

Tuesday, 05 November 2013

Dr Rishi Agrawal  
Hindu Council UK  
[Reply by email to: [agarwalrishik@gmail.com](mailto:agarwalrishik@gmail.com) and [generalsecretary@hinducounciluk.org](mailto:generalsecretary@hinducounciluk.org)]

Dear Dr Agrawal

Thanks for your email about the exhibitions in Room 33 and in particular about your concerns with regard to the information panel in Case 5 where statements are made about Indo-Aryans in South Asia.

The room in question was installed in 1992, more than two decades ago and before I joined the service of the museum. In the last twenty years there have been many developments and much research. In addition to the author you note, there is a landmark book by Edwin Bryant. No matter what we think about the strengths and weaknesses of different authors, there is no question that the Aryan theory is out of date and, more to the point, has no useful place in the gallery. I should note that there are no objects in the case (or elsewhere in the gallery) that relate to the early Vedic texts, so there is no particular need to raise this matter in our public interpretation.

The question of updating this gallery is a priority in the department and we are making plans to refurbish the cases and interpretation. Certainly one of my targets is to have this panel replaced with something more suitable and informative. We will be making plans over the coming year and changes will be implemented step by step. I would be grateful for your patience in this: with the budget cuts imposed on us by government we are not able to move as quickly as before. Please be reassured, nonetheless, that action will be taken and appropriate updates made.

I hope this is helpful and I am grateful for your writing to make comments.

Yours sincerely  
**Dr. Michael Willis**  
Department of Asia  
British Museum

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