incest by shooting Prajāpati with a three-parted arrow. In *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 3,33, Prajāpati, Rudra and the daughter are equated with three constellations, the daughter with the 'red' (*rohiṇī*) New Year star Aldebaran, but the same text also equates the daughter with the Dawn (*ucas*). Rudra could be the rising sun,

which with its arrow-like rays[14] kills the dark night (or the night aspect of the sun) at dawn. (Cf. Parpola 1992; 1998: 225-6, 229- 231.) There is a partial Greek parallel to this myth. According to the Kupria (fragm. 7), Helene was born by Nemesis, the daughter of Zeus and the night, with whom her own father Zeus united after chasing the unwilling Nemesis. In her flight over the sea, rivers and land, Nemesis assumed in turn the shape of a fish and various other animals. Other sources tell that finally Nemesis took the shape of a goose and was fructified by swan-Zeus. The egg laid by Nemesis was found by Leda, who adopted Helene born out of it as her own daughter. Later even the Dioskouroi (Horatius, Ars p. 147) or just Poludeukes were thought to have been born out of the same egg as Helene, or Leda is said to have laid two eggs. (Cf. *Der kleine Pauly* 1979: III, 531.)

Rudra's name seems to have been influenced by Indra's name and the desire to connect it with the verb *rud-* 'to cry, lament', but it is probably derived from *rudhra* like Sanskrit *rudhira* 'red' and cognate with Greek *e-ruthrós* 'red'. Rudra's red colour and his fiery anger that the Rudra hymns of the *Ṛgveda* try to avert and pacify, heighten the likelihood that the red-hot gharma vessel originally represented Rudra. The association of the gharma offering with the morning further suggests Rudra's identity with the rising sun, praised as *rohita* 'ruddy' in the hymns of the 13th book of the Atharvaveda.

Rudra seems to be personified also by Rohita the first-born son of King Hariścandra in the Śunaḥśepa legend (Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa 7,13-18). When this youth has reached the age of a warrior — the Hindu war god Skanda, a double of Rudra, is Sanatkumāra 'eternal youth', always 16, which is the ideal age of the warrior — his father intends to offer him to Varuṇa as a human victim, because Varuṇa has granted the king offspring. But Rohita takes his bow and flees to the forest, where he eventually catches 1000 cows and with them buys the brahmin boy Śunaḥśepa who is to be a substitute victim. (Cf. Parpola 1998: 293-298.) The Śunaḥśepa legend is recited at the royal consecration (*rāja-sūya*), which also comprises a chariot-drive: the crown-prince (*pratihita*) is presented with a bow and arrows as his patrimony by his father the king, and thereafter he drives off in a chariot to capture a 100 cows or more by symbolically touching a cow with the end of his bow (cf. Heesterman 1957: 129f.). The bow and arrows connect Rohita and the crown prince not only with Rudra who has the bow and arrows as his characteristic weapon but also with Makha, the 'great hero' of the pravargya myth. The name Makha and the crown prince's chariot drive further connect these figures with one of the Aśvins, namely the one called "the victorious son of Sumakha" in the Aśvin hymn *Ṛgveda* 1,181,4, where the other Aśvin is called "son of the Sky" (*jiṣṇúr vām anyàḥsúmakhasya sūrír divó anyàḥsubhàgaḥputrà ūhe*). In the chariot team, Makha-Rudra would be the chariot warrior. A little wider discussion of the Aśvins is in order now to back up this identification.

Horse-chariot and its team as a model of the Aśvins and the Dioskouroi

The Nāsatya alias Aśvin twins of the Indo-Aryans — who are called *dívo nàpātā* 'the two sons or descendants of the Sky' three times in the *Ṛgveda* (1,117,12b; 3,38,5c; 4,44,2b) — have a counterpart in the Greek *Dióskouroi* or *Diós koûroi* 'the youths of the Sky (Zeus)' and in the *Dieva dēli* 'sons of the God' of the Latvian folksongs (*daina*). In all three cases,[15] the deities are young and beautiful horsemen, who woo or wed the Sun's daughter or the goddess of Dawn − in the case

of the Indo-Aryan and Greek twins she is also their sister. In Greece and India, as elsewhere in the world, twins are thought to result from a double impregnation, of which one is human, the other divine.[16]

The Aśvins form a trio with the dawn, and their "chariot goes around the heaven and earth in one day (*sadyàḥ*)" (RV 3,58,8) just like the chariot of the sun (RV 1,115,3) and the chariot of the dawn (RV 4,51,5) (cf. Hillebrandt 1927: I, 59). The Aśvins circle around in the atmosphere continuously, without intermission: the starting point of all their activities is this *vartís*- 'turning around': in all but one of the 28 occurrences of this word in the *Ṛgveda* it denotes the circular movement of the Aśvins or their chariot (cf. Zeller 1990: 45-47). The Greek Dioskouroi were chiefly conceived of as heroes riding horses, sometimes even as (riders of) winged horses or birds: with whirring wings they fly through the air (Homeric hymns 33,13).

As a natural phenomenon on which the concept of these youthful twins wooing the Dawn is based, the evening and morning star have often been mentioned ever since the suggestion was made by Mannhardt (1875) on the basis of the Baltic evidence.[17] This identification is recommended especially by the Greek evidence, which connects the Dioskouroi with stars since the 5th century BC,[18] and it continues being endorsed (cf. Nagy 1990: 258; GotR 1991). However, serious objections have been raised against this identification, particularly the fact that the twins are mostly invoked and thought to appear together, whereas the morning and evening star are separate from one another, sometimes for months (cf. Hillebrandt 1927: I, 60-62; Zeller 1990: 96-99; Oberlies 1993: 171 n. 6).

As primary images from the natural world, I prefer the young (red) sun and the moon, which often appear together at sunrise and offer a beautiful sight. However, on occasion the bright day sun and the dark night sun, or simply day and night (or the sun and moon) seem to be meant (cf. Hillebrandt 1927: I, 65-67). Later Vedic texts actually equate the Aśvins with day and night (cf. *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 3,4,4 *ahorātre vā a śvinā*; Zeller 1990: 7-8). In the *Ṛgveda* (3,55,11), the day and night are spoken of as twin sisters (*yamyā'*), who have assumed different colours: of these two (colours) one shines bright (*tàyor anyàd rócate*), the other is black (*kṛṣṇàm anyàt*). In ṚV 10,37,3, the sun-god Sūrya drives a chariot yoked with winged horses[19] ; his one side, darkness (*ràjas*), rolls along (or pursues) the east, while the other side, the light (*jyotis*), the sun goes up.[20] In ZV 10,39,12, the two Aśvins are prayed to come with their chariot that is speedier than the thought, made for them by the Ṛbhus: when it is yoked, the daughter of the Sky is born, and so are both sides of (the sun-god) Vivasvat, the bright day and the night.[21]

Arjuna and *Kṛṣṇa*. The two colours white and black associated with the two sides of the sun (and with day and night) were probably associated with the Aśvin twins, too. In the *Mahābhārata* the greatest chariot warrior is called Arjuna, whose name means 'white', while his charioteer is the king of the Yādavas called Kṛṣṇa 'black'. Kṛṣṇa is a great trickster and a clever and wise negotiator and advisor. I have argued that although the epic tradition in its present shape is post-Vedic, it goes back to Vedic origins. The Vaiṣṇava trio of the 'white' elder brother Bala-Rāma and the 'black' younger brother Kṛṣṇa and their sister-wife likewise seems to go back to the Vedic trio of the Aśvins and their sister-wife Uṣas. (Cf. Sen 1976: 124-127; Parpola 2002c: 366).

The chariot and the age of the divine horseman twins. Apart from the heavenly bodies and cosmic phenomena, a basic model for the concept of divine horseman twins who daily circle the racecourse of the sky is supplied by the horse-drawn chariot. In fact, these mythic figures shared by the Indo-Aryan, Greek and Baltic speakers evidently go back to the last quarter of the third millennium BC, when the Proto-Indo-European community had already dispersed, but the ancestors of all these three peoples still lived relatively close to each other and obtained the light and speedy horse-drawn chariot (newly developed from the heavier and slower ox-drawn chariot). Most probably this happened in the steppe and forest steppe of Eastern Europe. The Sintashta-Arkaim culture (c. 2200-1800 calBC) was one of, if not the very first centre(s) from which this important innovation in transport and war technology diffused.[22] By that time, more than a millennium had elapsed since the ox-drawn wagons and carts with solid wheels had started rolling in these regions.[23]

Honey and mead. The antiquity of the Aśvin worship is supported by the fact that an essential part of their cultic drink is the honey (madhu). Even though the hot drink offered in the pravargya rite consists of goat's and cow's milk, it is still called "honey" or "bee's honey" in the accompanying mantras. (Cf. Lüders 1959: II, 339- 374.) The Vedic ritual knows however also a drink called madhu-mantha-[24] or madhu-parka-[25] which usually consists of a mixture of honey (madhu) and curds (dadhi) and offered to a worthy guest in Vedic rites, mainly the domestic ones which seem to go back to the Atharvavedic rather than the R̥gvedic tradition.[26] Medhu 'honey' meant also 'honey-drink, mead' in Proto-Indo-European, and remained the principal alcoholic beverage in Russia until the times of Peter the Great. The word was borrowed from early Proto-Aryan into Proto-Finno-Ugric as *mete 'honey'.

The pair of horses. Probably the pair of horses yoked to the chariot was the most ancient prototype of the Aśvins. The Greek Dioskouroi are often said to possess white horses (*leúkippoi*), and in the Odyssey (23,246), the chariot of the goddess of Dawn, *Eōs* (whose name is cognate with Sanskrit *uṣas* and Latin *aurora*) is pulled by two young horses (*pôloi*) called *Làmpos* 'bright, shining' and *Phaéthōn* 'bright, shining'. The Odyssey (12, 132) also mentions the feminine equivalents *Lampetíē* and *Phaéthousa* as the names for the daughters of the sun-god Hēlios. In the R̥gveda (7,77,3), the sun-god Sūrya (whose name is cognate with Hēlios) is called "the white horse" of the goddess of Dawn, Uṣas; in R̥V 7,78,4 well-yoked horses pull the chariot of Uṣas. Uṣas is also frequently called "daughter of Sky" in the R̥gveda (*divó duhitàr-* or *duhitàr- divàḥ*), which corresponds to "the daughter of Zeus" in Homeric Greek (*Diós thugàtēr* or *thugàtēr Diós*), used of Helene the sister of the Dioskouroi (Odyssey 4, 227) and of other goddesses (though not directly of Eos). (Cf. Nagy 1979: 198-200.)

The chariot team. However, as soon as the one-man chariot gave way to a wider chariot, its two-man team became the primary model for the divine twins. The two men had specialized tasks: the chariot-warrior concentrated in using weapons in fighting or hunting, and his charioteer took care of driving and assisted in other ways as well. (The Sanskrit word sūta means both 'charioteer' and 'bard', and in ancient Indian epics the charioteer often encourages the warrior by singing about the heroic deeds of his ancestors or gives him advice.) This 'division of labour' is exactly reflected in the earliest Greek references to the Dioskouroi in Homer: Poludeukes the boxer represents the warrior of the chariot team, Kastor[27] 'the tamer of horses' the charioteer.[28] As a rule, both men came from the high elite (cf. Piggott 1992: 47). In the probably Proto-Aryan speaking Sintashta-Arkaim

culture, burials exhibiting the highest status contain a warrior lying fully armed in his chariot, accompanied by his charioteer lying between the chariot and the horses (fig. 9).

The royal status associated with the horse-drawn chariot is evidenced by the names of the Mitanni kings and nobles, which are derived from the appellations of the chariot warrior (cf. Parpola 2002a: 77-78). Mitanni-related documents use the word *màrya- (ma-ri-ia-an-nu)* 'young man, warrior' of the Proto-Indo-Aryan nobility, whose status was related to the use of war-chariots (cf. Mayrhofer 1996: II, 329-30).

Chariot team and dual kingship

Dual kingship in Sparta. In Sparta the Dioskouroi were worshipped as national gods, and they served as a model for a dual kingship.

> "In actuality the Dioskouroi are to a large extent a reflection of the body of young men capable of bearing arms. They invent the war dances, and as mounted warriors they ride out in search of adventure, rustling cattle and stealing brides, but they also rescue their sister. The dual kingship of Sparta bears a special relationship to the Dioskouroi. The Tyndaridai are invoked when the army marches into battle, and if one of the kings remains behind, then so does one of the Tyndaridai." (Burkert 1985: 212)

The basis of the last sentence is Herodotus (5,75), who reports what happened during the Persian wars when the two Lacedaemonian kings were not of one mind:

> "On account of this rupture between the kings, a law was passed at Sparta, forbidding both monarchs to go out together with the army, as had been the custom hitherto. The law also provided, that, as one of the kings was to be left behind, one of the Tyndaridae should also remain at home; whereas hitherto both had accompanied the expeditions, as auxiliaries." (Tr. Rawlinson p. 406).

The dual kingship of Sparta associated with the Dioskouroi may be an ancient survival. According to the Greek tradition, it goes back to the Herakleidai, when they 'returned' to Peloponnesos, i.e. to the coming of the Dorians (around the 12th-11th century BC). In Argos, the Dioskouroi were called *Ànakes* 'the kings' as early as the sixth century BC, and their shrine (with images of the twins, their horses, wives and son in ebony and ivory) as the anakeîon. They were Ànaktes 'kings' in many other parts of Greece including Athens (*tō ànake* in the dual) and Boeotia (cf. Farnell 1921: 186, 188, 203-5, 217-8; Nilsson 1955: I, 407).

The cult of the Dioskouroi was specifically associated with Sparta and the Dorians. By the time the Dorians arrived in Greece, around 1200 BC, riding had already displaced chariotry, but the two-man team of the chariot remained associated with horses even in the riding era. Some reminiscences of divine horseman twins from the Mycenaean times of chariotry survive, however. Nestor the king of Pylos tells that he once had a chariot-fight with the twin sons of Molione (their mother) and A'ktōr[29], who is their human father, but the twins were saved by Poseidon, their divine father (cf. Iliad 11, 750-2). In Iliad 23, 638-642, Nestor boasts that in the funeral games of the Epeian king, he won every contest but the chariot-race: "In the chariot race alone the twain sons of Actor outstripped me by force of numbers ... Twin brethren were they — the one drove with

sure hand, while the other plied the goad" (transl. Murray 1925: II, 541). "Aristarchus held that the Actoriones derived an advantage from their composite form — one body with two heads, four arms and four legs — but that Nestor's protest against this was overruled" (Murray 1925: II, 540, n. 1).[30]

Dual kingship in India. In his study of kingship in the *Ṛgveda* and *Atharvaveda,* Bernfried Schlerath (1960: 108) finds 'divine' evidence for dual kingship in the dual deity Mitra-and-Varuṇa, but misses corresponding evidence in secular life: "Nach dem Vorbild von Mitra und Varuṇa sollte man auch ein irdisches Doppelkönigtum gelegentlich erwarten." In my opinion, however, such 'mundane' evidence can be found in the integral connection between the *kṣatra*-'royal power' and *brahman*-'sacred power' in ancient Indian kingship (cf. Gonda 1966: 62ff.; Rau 1957: 117ff.; Scharfe 1989: 112ff.). "King and purohita are, for the sake of the well-being of the kingdom, an inseparable pair; they are each other's complement" (Gonda 1966: 66). The *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (4,1,4,1-2) actually compares the relationship between the king and his purohita to that between Mitra and Varuṇa (cf. Scharfe 1989: 114).

Mitra and Varuṇa: a transformation of the Aśvins? Mitra-and-Varuṇa are the most important among the Proto-Indo-Aryan divinities whose names denote abstract social concepts (cf. Brereton 1981). These Āditya gods seem to have come into being under the influence of the Assyrian religion during the tin-trade in 1920-1850 BC, for according to the glyptic evidence, the BMAC was clearly involved in this trade (cf. Parpola 2002a: 87-91). That this creation of gods of a new type took place in southern Central Asia or northern Iran is suggested by the fact that Mitra-and-Varuṇa, Indra and the Nāsatyas are mentioned as oath deities[31] by the Mitanni king in his treaty with the Hittite king in 1380 BC. If Mitra-and-Varuṇa[32] on this occasion split off from the Aśvins and took over their royal function,[33] these older deities continued to exist alongside their new doubles, but with their function now mainly reduced to that of helpers and saviours, which function they do share with the Dioskouroi.

The charioteer as the king's house priest, representing sacred power. Vedic texts connect the two kinds of power, the secular and sacred power, *kṣatra and brahman,* with the two members of the chariot team, the chariot fighter and the charioteer.

In the *Ṛgveda,* the word *brahman-* denotes 'powerful cultic poem, sacred utterance, prayer, mantra' (cf. Oldenberg 1916; Schmidt 1968: 16-22); in the Brāhmaṇa period and later, this *brahman-* denotes 'sacred power' in general, the basis of the universe, and it is in the care of the Brāhmaṇas, members of the priestly class. According to Hanns-Peter Schmidt (1968: 239), Brahmaṇaspati 'Lord of the sacred word' was originally an epithet of Indra, whose kingship thus incorporated the priestly function as well as the secular power, but in the Ṛgvedic time Bṛhaspati (a synonym of Brahmaṇaspati) became an independent deity and the chief priest (*purohita*) of the divine king Indra. In the Brāhmaṇa texts and later epic and Purāṇic literature, Bṛhaspati is the purohita of the gods. This development may be due to the assimilation of the Indra tradition of the *Ṛgveda* to the model of double kingship reflected by the dual divinity Mitr-Varuṇau 'Mitra-and-Varuṇa' that existed among the early Indo-Aryans before the arrival of the Indra worshippers: Bṛhaspati is separated from Indra to stand for the priestly side of a dual kingship, present in the pre-Indra model of Mitra-and-Varuṇa.[34]

According to the *Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa* (3,94), "formerly the kings' chief priests used to be their charioteers so that they could oversee that the king did not commit any sin" (*purā rājabhyaḥ purohitāeva rathān sam gṛhṇanty aupadraṣṭyāya: ned ayam pāpam karavad iti*). Chapter 3,12 of the *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra* details the royal priest's duties in the battle. The *purohita* standing to the west of the chariot, makes the king put on the coat of mail. He hands over to the king the bow and the quiver, ties on the king's arm the leather that protects it against the bow-string. While doing all this, the *purohita* blesses the weapons and the chariot with its horses with the hymn ṚV 6,75 (this hymn is used in the horse sacrifice as well, to bless the warriors who are protecting the sacrificial horse during its year-long expedition). Mounting the chariot, the *purohita* makes the king repeat the 'overrolling' (*abhīvarta*) hymn (ṚV 10,174), with which the king asks Bṛhaspati to make him roll over his rivals; according to Atharvavedic texts, this hymn is recited while binding on the king an amulet (*maṇi*) made of the rim of the chariot wheel. The king is also to pray Mitra and Varuṇa with ṚV 8,101,3-4. Now the *purohita* is to look at the king and to recite the *apratiratha* hymn (ṚV 8,103), the *śāsa* hymn (ṚV 10,152) and the *sauparṇa* hymns. Geldner in his ṚV translation (1951: III, 320) characterizes the *apratiratha* hymn as "ein urwüchsiges, ganz im Atharvastil gehaltenes Schlachtlied". In verse 4, Bṛhaspati (who as Indra's *purohita* accompanies Indra to the battle, cf. Schmidt 1968: 100) is asked to "fly around" in his chariot, killing and warding off enemies, and, victorious in battle, to be "a helper of our chariots" (*bṛ 'haspate pàri dīyā ràthena rakṣohàmítrān apabādhamānaḥ / prabhañjàn sénāḥpramṛṇó yudhā jàyann asmākam edhy avitā ràthānām*).

In ritual formulae belonging to the chariot race of the royal rite vājapeya, Bṛhaspati is said to be the divine charioteer who won the race (*Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* 1,7,8a ... *bṛ haspatinā vājajitā vājam jeṣam*, cf. Sparreboom 1983: 38f.). In the hymn ṚV 2,24, reference is often made to Bṛhaspati as an excellent charioteer and race winner (cf. Schmidt 1968: 230-237). In the vājapeya rite, the brahman priest ascends the chariot-wheel that is turned around[35] while the king and the adhvaryu win the chariot race. The adhvaryu priest functions as the king's charioteer in this race, consecrating the horses, the chariot and the king in the same way as the purohita does in *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra* 3,12. The sacrificing king hands over his kingship to the adhvaryu priest for the duration of the horse sacrifice (cf. *Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra* 20,2,12-20,3,2).

The adhvaryu priest and his team mate pratiprasthātṛ are identified with the Aśvins, who are the two adhvaryu priests of the gods (*Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* 3,3 *aśvínādhvaryū*; cf. Zeller 1990: 178; Parpola 2002a: 78). This is undoubtedly connected with the fact that these two are the main priests performing the pravargya rite. In the priestly title prati-prasthātṛ, the component prasthātṛ apparently denotes 'chariot fighter': Prasthātṛ, written Parsatattar in the cuneiform script, is the proper name of an early Mitanni king, whose son and successor was called Sauštattar = *savyesthātṛ* 'chariot-fighter', literally 'one who stands on the left side [of the chariot]' (cf. Parpola 2002a: 74-78). The prefix *prati-* in *prati-prasthātṛ* seems to come from *prati-hita* 'crown prince',[36] who makes a chariot drive in the royal consecration.

Nāsatya: the charioteer and the saviour function

The saviour function of the Nāsatyas is ancient, for both they and the Dioskouroi were prayed for help and often came to people's rescue. In Greece, the Dioskouroi as *sōtēres,* 'saviours', helped

in all kinds of trouble, particularly in peril at sea, in battle-field, and in illness (cf. Eitrem 1902: 4-5; Bethe 1905: 1094-1097).

That charioteers were saviours in the battle-field is understandable from the function of the early war chariot:

> "the massed chariot charge is a fiction, and ostentatious parade and intimidation, mobile commanding posts and flanking actions seem the chariot's main function, with bow and arrow or light throwing spear as mobile missiles: if swords and heavy spears and body armour were involved, earlier chariotry provided a quick delivery and rescue service to and from the battle field" (Piggott 1992: 57)

> "in the Iliad... the rôle of the chariot seems to be chiefly as a means of transport to and from the battlefield. Generally the warrior leaps down to fight — his charioteer standing by to carry him out of danger if things go badly" (Wace & Stubbings 1962: 521).

The rescue function thus belonged especially to the charioteer, and the word *nāsatya / néstōr* is likely to have originally denoted just this member of the chariot team.

The names Nāsatya and Aśvin, used in the dual of both of the divine twins, seem to have originally denoted just one of them, the 'charioteer'. As elliptic duals, they mention explicitly only one member of the pair, as do the Vedic duals *mitrā* (= *mitrā-vàruṇā / mitrā-vàruṇau*) 'Mitra-and-Varuṇa' and *dyāvā* (= *dyāvā-pṛthivī*) 'heaven and earth'. A similar use of elliptic dual is found in Greek (*Aíante* 'Aias & Teukros'); Latin (which lacks the dual) has the elliptic plural *Castores* 'Castor et Pollux' (from the Greek dual *tō Kàstore*, cf. Eitrem 1902: 6 n. 3). In the Ṛgveda, the two members of the pair are often both explicitly mentioned, and both can be in the dual, sometimes separated by other words (RV 6,51,1 *càkrur màhi mitràyor āṃ éti priyāṃ vàruṇayor*). From a similar tmesis occurrence of two duals in RV 1,184,1cd (*nāsatyā kúha cit sàntāv aryó divó nàpātā*) Geldner has concluded that one of the Aśvins was called Nāsatya, the other 'Son of the Sky' (*divó nàpāt*).[37]

Among the ancient Proto-Indo-Aryan deities *(daiva)* of Iran, who became 'demons' *(daēva)* for Zarathustra, the *Avesta* (in Vidēvdāt 19,43 and 10,5-6 and 10,9-10) mentions just one Nāhathya, using the singular number;[38] Thieme (1960: 315b) has called attention to the fact that immediately after Nāhathya, the Vidēvdāt mentions in the same way the demon Saurva. Avestan Saurva corresponds to post-Ṛgvedic Śarva (derived from *śaru* 'arrow'), another name of Rudra. Thieme adds that Rudra is collocated with Nāsatya also in that one and single verse of the Ṛgveda (4,3,6), which speaks of the Nāsatya in the singular[39] (here Nāsatya the epithet *pari-jman-* 'round-driving'). This agrees perfectly with the above argued identification of Rudra as one of the Aśvins. In the post-Vedic texts *Harivaṃśa* (8,39), *Mahābhārata* (12,201,17) and *Bṛhaddevatā* (7,6), the two Aśvins have Nāsatya and Dasra as their individual proper names (cf. Tokunaga 1997: 266-7).

The name *Nāsatya-* 'effecting safe homecoming, rescuer, saviour' is derived (with the vṛddhi lengthening of the root) from **nas-atí-* 'safe homecoming, happy return', which has been formed (like Vedic *vas-atí-* 'dwelling' from the root *vas-* 'to dwell') from the root *nas-* 'to (come home and) unite happily' (past participle **ṇs-tà- > *as-tà- >* noun *àsta-* n. 'home', *astam-ayà-* m., *astam-àyana-* n. 'homecoming; sunset', cf. Mayrhofer 1992: I, 149-150), from the Proto-Indo-European root **nes-*

'to come safely home', Greek *néomai* 'to return home, arrive happily, escape into safety', *nóstos* 'homecoming, return', Gothic *ga-nisan* 'be saved', *nasjan* 'to save, rescue', German genesen '*be healed*') (cf. Frame 1978: 125ff.; Mayrhofer 1996: II, 30 & 39 with further references; also Oberlies 1993: 172 n. 6).

Nāsatya- is cognate with Greek *Néstōr* 'rescuer, saviour'. Alone of all the Homeric heroes, Nestor has the standing epithet 'horseman' (*hippóta*). For the chariot race at Patroclus' funeral, Nestor in a lengthy passage (Ilias 23,301-350) gives counsel to his son Antilochus, one of the competitors, even though Zeus and Poseidon had taught the son "all manner of horsemanship" (*hipposúnas ... pantoías*).

Douglas Frame (1978) has argued that "the essential part of Nestor's story in Iliad 11 descends from an original myth of the sun. This would imply that Nestor himself came to be viewed as 'historical' only when his myth had first been historicized. The trend of modern scholarship since the discovery of Pylos has been to historicize Nestor even more, and a pivotal argument in this trend has to do with the interpretation of Nestor's name" (96) Frame leaves open the possibility that there has been a real King Nestor (p. 99), but concludes: "even if a good possibility remains that Nestor was originally a god, we may rest content with what clearly emerges from Iliad 11 — namely, that he was at least mythological... Nestor does not belong entirely either to the world of gods or the the world of men" (p. 99). Frame's thesis is most relevant for the present paper, not least because Nestor's name is cognate with Sanskrit Nāsatya, and these mythical figures have a closely similar function.

The Nāsatyas as funerary deities

Odysseus describing his visit to the Netherworld says (Odyssey 11,298-304): "And Leda I saw, the spouse of Tundareos,[40] who bore to Tundareos two sons of mighty heart, Kastor the tamer of horses and Poludeukes good at the fist-play, both of whom being still alive lie 'neath the life-giving earth; who have this honour from Zeus, albeit in the nether world, they pass from death to life and life to death on alternate days,[41] and enjoy equal honours with the Gods." (tr. Farnell 1921: 181) Corresponding to the conception that one of the Dioskouroi is among the celestials and the other in the netherworld, sometimes one is provided with a white horse and the other with a black horse in the monuments (cf. Eitrem 1902: 6; Bethe 1905: 1091-2).

The Greek Dioskouroi were also connected with the burials of the dead:

> "As they were the conspicuous examples of the mortal attaining a blessed immortality, their personalities came to support the later faith in a blessedness attainable by the individual soul after death; hence their frequent presence on Roman sarcophagi. The dead might therefore occasionally be committed to their care [as in the second century BC grave inscription on a tomb in Thessaly: *Sōpuros Parmeníōnos Dioskoúrois*]" (Farnell 1921: 227, with further references).

Douglas Frame (1978) has convincingly argued that *nóstos* 'homecoming, return' in early Greek religion primarily meant 'return from (darkness and) death', 'coming back to (light and) life'. He has presented a lot of material — which I cannot repeat here for reasons of space and time — to the effect that the miracles performed by the Dioskouroi and the Nāsatyas as saviours largely denote revivals from death.

Indeed, the Atri legends seem to reflect the mysticism of rebirth involved in Vedic funerary rituals. The Aśvins saved Atri from the heated *ṛbīsa*.[42] Atri had descended into this *ṛbīsa*, but the Aśvins warded off the fire so that it did not burn Atri. The Aśvins brought enlivening nourishment to Atri, the honey-sweet hot drink *gharma*, which Atri afterwards gave back to them in the form of *gharma* offering. The secret which the Aśvins received from Dadhyañc is called *madhu-vidyā*, 'knowledge of the honey-drink', and apparently the gharma is this nectar of immortality, which revives dead persons and rejuvenates old people who are falling apart. The Aśvins released Atri from distress (*aṃhas*), which is comparable to an embryo's confinement in the womb (cf. Heesterman 1957: 18, n. 15a). The Aśvins brought old Atri up and made him young again. (See Zeller 1990: 68-76 and Macdonell 1897: 145.) The Aśvins help also other protégés by 'freeing' (*muc-*) them from distress (*aṃhas-*) and by bringing them up with their chariot, which is drawn by winged horses, often "to see the sun" (*svàr dṛśé*). Thus Rebha and Vandana were saved when they had been bound up by enemies and lied in a pit as if dead: the Aśvins came, released their bonds, brought them up and made them alive again (cf. Zeller 1990: 75f.).

Funerary urns, the gharma and ukhā pots, and death rites

The 'face urns' of Swat, filled with collected post-cremation bones, had a funerary function, while the 'nosed' gharma vessel of the pravargya rite was used to offer hot milk to the Aśvins. The mantra texts, however, suggest that the pouring of milk into the vessel symbolizes impregnation with seed (cf. Buitenen 1968: 94, 105). This symbolism is very much there in the parallel rite of agnihotra, the offering of milk into sacred fire at sunrise and sunset (cf. Bodewitz 1976; Parpola 1998: 226-228) — one is tempted to think that the agnihotra is an ancient variant of the gharma rite. After the offering, the pravargya vessel has funerary associations: the pravargya rite ends in the disposal (udvāsana) of the ritual equipment, in which the implements are laid down in the shape of a human body (or the sun) (cf. Buitenen 1968: 130), just as in the cremation funeral of the Veda the collected bones of the dead are to be laid down in the shape of a human being, so that the dead person gets his or her body back and can be revived (cf. Caland 1896: 154). The ritual equipment of a śrauta sacrificer is to be laid down on the different parts of the body of the deceased immediately before the cremation (cf. Caland 1896: 49-54). A similar putting together of cut-off pieces of the slaughtered primeval man takes place at the rite of agni-cayana, 'piling of the fire altar', in which the ukhāvessel plays an important role and which is parallelled by the piling of the funeral monument (śmaśāna-cayana).

Already from an inspection of the rules concerning pottery (see Rau 1972),

> "it is clear that the *pravargya* ritual is closely related to the rites of the brick altar with which it shares the proceedings of fetching the clay, the manufacture of the fired clay pot and the concern with the 'head of the sacrifice' (real ones under the brick altar, an imaginary head represented by the *mahāvīra* pot of the *pravargya*)." (Heesterman 1993: 168)

The brick-built fire altar (*agni-citi*) is related to the funerary tumulus (*śmaśāna-citi*) made of lumps of earth (*loṣṭa-citi*); according to some ancient ritualists, only a builder of the *agni-citi* was entitled to be buried in such a tumulus. The two structures were largely parallel as well (cf. Caland 1896:

129ff.). The word *citi* is used also of the pyre of wood in the ordinary cremation funeral (cf. Caland 1896: 36).

Prajāpati, the 'Lord of Creation', fell apart (i.e. died) as a result of his creating the world. His disintegrated body is put together again in the ritual of the fire altar. Its 10,800 bricks correspond to the body parts of Prajāpati, who among other things is equated with the year (which has 360 days of 30 'moments', altogether 10,800 'moments'). "The year is considered the full term of pregnancy" (Heesterman 1957: 28, referring to *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa* 6,1,3 and 10,1,9). According to the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (7,2,1,5), "When the gods made Prajāpati, who had fallen asunder, fit again, they poured him in the form of seed in the fire pot (as) in a yoni [i.e. womb]. The fire pot, verily, is yoni." In the fire altar rite,

> "the *ukhā*, 'fire pot', in which the fire is to be carried during the year preceding the actual building of the brick construction ... [and] which is identical with the milk pot used in the pravargya ritual, is also a form of the 'head of the sacrifice' ... Finally when the fire altar is built, the human head is put in the *ukhā* in the center of the first layer." (Heesterman 1985: 53)

In the funerary ritual, the bones, starting with the skull, are collected after the cremation (cf. Caland 1896: 103ff.) into a pot. This pot is called *kalaśa-* in the *Kauśikasūtra* (82,31), *kumbha-* or *sata*[43] in the *Baudhāyana-Pitṛmedhasūtra* (11: ed. Caland p. 17,4).

The *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra* (8,3) mentions a wooden vessel or a vessel of bell-metal[44] for the heating of the so-called *dadhi-gharma* offering, which consists of heated curds (*dadhi*) and ghee. The *dadhi-gharma* is important for understanding "earlier, pre-classical forms of the Pravargya, and its conservation of archaic features for which the classical Pravargya also contains indications" (Houben 2000a: 18; this has been emphasized already by Buitenen 1968: 1-5). Thus, *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 14,2,2,53-54 suggests that wooden and metal vessels were once used as pravargya vessels, but they were later replaced by earthen vessels because wooden vessels were burnt and metal vessels melted; the older but "already developed" practice of using a metal vessel in the gharma ritual is actually referred to in *Ṛgveda* 5,30,15 (cf. Houben 2000a: 6-7, 17-18). The *dadhi-gharma*, which is referred to as early as ṚV 10,179, is offered to Indra during the midday service of a soma sacrifice; it has undoubtedly originated from the desire of Indra worshippers to compensate for the gharma offered to the Aśvins (cf. Buitenen 1968: 3; Houben 2000a: 18).

Another offering that has preserved features of an earlier form of the pravargya rite is the *pṛṣātaka* ceremony that the Gṛhyasūtras prescribe to be performed at the full moon of the Āśvina or Aśvayuja month (in September-October): the name of the month connects it with the Aśvins, who are also among the deities mentioned as its receivers (*Śānkhāyana-Gṛhyasūtras* 4,16 enumerates the Aśvins, the Āśvayuj, the Āśvayuja full moon, the autumn and Paśupati, while Pāraskara-Gṛ hyasūtras 21,6 enumerates Indra, Indrāṇī, the Aśvins, the Āśvina full moon, and the autumn). Here the oblation (from which the ceremony has got its name, which denotes 'spotted ghee' like *pṛṣad-ājya-*) consists of a mixture of milk or sour milk and ghee, according to the PGS also honey (cf. Houben 2000a: 19).

Sour milk (*dadhi*) and honey (*madhu*) appear to have been among the ingredients of the original gharma offering, for the word *dadhi* is part of the name of the demon Dadhyañc, who taught the

Aśvins the secret *madhu-vidyā* 'honey-knowledge'. According to the Gautama-Pitṛmedhasūtra (1,6), the funerary urn is to be filled with sour milk, ghee, honey and water, and in addition a piece of gold; then the bones are put in (cf. Caland 1896: 107). A great feast for the ancestors on the 13th day of the dark half of the Aśvayuj and in the Maghā month in the rainy season must contain honey (cf. Caland 1888: 44-46).

The funerary pot with the bones and ashes is dug and buried in a pit dug in the forest and more specifically at the root of a tree. According to (an admittedly late) manual of the Kaṭha school, a cloth made of the kuśa grass is wrapped around the funerary urn[45] and this is placed inside another earthen vessel and then put down in the forest, at the root of a tree or a permanent reliquary placed in a clean location (*kauśavastreṇa pariveṣṭyānyasmin mṛnmaye pātre nidhāyāraṇye vṛkṣamūle vā śucau deśe vā abhraṃśinyām aiḍūkāyṃ saṃsthāpya*) (cf. Caland 1896: 107f.). When a funerary tumulus is built, also a big pot with a hundred holes (*kumbhīṃ ca śatātṛāṇṇāṃ*, Baudhāyana-Pitṛmedhasūtra 14: 19,10), according to the Atharvavedins also another one with a thousand holes (*śatātṛāṇṇāṃ-sahasrātṛṇṇau, Kauśikasūtra* 83,3), is needed to sprinkle the ready tumulus with water, after it has been covered with stones (cf. Caland 1896: 157-159). Can this represent the 'cooling' of Atri's *ṛbīsa* by the Aśvins?

The Nāsatyas and the nose

The prominent 'nose' on the pravargya pot and on the face urns of the Gandhāra Graves is connected with the Aśvins in their function as Nāsatyas, 'saviours'. In *Ṛgveda* 2,39,6, they are asked to be "protectors of our body like the nose (with its two nostrils)" (*nāseva nas tanvó rakṣitārā*). On some of the Gandhāran face urns the 'nose' resembles the beak of an eagle or some other bird: according to the *Ṛgveda*, the flying chariot of the Aśvins is drawn by winged horses (ṚV 6,63,7 *vàyó ' śvāsaḥ*), geese or swans (ṚV 4,45,4 *haṃsāsaḥ*) or eagles or hawks *(śyenāsaḥ)*. A connection between the face urns and the Aśvins is suggested even by the horse shaped handle on the lid of one of these Gandhāra Grave funerary pots (fig. 2). The word *nàs-*'nose' occurs only twice in the *Ṛgveda*. One occurrence is the above-quoted verse ṚV 2,39,6, where the two Aśvins are compared to the nose with its two nostrils (*nāsā* in the dual) — note that the nose of one face urn has the detail of the two nostrils (see fig. 10). The other reference is ṚV 5,61,2c, addressed to the Maruts, the gods of storm and battle, who later in the hymn (in verses 12-13) are represented as driving a chariot, but in the verse 6 apparently as riders (cf. Falk 1994: 93): *pṛṣṭhé sàdo nasór yàmaḥ* '(where is) the saddle (literally, the seat) on the back (of the horse), (where) the rein (literally, restrainer) of the two nostrils (of the horse)?' This verse is important, because it shows that the Sanskrit words *yama-* meaning 'twin' as well as 'rein' and *nàs-* meaning 'nose' as well as 'to save' — both associated with the Aśvins / Nāsatyas in the Ṛgvedic language — had connotations definitely linked with a key skill in horsemanship, the control of the horse through its nostrils.

The Nāsatyas exerted their saviour function primarily as regenerators and psychopomps. In a Ṛgvedic prayer for the birth of a son, the two Aśvins, the lotus-garlanded gods, are asked to place an embryo in the wife (ṚV 10,184,2).[46] In the next verse of this hymn, the embryo is equated with the fire, the embryo of the waters, who is hidden in the *aśvattha* wood (cf. Krick 1982: 158-9): "The embryo, whom the Aśvins create with the golden fire quirl, him we call hither for you, so that he may be born in the tenth month". According to the Atharvavedic *Kauśika-Sūtra* (35,6-10),

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the life cycle rite of *puṃsavana* aiming at the birth of a son is performed as follows. Fire is rubbed with a fire quirl, which consists of a female plank of *śamī* wood and a male stick of *aśvattha* wood (the fire stood *[sthā-* 'to stand'] in the shape of an *aśva* 'horse' one year in the *aśvattha,* cf. Krick 1982: 174-6); then the fire quirl is ground into powder and mixed with butter coming from a cow that has born a male calf; the mixture is put with the thumb of the right hand into the right nostril of the wife. The powder of the ground fire quirl can also be mixed with a honey-drink *(madhu-mantha)* that the wife is made to eat. We have seen that the honey-drink is connected with the Aśvins.

Smearing substance that symbolizes 'manly seed' into the nostril corresponds to becoming pregnant from smelling the seed, which is found in the myth the Aśvins' birth. According to the Bṛhaddevatā (7,3-6), Saraṇyū who had assumed the shape of a mare was covered by the steed-shaped Vivasvant, but on account of their speed the seed fell on the ground. After Saraṇyūhad merely smelled the seed she immediately gave birth to the two 'nose-born' Nāsatyas. The myth is hinted at in ṚV 10,17,2 and told also by Yāska in *Nirukta* 12,10, in the *Harivaṃśa* (8,1-39) and in several Purāṇas (cf. Krick 1982: 211-2; Tokunaga 1997: 119 and 266-7). One of the etymologies mentioned by Yāska (and endorsed by Lommel 1951: 29-31) derives the name of the Nāsatyas from their nose-birth (Nirukta 6,13 *nāsatyau cāśvinau / ... nāsikāprabhavau babhūvatur iti v*).[47]

The 'nose-birth' of the Nāsatyas is ritually included also in the pravargya rite. When the clay out of which the gharma pot is to be fashioned has been collected, at the moment when a goat is milked so that its milk flows over the clay, a stallion is made to sniff at the clay while the adhvaryu recites: "Grant life, grant prāṇa, apāna and vyāna, sight, hearing, mind, voice, body, strength, mass — grant me all this!" (cf. ÂpŚŚ 15,2,2-3 and Buitenen 1968: 58).

In the establishment of the sacred fires (*agnyādhāna*), the new fire generated by means of the fire quirl is carried eastwards behind a horse led by the adhvaryu priest, followed by the fire-kindler priest with the fire, flanked on the left by the sacrificer and on the right by the brahman priest who makes a chariot or a chariot wheel roll forwards. As noted by Hertha Krick, the pair of the sacrificer and the brahman corresponds to the king and his house priest, and to the chariot warrior (*savyaṣṭha-* 'who stands on the left') and the charioteer (*sārathi*). The procession takes the fire from the gārhapatya hearth (which symbolizes the earth or the human world) to the āhavanīya hearth (which symbolizes the heavenly world), where it is placed upon the hoofprint of the horse; the horse snorts off the demons of darkness and tramples the enemies under its hoofs (cf. Krick 1982: 301-307). The fight between the solar horse and the demons of darkness seems to be depicted on the painted pottery of the Gandhāra Graves (cf. fig. 1). The whole procession is very similar to that in which the hot milk offering of the gharma rite is taken to the āhavanīya: "while the Adhvaryu brings forward the Mahāvīra, the Pratiprasthātar brings the southern rauhiṇa cake" (Buitenen 1968: 107) and a little later the northern rauhiṇa cake (p. 115): these cakes are made in the shape of a horse.

In the fire altar ritual, the *ukhā* pot symbolizes the earth as the maternal womb, into which part of the old fire had been placed as an embryo; after the *ukhā* vessel with this fire embryo had been carried around for one year marking the gestation period, it was reborn when laid down in the middle of the fire altar at the beginning of the new year (cf. Krick 1982: 115). The gharma pot, made exactly like the ukhā pot, has similar symbolism.

Afterword

This paper was written for a Festschrift in honour of Professor Viktor I. Sarianidi on his 75th birthday in September 2004. When the paper was submitted early in August 2004, the final name of the book had not yet been decided, but the provisional publication data of that volume are as follows: M. F. Kosarev, P. M. Kozhin & N. A. Dubova (eds.), *Grasping the sources of civilizations*. Moscow: Staryj Sad, 2004. As the book is published in no more than 250 copies, it will not be of easy access outside Russia, and the editors have given their kind permission to publish this paper simultaneously in *Ancient Pakistan*. The two texts are the same (including the way of presenting the bibliographical references, which agrees with the other papers in the book), except for different pagination and the addition of this afterword in *Ancient Pakistan*. I take the opportunity of correcting the information given in footnote 5. According to Dr Shahbaz Khan, whom I met in Lahore in August 2004 and who directed the Salt Range survey, Kot Dijian pottery was found in the course of these exploration, but not any ceramic connected with the Gandhāra Grave culture.

Notes

[1] I am grateful to Viktor Sarianidi for sending me his draft description of this find in Russian, together with several photographs.

[2] The calibrated radiocarbon dates from Krivoe Ozero, a site of the Sintashta-Arkaim culture with the earliest known chariot burial, center around 2000 BC; the dated samples were taken from the skulls of the horses buried along with the chariot (see Anthony 1998; cf. also Anthony and Vinogradov 1995)

[3] The following paragraph was included in the abstract and oral version of my paper "From archaeology to a stratigraphy of Vedic syncretism" read at the *Third International Vedic Workshop* held at Leiden in May, 2002, but it was excluded from the printed version of the paper, which is more limited in its scope (Parpola, in press). The present paper is the first detailed presentation of this thesis of mine.

"The 'Proto-Ṛgvedic' phase is reflected not only in Mitanni but also in the Kāṇva hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, which differ from the family hymns in their strophic structure and in their agreement with Mitanni onomastics. It is the Kāṇva hymns that most often speak of the early Ṛgvedic tribes Yadu and Turvaśa, and of the northern areas of Pakistan, where the first wave of Ṛgvedic Aryans entered around 1600 BC with the Ghalegay IV culture, the first in Swat to have the domesticated horse. The Atris and Kāṇvas, both settled in Swat, have the closest connection with the Aśvins and their gharma offering. The heated gharma pot is called "great hero" and identified with the sun and the cut-off head of the sacrifice, that is, the sacrificial victim. The gharma implements are discarded after laying them out in a human image, as if for a funeral. The pot should have a nose (*nāsa*) — apparently because it represents the 'saving' (*nas-*) Nāsatyas, allegedly born from the nose. The prominent nose of the funeral 'face urns' of the Ghalegay IV culture thus seems to connect them with the Nāsatyas capable of reviving the dead."

[4] On the Gandhāra Grave culture, see especially Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972 and Stacul 1987; Müller-Karpe 1983; Dani 1967; 1988: 70-76.

[5] The Salt Range sites have been recently discovered by the Department of Archaeology in Lahore (personal communication of J. M. Kenoyer in July 2004).

[6] Müller-Karpe (1983: 29-51) has misunderstood the sequence. According to him, the oldest Gandhara Graves are predominantly cremation burials, in the middle phase cremation and inhumation burials are about equal in numbers, and the last phase consists predominantly of inhumations.

[7]   Vajīra might stand for Prakrit *vājīra- < Sanskrit vājī-kara- 'which makes potent'.

8   For the 'classical' *pravargya* rite described in the Śrautasūtras, see Buitenen 1968 with corrections by Kashikar (1973), the Śrautakośa (1970: II SS 1, pp. 9-17, 71-130, 137-138, 140-141, 145-155, and 1973: II ES 1, pp. 28-47, 166-213, 229-231, 234-236, 242-266), and, for the ninth book (pravargya) of the *Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra,* Kashikar 2003: II, 474-543. For the older sources, see Eggeling 1900: V (*Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 14), Witzel 1974 (Kaṭha-Āraṇyaka 2-3) Houben 1991 (*Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka* 5 or 8) and Houben 2000a; 2000b (Ṛgvedic hymns). Of the other literature dealing with the pravargya I mention here just Lüders (1959: II, 339-374); Kramrisch (1975); Gonda (1979); Kashikar (1982); and especially Rönnow (1929) and Heesterman (1967).

9   Kashikar (1973: 4) points out that "by the word *mukha* we have to understand the opening (= *āsecana* of Āp[astamba] and *pinvana* of Bodh[āyana])." In fact, Eggeling himself (1900: V, 454 n. 3) notes: "'Mukha´, for which Kāty[āyana] XXVI, 1, 16 has 'āsecana´ explained by the commentator as a hole (garta; comm. on Āśv. Gṛhyas. IV, 3 bila), apparently serving as the mouth, or open part of the vessel which seems to be otherwise closed. The edge of the hole would seem to protract sufficiently from the surface to suggest a similarity to the nose..." Wilhelm Rau (1972: 66-67) translates this passage as follows: "Weiter setzt er [die Zutaten] auf einen Erdhaufen. Für Makha dich! Für Makha's Kopf dich! ... Weiter trennt er [von der Gesamtmasse] einen Tonklumpen ab und formt den mahāvīrà. Für Makha dich! Für Makha's Kopf dich! ... Spannengross [ist er], — der Kopf ist ja ungefähr spannengross —, in der Mitte zusammengezogen, — der Kopf ist ja in der Mitte etwas zusammengezogen. Weiter zieht er oben an ihm eine dreifingerbreite Tülle hoch. Dabei setzt er eben eine Nase an ihn."

10   Buitenen (1968: 9-12) has discussed the descriptions of how the mahāvīra vessel is prepared. However, his discussion contains many mistakes which have been corrected by Kashikar in a review article (1973). Plate 3: 1 in Buitenen (1968) shows "the mahāvīra pot as it appears now-a-days": it "looks as if three spherical bowls were kept one upon another with a all-through vacuum" (Kashikar 1973: 1). But as Kashikar (1973: 2) notes: "The three spherical bowls, which form the chief characteristic of the present-day Mahāvīra, have no authority in the Sūtras. It is not known since what time, and how, the three-bowl-shaped Mahāvīra came to be used in the Pravargya rite." An answer to Kashikar's question 'how' might be sought in the prescription of the Sūtras that in addition to the Mahāvīra vessel actually used, two spare ones are to be prepared; perhaps all the three were initially kept together, one above the other, and at some time the whole complex started being considered as the Mahāvīra.

11   Houben refers to Geldner 1951: IV (index edited by Johannes Nobel), p. 43a.

12   This is suggested also by the fact that Dīrghatamas, the poet who composed the important pravargya hymn *Ṛgveda* 1,164, is also the author of the aśvamedha hymns *Ṛgveda* 1,162-163 (cf. Houben 2000b, para 9.2).

13   The possibility is not excluded that the horse skull has fallen in this position from an upper layer of the grave (personal communication of Pavel F. Kuznetsov in Samara in 2003).

14   "But the sun also slays. The warrior kills with arrows, 'like Savitṛ' and 'like Āditya' (Hopkins 1915: 85).

15   The 'divine twins' of several other Indo-European peoples (Celtic, Germanic, Slavic) have been compared with these three (cf. Güntert 1923: 262-3; Wagner 1960; O'Brien 1997), but these twins are not associated with both horsemanship and the Dawn, or one may suspect an influence of the Graeco-Roman Dioscuri.

16   For the Nāsatyas, see Muir 1874: V, 234-257; Myriantheus 1876; Bergaigne 1883: II, 431-510; III, 5-20; Macdonell 1897: 49-54; Oldenberg 1917: 207-215; Güntert 1923: 253-276; Hillebrandt 1927: I, 54-70; Geldner 1928: 21-23; Lüders 1959: II, 339-374; Renou 1967: XVI, 1-76; Gonda 1974: 34-58; Zeller 1990; Oberlies 1993; 1998: 178-183; Pirart 1995-2001. — For the Dioskouroi, see Eitrem 1902; Bethe 1905; Farnell 1921; Nilsson 1955: I, 406-411; Burkert 1985. — For the Baltic 'God's sons', see Mannhardt 1875; Biezais 1975. — For the Indo-European divine twins, see Wagner 1960; Ward 1968; O'Brien 1997.

17   However, in Lithuanian, the Venus as the evening star is called *wakarínė* and as the morning star *auszrínė*: these words are of the feminine gender, and the Lithuanian folk songs therefore sing of them as maidens of

the sun; the morning star lights the fire for the sun and the evening star prepares the bed for him (cf. Mannhardt 1936: 64).

[18] Euripides in his drama Helene, asks: "Are the sons of Tundareos alive or not? They are dead and yet not dead — report is diverse — which is the prevailing story? Men say that they are gods, fashioned like unto stars" (137-140). Later in Helene (1499), they are "sons of Tundareos, who dwell in the regions of heaven beneath the whirling orbits of the stars". In the Elektra of Euripides, ìthe good Sons of God... dwell in the gleaming aether among the stars, having honour as saviours of men in the billows of the main" (990) (tr. Farnell 1921: 185). "The later writers explicitly identify them with the constellation known as 'the Twins', or even with the morning and evening stars ... the popular art from the fourth century onwards, on many coins and other monuments, displays . . . two stars above their heads or above their caps, or in other close association with them" (Farnell 1921: 186). In Athens the Dioskouroi were worshipped as 'light-bringers' (*phōsphóroi*); they were called stars and represented with stars as their attributes. This astral aspect was associated with mystery cults: ìIn the Odyssey it is said that 'the corn-giving earth holds both living ... now they are living, day and day about, now they are dead.' ... The Dioskouroi ... were also said to have been initiated at Eleusis and were seen as guiding lights for those hoping to break out of the mortal sphere into the realm of the gods" (Burkert 1985: 213). In Iliad 23,226-7, the light is heralded by the morning star: "But at the hour when the star of morning goeth forth to herald light over the face of the earth — the star after which followeth saffron-robed Dawn and spreadeth over the sea..." (tr. Murray 1924: II, 511).

[19] The words *étaśa-* and *étagva-* are used as attributes of divine horses; *eta-* in them is a colour term meaning something like 'variegated'; in the Avesta, the cognate word *aēta-* is used of camel. Cf. Mayrhofer 1992: I, 265-6.

[20] According to *Ṛgveda* 1,115,5, the Sun makes one to see the colours of Mitra and Varuṇa in the sky: his horses bring together his two appearances, one infinitely white, the other black. This verse belongs to those recited at the twilight praise addressed is to the Aśvins (*āśvina-śastra*) in an over-night Soma sacrifice, and in that context the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (4,10,9) comments: "Mitra is the day, Varuṇa the night".

[21] Further evidence of this kind e.g. in *Atharvaveda* 12,3,54; see Bergaigne II, 423.

[22] The evolution of the horse-drawn chariot required longer experimentation: earlier mono-axle chariots with solid wheels have found in the graves of the North Pontic Catacomb culture (c. 2800-2200 calBC) (cf. Klochko & Pustovalov 1994: 205 fig. 6; 208; Pustovalov 1994: 99; 102 fig. 11; Parpola 2002b: 237 fig. 2). These early one-man chariots were probably drawn by oxen, like the similar chariots depicted on a silver drinking vessel of the BMAC (cf. Amiet 1989: fig. 6; Parpola 2002b: 240 fig. 5).

[23] The earliest known evidence of wheeled vehicles anywhere in the world seems to be a drawing of a wagon on a clay vessel of the Funnel Beaker culture found at Bronocice in southern Poland, with a calibrated radiocarbon date of 3470-3210 BC (cf. Piggott 1983: 40-42, 62-63; Carpelan & Parpola 2001: 59-60).

[24] *Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra* 1,2,7; *Kauśikasūtra* 29; 35; 66; 83; *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra* 2,5,2-4. *Mantha* means 'churning' and 'mixed beverage'.

[25] *Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra* 1,2,1-2. *Parka* comes from the verbal root *pṛc-* 'to mix'.

[26] The cult of Kṛṣṇa and Bala-Rāma was current particularly among the Yādavas of the Mathurā region. The Yādavas tribe is descended from the early Ṛgvedic Yadu tribe connected with the cult of the Aśvins and their wife/sister Uṣas. The city of Mathurā was originally called Madhurā (this form in Patañjali c. 150 B.C.) according to the 'demon' Madhu, who was the first ruler of the city. Madhu, whose name means 'honey, honey-drink, mead, wine', may have been the prototype of Bala-Rāma, the great wine-drinker. (Cf. Parpola 2002c).

[27] The name *Kàstōr* is derived from the Proto-Indo-European root *k'ad-* or rather **k'end-* 'to excel, surpass, triumph'. This root is supposed to be originally identical with **sk'end- / *skend-* 'to appear, to shine' (cf. Pokorny 1959: I, 516-7, 526; LIV 1998: 289-290; 494-5, 501-2).

[28] Reflecting these different tasks and qualifications, the Vedic tradition makes some distinctions between the two Aśvins: the elder one is a 'victorious' (*jiṣṇú-*) warrior, a mortal king (*rājan-*) as the son of a human father, while the younger brother is more peaceful and of divine origin, an 'intelligent, wise, skilful' (*dasrà-*) and 'trickful' (*māyāvin-*) charioteer (cf. Zeller 1990: 36f.).

[29] Àktōr 'driver, leader' is also an epithet of the horse-related sea god Poseidon, the divine father of these "Siamese" twins.

[30] The authority on which Aristarchus' explanation is based is Hesiodus, according to whom these twins had a single body (Fragm. 13 (32), Rzach 1958: 137). Ibukos in the sixth century BC "describes 'the two sons of Molione' as 'youths who ride (or drive) white horses [leúkippoi], equals in age and height and one in body, both born within a silver egg'" (Farnell 1921: 208). (Cf. also Eitrem 1902: 11-12.)

[31] In the Mitanni-Hittite treaty of 1380 BC, the Nāsatyas are summoned to punish the breaker of the treaty. Theognis (verse 1087) reveals that the Greek Dioskouroi had this function, too: "Kastor and Poludeukes, who dwell in holy Lakedaimon by the fair-flowing stream of Eurotas, if ever I plot evil against my friend, may it fall on my own head" (transl. Farnell 1921: 228). The Lacedaemonian oath *vaĕ tō siō* is commonly interpreted to mean 'by the two gods', referring to the Dioskouroi (cf. Farnell 1921: 193). An ancient Indian etymology for the name Nāsatya quoted by Yāska (Nirukta 6,13 *satyāv eva nāsatyāv ity aurṇavābhaḥ/ satyasya praṇetārāv ity āgrāyaṇaḥ*) shows that they were regarded as guardians of truth: "'They are ever true and never false [na-asatya]', says Aurṇavābha. 'They are promotors of truth', says Āgrāyaṇa." (Transl. Sarup 1921: 98).

[32] I cannot go further into a discussion of Mitra and Varuṇa here, but I would like to make this observation. In this pair, Mitra represents the 'bright' side of the sun and thus is the original chariot warrior. While Mitra has preserved his former function and importance in the Iranian tradition, in India the originally 'priestly' co-ruler (*samrāj*), Varuṇa, who represents the 'dark' side of the sun and is the original charioteer, has amassed practically all power and left Mitra in his shadow. Exactly the same thing has happened with the pair of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, where the 'white' Balarāma stands for 'king' and the 'black' Kṛṣṇa for 'house priest'.

[33] There are passages in the *Ṛgveda* which suggest that *mitra* and *varuṇa* were originally attributes of the Aśvins. Paul Thieme (1960: 314) has cited ṚV 8,35,13 (*mitrāvàruṇavantā utà dhàrmavantā/ marútvantā jaritúr gacchatho hàvam*), in which the Aśvins are asked to come provided with or accompanied by 'Treaty' (*mitra*), 'True Speech' [or 'Command', Brereton 1981] (*varuṇa*), 'Lawfulness' (*dharma*) and the Maruts (divinities of storm and battle, companions of Indra, the god or war and thunder).

"ṚV 8,35,12 explicitly says: *hatàṃ ca śàtrūn yàtataṃ ca mitríṇaḥ... aśvinā* 'You two Aśvins (= Nāsatyas) slay the enemies and array (= keep in agreement) those who are connected by a contract/treaty...' ... From this passage it becomes evident that the two Nāsatyas may be regarded not only as divine 'healers and wonderworkers', but that their role as 'helpers' may involve fighting and have an ethical motivation. In 'arraying' the *mitrin* (cf. Avestan *aiwi-mithri-* '[fighting] against a contract/treaty partner'), they share a function with Mitra and Varuṇa; in 'slaying' the enemies, with Indra." (Thieme 1960: 314)

It is significant that "the mention of these belligerent traits of the Aśvins seems limited, as already noted by Lüders, to the Kāṇva hymns (8th *maṇḍala* and first part of the first *maṇḍala*). This can hardly be due to chance" (Thieme 1960: 315). In this I agree with Thieme, but to my mind, the reason is largely in the archaism of the Kāṇva tradition.

[34] Of the entire Vedic literature it is especially the *Atharvaveda* that has the closest connections with the purohita, the royal house-priest, and with the brahman priest of the śrauta ritual (cf. Bloomfield 1899: 28-34; 73ff.). Though the *Atharvaveda* as we now have it is later than the *Ṛgveda*, the Atharvedic tradition and its slightly different and in some respects more archaic Indo-Aryan dialect seem to have come to South Asia before the Ṛgvedic tradition, where Indra-worship with the *soma* sacrifice is the main content (cf. Parpola 2002a: 49-66).

[35] This 'turning of the wheel' seems to be behind the title *cakravartin* 'wheel-turner' which in ancient India denoted the 'ruler of the whole world'.

[36] *Prati-hita* literally means 'put in place'; specifically, it is used of an arrow adjusted to the bowstring (the crown prince receives bow and arrow in the royal consecration and uses them during his chariot drive).

[37] Cf. Geldner 1901: III, 72; Wackernagel 1905: II (1): 151-2; Konow 1921: 37; Gotô 1991; Mayrhofer 1996: II, 39.

[38] Pirart (1995: I, 18-22) discusses and analyzes the Avestan evidence in detail. Departing from the traditional interpretation, according to which the Avesta knows only one Nāhathya (in the singular), Pirart suggests an emendation into the dual and takes the names of the following two Daēvas Taurvi and Zairica (not otherwise known, but Taurvi corresponding to Vedic *tūrvi* 'superior, overpowering', which occurs only once, in RV 9,42,3) as the names of the two Nāhathyas.

[39] Geldner (1951: I, 420) suggested an emendation into the dual, which would be metrically better.

[40] Tundàreos or Tundàreōs was a mythical king of Sparta.

[41] A coin type of Istros on the Black Sea dated to c. 300 BC shows two young male heads, the one on the left upwards, the one on the right downwards. They have been interpreted to symbolize the dual nature, celestial and chthonia, of Poludeukes and Kastor, or the rising and setting sun. Cf. Farnell 1921: 220.

[42] The word *r̥bīsa* seems to come from the non-Indo-European language originally spoken in the BMAC culture (cf. Lubotsky 2001; Parpola 2002a: 92-94). — On Atri and the *r̥bīsa*, see Jamison 1991.

[43] The etymologically unclear term *sàta-* is interesting, as it is otherwise known only as the name of a wooden vessel for beer (*surā-*) in the *sautrāmaṇī* rite: in the legend connected with the *sautrāmaṇī* , Indra with the help of the Aśvins won the *surā-* drink from the Dāsa demon Namuci whose head Indra cut off (cf. Rönnow 1929).

[44] Taking into consideration that the cult of the Aśvins apparently survived in Mathurā, perhaps not only Madhu as the name of an earlier local ruler or demon can be related to this cult, but also Kaṃsa 'vessel of bell metal' and the name of Mathurā's 'evil' ruler.

[45] I cannot here go into the important symbolism of this funerary wrapping, which symbolizes embryonic covers and is very much involved in the Atri myths; see — also for many other aspects of the Atri mythology — Jamison 1991 (especially pp. 234-237).

[46] A Greek inscription found at the Laconian colony of Akrai in Sicily contains the words Kalligenían Kàst[ora kai Poludeúkēn]. Here the divine twins are associated with "the goddess of 'beautiful birth', a child-birth goddess whom we know from other sources". Farnell (1921: 225-6) suggests that a woman had given birth to twins and therefore invoked this set of gods, denying any particular connection between the twin gods and childbirth.

[47] In the *Mahābhārata* (12,347,42 and 12,348,39 Bombay ed.), the fifth birth of the god Brahmā from the nose of Nārāyaṇa is called *nāsatyaṃ janma.*

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Fig. 1: A fragment of black-on-red painted pottery (BKG 500) of the Ghalegay IV period from Bīr-köṭ-ghwaṇḍai (Swat), representing a horse attacked by a monster. After Stacul 1987: 106,   fig. 46 h.

Fig. 3: Horse as the top of a small conical capsule made of bronze (T. 242/32) from the grave-yard of Kātelai (Swat). Height 3,6 cm. After Müller-Karpe 1983: 111, Abb. 39: 3 [wrongly said to come from Butkara] (based on Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972: I (2) pl. LIII a; cf. I (1), p. 422).

Fig. 2: A concave terracotta lid with the figurine of a horse as its handle, found in situ closing a cinerary vase (T. 19/1), from the graveyard of Loebanr (Swat). Diameter of the lid 31 cm, height of the handle 10 cm. After Müller-Karpe 1983: 111, Abb. 39: 1 (based on Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972: I (2), pl. LII c; cf. I (1), p. 78).

Fig. 4: Skeleton of a horse (T. 45) from the surface of stratum (3) from the graveyard of Kātelai (Swat). After Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972: I (2), pl. CLIV a; cf. I (1), p. 291.
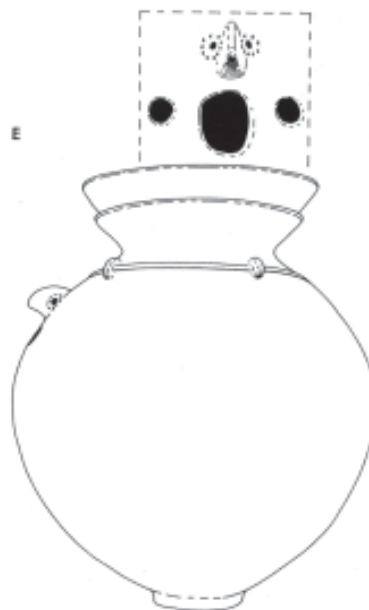
Fig. 5 A
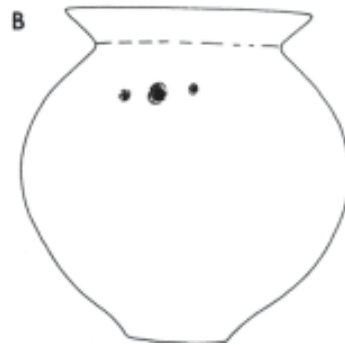
Fig. 5 B

Fig. 5 C
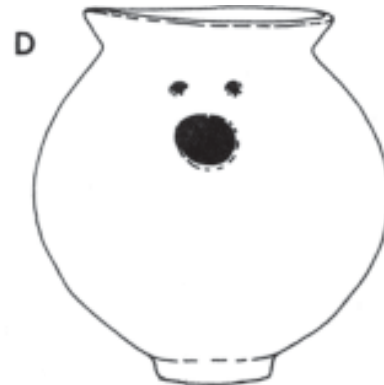
Fig. 5 D

Fig. 5 E

Fig. 5: Face urns of the Gandhāra Graves from the Ghalegay IV period. A, C, D from Kātelai (Swat), B, E from Loebanr (Swat). After Müller-Karpe 1983: 53, Abb. 21 (based on Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972).
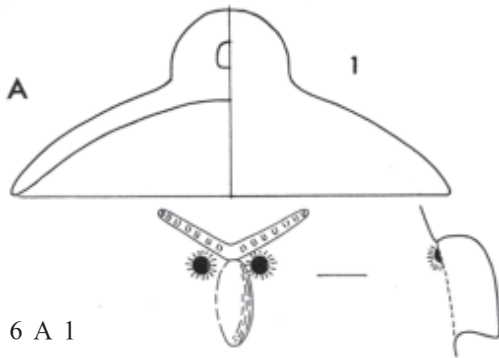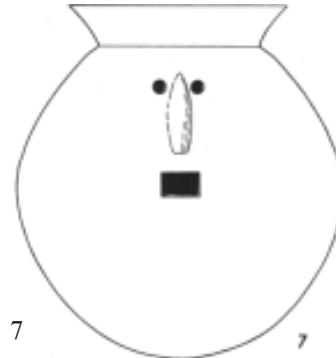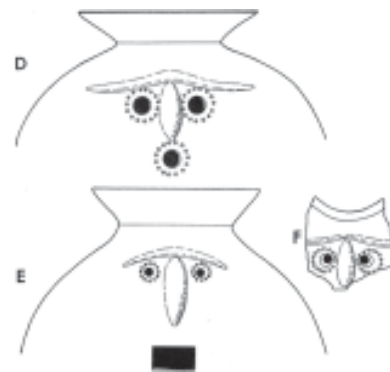
Fig. 6 A 1

Fig. 6 A 7

Fig. 6 C 8

Fig. 6 D-F

Fig. 6. Face urns from Timargarha. After Müller-Karpe 1983: 109, Abb. 38 A 1 & 7, C 8, D-F (based on Dani 1967). Scale 2 : 5.

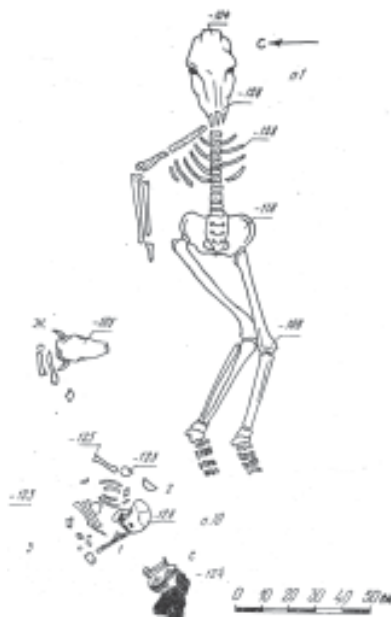Fig. 7: A face urn from Zarif Karuna near Peshawar (c. 1000 BC). After Stacul 1979: pl. 51.

Fig. 8: A human skeleton provided with a horse's skull in a grave of the Potapovka culture near Samara in the mid-Volga region, from about the beginning of the second millennium BC. After Vasil'ev, Kuznetsov & Semënova 1994: 115, ris. 11.
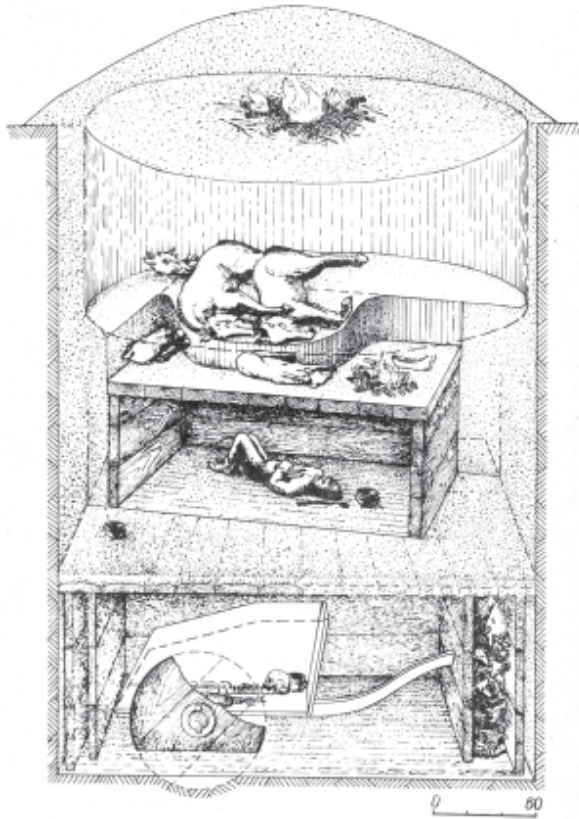
Fig. 9: An aristocratic burial at Sintashta in the southern Urals (c. 2200-1800 calBC). The chariot in this grave still has plank-wheels. After Gening, Zdanovich & Gening 1992: 154, fig. 72.

Fig. 10: A face urn from Loebanr (Swat) (T. 67/1). After Müller-Karpe 1983: 112, Abb. 40: 4 (based on Silvi Antonini & Stacul 1972: I (2), pl. XXXIX: c-d).