

(Akṣa). The racecourse, called Kāṣṭhā³ or Āji⁴ itself, appears from the Atharvaveda⁵ to have been a quasi-circular one to a mark (*kārśman*⁶) and back again. In the Rigveda the course is described as broad (*urvī*) and the distance as measured out (*apāvṛktā aratnayaḥ*).⁷ Prizes (*dhana*) were offered (*dhā*),⁸ and eagerly competed for. Other words for victory and the prize are *kāra*⁹ and *bhara*,¹⁰ and to 'run a race' is described by the expressions *ājim aj, i, dhāv, sy*.¹¹ The person who instituted a race is referred to as *āji-syt*,¹² and Indra is called *āji-kyt*¹³ ('race-maker'), and *āji-pati*¹⁴ ('lord of the race').

The swift steeds (*vājin, atya*) used for the races were often washed and adorned.¹⁵ According to Pischel¹⁶ the name of one swift mare is preserved—viz., Viśpalā,¹⁷ whose broken leg was replaced by the Aśvins in a race; but the interpretation is very doubtful. Geldner¹⁸ has also found a comic picture of a horse-chariot race in the Mudgala hymn in the Rigveda, but Bloomfield¹⁹ has shown that that interpretation is unsound. Pischel²⁰ also seeks to show that races were run in honour of gods, but the evidence for the theory is inadequate.²¹

³ Rv. viii. 80, 8; Av. ii. 14, 6.

⁴ Rv. iv. 24, 8; Av. xiii. 2, 4.

⁵ ii. 14, 6; xiii. 2, 4.

⁶ Rv. ix. 36, 1; 74, 8.

⁷ The sense is doubtful in Rv. viii. 80, 8. Zimmer suggests that it may mean 'the course is straight,' without twistings, for which idea cf. Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 160, quoting the comparison of the course's race with a bowstring (Rv. iii. 53, 24). It is also rendered 'the barriers are removed.'

⁸ Rv. i. 81, 3; 116, 15; vi. 45, 1 et seq.; viii. 80, 8; ix. 53, 2; 109, 10. According to Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 1, 120, n. 2, *dhana* is from *dhan*, 'start.' Cf. Pischel, *ibid.*, 171. Cf. *ghanasā*, Rv. i. 112, 7, 10; ii. 10, 6; viii. 3, 15, etc.

⁹ Rv. v. 29, 8; ix. 14, 1.

¹⁰ Rv. v. 29, 8; ix. 16, 5, etc.

¹¹ *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 25; iv. 27; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, ii. 4, 3, 4; v. 1, 1, 3; 4, 1; vi. 1, 2, 12; vii. 1, 2, 1, etc.

¹² *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, v. 1, 5, 10, 28; xi. 1, 2, 13.

¹³ Rv. viii. 53, 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁵ Rv. ii. 34, 3; ix. 109, 10; x. 68, 11.

¹⁶ *Vedische Studien*, 1, 171-173. Cf. Sieg, *Die Sagenstoffe des Rgveda*, 127 et seq.

¹⁷ Rv. i. 116, 15. Pischel finds here a race in honour of Vivasvant, but his equation of Khela and Vivasvant is denied even by Sieg, who accepts his theory of Viśpalā.

¹⁸ *Vedische Studien*, 2, 1 et seq.

¹⁹ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 48, 541 et seq. Von Schroeder, *Mysterium und Mimik im Rgveda*, 346 et seq., follows Geldner. Cf. Winternitz, *Vienna Oriental Journal*, 23, 137.

²⁰ *Vedische Studien*, 1, 172.

²¹ Sieg, *op. cit.*, 128.