

# ON THE ORIGIN OF BRAHMIN GOTRAS

BY D. D. KOSAMBI

1. The word *gotra* in the R̥gveda means only a herd of cattle or a pen for cattle. In later times, down to the present day, it has the meaning of an exogamous patriarchal family unit, corresponding roughly to the *gens* in Rome. The words *gana* and *jana* would seem more logical had the system been directly inherited from the Aryans, but they mean group or aggregate, and tribe respectively. In the R̥gveda at least, we have no explicit statement of the current rules for exogamy; RV.\* x.10 shows in a dialogue between Yama and his importunate twin sister Yamī that such extremely close unions were regarded with horror by the male; but the *patria potestas* is absolutely clear and marked, in that it is the spirits of the paternal ancestors exclusively who are propitiated by the cult of the dead, and the predominant deities of the pantheon are male.

Nevertheless, the gotra system is an outstanding feature of modern Brahminism, which has otherwise made so many compromises in the matter of worship and ritual. Apparently only the Brahmins have gotras, for the lowest caste, that of the śūdras, has no gentile organization at all in our scriptures; tribes and guilds were enrolled later by deriving them as mixed castes (cf. Manusmṛti x.8, 11, 13, 18, 22, 33, 34 etc.) from the principal four without imposition of the gotra system. For the ruling warriors and the trader-yeomen, the *kṣatriya* and *vaiśya* castes respectively, we have the Brahmanic ritual such as the initiation ceremony etc., but their gotras are restricted. In the first place, Brahmin gotras are grouped into larger units (probably corresponding to the phratry) by common *pravaras*, of which Baudhāyana recognizes 49 sets in a far larger—almost unlimited—number of gotras, while in theoretically accepted lists as they now exist (GPN pp.207-285), we find not less than seventy-three. For the *kṣatriya* and the *vaiśya*, however, there is only one pravara

---

\*Hereafter, citations from the R̥gveda (for which I have also made use of the Macdonell-Keith Vedic Index and Grassmann's *Worterbuch*) will be given without a preceding abbreviation; the other commonly cited source is P. Chetanal Rao's collection of gotra lists and rules: *Gotra-pravara-nibandha-kulambam*, Mysore, 1900; This is abbreviated as GPN, with reference by page and line numbers. Keith's devastating criticisms in his book "Religion and Philosophy in the Veda" (Harvard Or. Series 31, 32) have been helpful in that they afford a good excuse for not making further detailed reference to the earlier writers, and restricting myself primarily to the sources. Other frequent citations: Vd—the Vendidad; Yt—the Yaṣṭ, both in J. Darmstadter's translation, *Sacred Books of the East* vols. 4, 23; Her.—Herodotus; Marshall (Sir J., ed.), *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, London 1931; Mackay (R. J. H., ed.) 'Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro', New Delhi 1934; Vats (M.S.) 'Excavations at Harappa', New Delhi 1940; Frankfort (Henri) 'Cylinder Seals', London 1939; Herzfeld (Ernst) 'Zoroaster and His World', Princeton 1917. The Poona critical edition of the Mahābhārata is cited as Mbh, the Vulgate denoting the Calcutta editions.

each, namely Mānava-Aila-Paurūravasa and Bhūlandana-Vātsapri-Māṅkila, respectively, while Āpastamba and Kātyāyana are content with deriving both from Manu. But there is a very prominent rule for both these castes, namely that for marriage groups the gotra is to be taken as the same as that of the family priest, the *purohita*. (GPN. 126-7).

All this implies that the gotra is a purely Brahmanic institution which has been extended to the other two upper castes by Brahmin superiority. In support, we find that instead of the animal or food-tree totems of savage tribes, the gotras are always derived from the names of sages. I propose to show in this note that this system cannot have been present from the oldest times, and that there is considerable reason for believing the tradition to have been inverted (like several other prominent Brahmanic traditions which we shall point out) when the original situation had retreated into legendary antiquity and become too derogatory to acknowledge under the changed circumstances. My thesis is that, specifically as regards some important *Brahmins*, the gotra system is adopted by small groups of pre-kṣatriya and pre-Aryan people from Aryan invaders; as these groups take to the functions of priesthood, they are most logically assigned to the patriarchal clan-group of those for whom they officiate. They consequently acquire the same gotra; only afterwards does the rule become its opposite, when the vedic kṣatriyas have died out by the rise of settlements and the emergence of other warriors of obscure origin who fight their way to the top. At that stage, it becomes quite possible to assign to these newcomers the same gotra as that of the priests, who have maintained a continuity of tradition and acquired a monopoly of scripture by long and arduous study. I do not mean to imply that all gotras, or even all Brahmin gotras originate in this way.

Before proceeding to the proof, such as it is, one can note that the entire position of gotra and pravara is confused if one looks at it as a whole, and there is no historical or political reason given for the confusion though clearly part of the trouble arises from the fact that gotra lists could not be closed, and that newcomers were obviously being recruited into the ranks of the priesthood. The Nāgara Brahmins of Gujarāt are supposed to be medieval immigrants. If the institution of marriage were so strictly bounded by caste and gotra rules, it would be difficult to explain the strong racial heterogeneity of Brahmins in India, as well as the existence of endogamous regional units within them (amounting to sub-castes) which have no basis in scripture.

### THE CLASSIFICATION OF GOTRAS

2. The various lists of the principal authorities, namely Baudhāyana and Kātyāyana-Laughākṣi seem to agree on the whole with the Matsya Purāṇa

which has presumably been copied, with local variants, from the earlier lists. But there are serious differences of detail, as one sees at once on looking into individual cases. For example the Āśvalāyana gotra is ascribed variously to the Bhṛgu, Kaśyapa, and Vasiṣṭha groups (GPN.36.16, 100.21, 106.4, 176.8.) while the apparently related Āśvalāyani belong to the Bharadvājas (GPN. 59.11, 61.15, 163.7), and Āśvalāyanin is a Kaśyapa gotra according to the Matsya Purāṇa (GPN.102.8). It would be quite easy to give many more such examples, though one would then have to go deeper into the distinctions between names that are quite close in sound, and also into the text-criticism of our sources, which have yet to be edited properly. But there is a class of double gotras which are not easy to explain unless in fact the *conscripti* were added to the original *patres* at several later stages and then not always added to the same group. We get the following combined gotras, whose members cannot intermarry with either pravara group (GPN.pp.180-5) Śauṅga-Śaiśiri = Bharadvāja + Viśvāmitra ; Saṅkṛti—Pūtimāṣa = Kaśyapa + Vasiṣṭha, being in fact Vasiṣṭhas by day and Kaśyapas by night ; Devarāta = Jamadagni + Viśvāmitra ; Jātūkarnya = Vasiṣṭha + Atri ; Dhanañjaya = Viśvāmitra + Atri ; Kata & Kapila = Viśvāmitra + Bharadvāja ; Vāmarathya = Vasiṣṭha + Atri ; no Bhāradvāja can marry any Ucathya-pravara Gautama. The brief soma-hymn ix. 86 has traditionally the joint authorship (besides Atri and Gṛtsamada) of three double-named gaṇas not to be found elsewhere. The double name of Baka Dālbhya = Glāva Maitreya (Chāndogya Upaniṣad i. 12) may be explained as a survival of matriarchal tradition.

These are the officially admitted discrepancies, not oversights, and the explanation given is that these *dyūmuṣyāyana* are descended from adopted sons or bought, or descended through a brotherless daughter, or acquired in some, such "artificial" manner in order to perpetuate the cult of the dead, who would otherwise fall from heaven. But let us look for a moment at the largest groups into which the gotras are combined, which are only eight and which show how the historical reality was readjusted in theory to the needs of a growing system (and of course the converse in practice).

The *gotra-kāra* ṛṣis are 1. Jamadagni, 2. Bharadvāja, 3. Gotama, 4. Kaśyapa, 5. Vasiṣṭha, 6. Agastya, 7. Atri, and 8. Viśvāmitra. No Brahmin gotra is valid that does not contain the name of one of these or his (supposed) descendants and the pravara groupings contain the names of one, two, three, or five in one line. But these are not the original ṛṣis even in Brahmanical theory. A Brahmin is the descendant of Brahmā, as such, has one of the ancestors : 1. Bhṛgu, 2. Aṅgiras, 3. Marīci, 4. Atri, 5. Pulaha, 6. Pulastya, 7. Vasiṣṭha. Some measure of accord has been restored by taking Jamadagni as the descendant of Bhṛgu, a tradition which there is no reason at all to doubt though why Bhṛgu himself could not survive in the previous list has to be explained.

Bharadvāja and Gotama are then descendants of Aṅgiras, which might pass. With less justification, Kaśyapa, Vasiṣṭha and Agastya are taken to be descended from Marīci, and for no immediately apparent reason Viśvāmitra is made a descendant of Atri. This explanation from the Matsya Purāṇa could only have been made if there were some need for it and if it were not against what was generally current at the time of writing. It is to be noted that Vasiṣṭha has a secondary and not independent position, while Pulaha and Pulastya have disappeared, the explanation being that they generated Rākṣasas and Piśācas respectively, beings that are some sort of demons, (which, as we shall see means non-Aryans) in any case nothing to do with Brahmins as such. Nevertheless, one finds both these names in the gotra lists. Pulaha is ascribed by Kātyāyana to the Agastī group while a Pulastī appears as a Bṛigu-Veda or Agastī; Paulastya also as a Jamadagni, perhaps the Palastī of iii.53.16. These could only have been so indicated if the particular gotra-names had actually existed within the living tradition. In other words, the conflict of tradition goes back very far, to the original sources.

Finally, there are the additional ten families which are ascribed to just two major groups: Viśahavya, Mitrāyu, Vena, Śunaka to Bṛigu; Rathītara, Muḍgala, Viṣṇuvṛddha, Harita, Kapva, Saṅkṛti to Aṅgiras. These are the *hetula* or "occasional" Bhārgavas and Aṅgirasas respectively, for they had followed professions other than those of priesthood (as can amply be confirmed by tradition, independently of these gotra lists) before becoming priests. We now have to see whether there is other evidence for such change of caste, and then to look deeper into the tradition for the actual characters named here.

#### HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOTRAS

3. It is not my purpose to trace the entire development of the gotra-pravara system, even if there existed material with which this could be done. That the system did expand is certain, for it has catered to the needs of an increasing population while assimilating an additional number of regional and racial groups which could not possibly have belonged to the vedic categories. Some of this has been reflected in the gotra-pravara confusion. For example, my own pravara is Vasiṣṭha-Maitrāvaruṇa-Kuṇḍina. But looking into the genealogies, the position of Maitrāvaruṇa is anomalous, for this hyphenated sage is then son of Vasiṣṭha but also his father; in some stories, Vasiṣṭha is born of the ejected seed of Mitra and Varuṇa (vii.33.9-13), who are gods and not ascetic ṛṣis. Thus Vasiṣṭha is himself Maitrāvaruṇa. In addition, there seem to be Kauṇḍīnyas among the Bharadvājas (GPN.163.1). There is no point in speculating how all this came about nor in attempting an explanation for every detail of the entire system. Let us first see whether there is any historical evidence for gotras other than the Brahmin.

Some gotras are found in inscriptions. A well-known case is that of the Sātavāhanas, who have a Vāsisthiputra (Puṣumāvi) at least one Gotamīputra (Yajñaśrī Sātakarṇi), a Māthariputra etc., while Brihavagopa, the commander-in-chief of Yajñaśrī's army is called a Kauśika in the Nasik cave inscription. Though they gave plentifully to the Buddhist Saṃgha, the Nānāghāt inscription (of Nāganika?) as well as the Nasik inscription of Puṣumāvi show that these kings were completely Brahminized, conscious followers of Brahmanic ritual. The same double loyalty without conflict appears in Hāla's *Saṅgatsalī*. Now it is remarkable that the gotra-names are all found in Brahmin lists, and this would give support to the current rule that the kṣatriya is to be known by his purohita's gotra. We need not stop to consider whether the reference by matronymic is indicative of a matriarchal system ; such reference is also to be found in the genealogy at the end of the Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, for the succession of Brahmin teachers.

The Sātavāhana kings are about the last complete line found in the Purāṇas\*, as would be expected from the probable date of revision of the documents, and the dynasty's close association with Brahmins. But let us go back to the previous dynasty, the Kāṇvāyanas, the last of whom was killed by Simuka Sātavāhana. These kings were themselves Brahmins according to the explicit statement of the Purāṇas, and the first Kāṇvāyana Vāsudeva was a minister who usurped the throne after killing the last of the Śuṅgas. Now both the Śuṅgas and the Kāṇvāyanas are to be found in gotra lists. We have noted the Śauṅga-Śaiśiri confusion above ; a famous sūtra of Pāṇini (4.1.117) ascribes Vikarṇa, Śuṅga, Chagala to the Vatsa, Bhardavāja and Atri groups respectively. There is no need to doubt the genuineness of this sūtra in spite of its not having been commented upon by Kātyāyana or Patañjali, for it is simple enough not to need any comment and in any case the detailed attention which Pāṇini pays in the entire section to gotra derivatives shows both the actual existence of the system in his day as well as its great importance. Turning to our gotra lists, we only find a Vikarṇeya ascribed to the Kaśyapas by a variant of the Matsya Purāṇa (GPN. 103.20), whence it may be assumed that the gotra was extinct by that time. In antiquity, the 21 Vaikarṇayas are against Sudās and overthrown (vii.18.11). Chagala is still an Atri gotra. Śuṅga and Śauṅga are both given among the Bharadvājas (GPN.57.14 & 62.15), while the Kāṇvāyanas are uniformly enrolled as Bharadvājas though Kaṇva and Mahākaṇva are put by the Matsya among the Vasiṣṭhas (GPN.177.23 & 113.12). However, the concordance is good enough, and again shows agreement between a king's gotra and that of his priests, admitting that the priest was likeliest to become a minister.

\*F.E. Pargiter : "The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age". Oxford 1913. The Kāṇvāyanas are the only proper Brahmin (p.35) kings while we have the statement (p.25) that after Mahāpadma Nanda, all succeeding kings would be śūdras or śūdra-like. This would mean primarily that they did not claim vedic ancestry nor observe the pure vedic ritual, and there is no reason to doubt this, for the Mauryas certainly did not.

To go back further, into the realm of pure tradition, we hear of a Gautama Sveta-ketu yielding to the superior philosophical knowledge of the kṣatriya Pravāhaṇa Jaivali (Bṛhad.Up.6.2). Remarkably enough, the Pravāhaṇeyas are still found in the list as Bharadvājas (GPN.56.5 & 162.20, on the authority of Baudhāyana), which is a branch of the Aṅgīrasas as are the Gotamas. Sveta-ketu is also called Āruṇi, which has a doubtful position, perhaps a Bharadvāja (GPN. 57.16). Jaivali is a Pāṇcāla and the Pāṇcālas form now a Kāśyapa gotra (GPN.96.21 & 174.3). The point is that the Pāṇcālas are an entire (composite) tribe, and it is conceivable that some of the Pāṇcāla Brahmins—if indeed the name means the same thing in both cases—could have been Kāśyapas. The name is associated with a definite locality, and there is no need for a locality to have been occupied altogether by people of the same gotra, though we know that clan territories did exist in all countries under certain circumstances. The Kaurukṣetris are Bharadvājas (GPN.59.12 & 163.12) while the Kauśāmbeyas (of whom I am not one in spite of the surname) are Bhṛigus (GPN. 32.1 & 43.15).

#### GOTRAS IN OLDER INDIAN TRADITION

4. So far, we seem to have reasonable confirmation of the gotra theory as it now stands. But let us go back still further. Identifying gotras of famous names is not always easy, and proving their historicity apart from tradition even less simple. Pāṇini's existence is not in doubt. But why are the Pāṇinis ranked among the Bhṛigus by Baudhāyana (GPN. 30.3), Viśvāmītras by Kātyāyana (GPN. 99.10) and the Matsya (GPN. 171.2)? The great commentator Patañjali is uniformly a Bharadvāja in the gotra lists.

That the other two upper castes had their own distinct gotras is quite clear from Patañjali's commentary on Pāṇ. 2.4.58, where he also quotes the opinions of other grammarians on gotra-derivatives; two vaiśya gotras seem to have been Bhāṇḍījāgṛhi and Kārnakharakī. Buddha quotes a verse as by Brahmā Sanatkumāra to the effect that among those with gotras, the kṣatriya is chief (in *Dīghanikāya* 3, and again in 27). There occur Brahmin gotra names in Buddhist stories of the earliest period, and even comparatively rare ones like Pauṣkarasādi of the *Dīgha-nikāya* are to be found in the lists (GPN. 111.10). But we also find kṣatriya gotras given on occasion. It is clear from Buddha's arguments with the Brahmins of his day that the kṣatriyas did have a gotra system of their own, and many families took immense pride in the purity of their lineage. Buddha (descended from Okkāka=Ikṣvāku\*, by tradition) claimed the *ādicca* (=āditya) gotra, and if the Buddha himself is Gotama, it can only

\* Ikṣvāku is mentioned by name in 2.36.4; hymns 2.57-59 are supposed to be by the Gaupāyana, dismissed priest of Ikṣvāku. With him and the Cēkian we come to the end of the Vedic tradition and the beginning of the Purāṇa-Mahābhārata complex.

be his personal name as his mother's son ; for his step-mother, his mother's sister, is Mahāprajāpati Gotamī and marriage within the gotra is excluded. The story of Viḍūḍabha senāpati (*Majjhimanikāya* 87,90 ; *Dhammapada Aṭṭha-kathā* iv. 3) shows that the Buddha's tribe, the Sakkas, cheated their overlord king Pasenadi of Kosala (supposedly of the low Mātāṅgas, according to the *Lalita-vistara*) with Vāsabha-khattiyā (the daughter of Mahānāma Sakka by a *dāsī* concubine) when he desired a Sakka girl as his queen. The result was that the son Viḍūḍabha, after usurping his father's throne, took the first suitable opportunity for wiping out the insult and the Sakkas together, washing his throne with their blood. Nothing is said of the priestly gotras being those of their royal masters. King Pasenadi was generous to many Brahmins, among them the Pauṣkarasūdi above who is a Vasiṣṭha and the Brahmin Lohicca, whose gotra is presumably Lohita, uniformly given as a Viśvāmitra ; both, apparently, had performed costly fire-sacrifices for Pasenadi. But here one can at least set down a reason for imposing the priest-gotra upon the other two eligible castes : that the Brahmins alone preserved the gotra system in spite of later changes, both in the structure of society and in its provincial reorganization. Recruiting new members into the other two castes needed much less specialized training in the traditional ritual than recruitment into the Brahmin caste - which undoubtedly also occurred in much smaller proportion.

This specialized training of the Brahmins was in the scriptures, primarily the vedas. Of these, the R̥gveda is the oldest and the most authoritative, and we should expect some information from the traditional method of its transmission. In fact, we find that books ii to viii are "family books", the hymns being written (at least in theory) by particular families,\* and supposed to be their special property ; this is borne out to a considerable extent by the style of composition and sometimes by the specific blessings called down upon the seers. One could reasonably expect these seven family books to belong to the seven families of gotra-founders, or of the seven original sons of Brahmā. But in fact the list differs from both, being : ii. Gṛtsamada (Bhārgava), iii. Viśvāmitra, iv. Vāmadeva (Gautama), v. Atri, vi. Bharadvāja, vii. Vasiṣṭha, and viii. the Kaṇvas. Jamadagni hasn't disappeared altogether, for he is mentioned several times with special favour: the phrase *gr̥nānā Jamadagninā* in iii. 62.18 and viii. 101.8 shows that the special form of panegyric ascribed to the Jamadagnis was approved of by both the Viśvāmitras and the Kaṇvas. Similarly in vii. 96.3, *gr̥nānā Jamadagnivat stuvānā ca Vasiṣṭhavat* shows that the Vasiṣṭhas did not think badly of it ; ix. 97.51 ascribed to Kutsa Aṅgiras has *ār̥seyam Jama-*

\*H. Oldenberg gave an excellent discussion of the authorship problem for the R̥gveda in ZDMG xlii, 1888, 199-247. But preconceptions as to the original position of the Brahmins seem to have prevented conclusions being drawn about the fusion of two originally inimical peoples and their traditions, or alternatively the development of irreconcilably antagonistic caste-classes.

*dāgnivat*, while the priceless gift (of speech) to Viśvāmitra in iii. 53.15 is *Jama-dagnidattā sasarparīḥ*. Nevertheless, the ṛṣi has not a book to himself in spite of founding a principal lineage. The Dīgha-nikāya (3, Ambaṭṭha-sutta) gives the list of Brahmin teachers, presumably vedic, as Aṭṭaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Angiras, Bharadvāja, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Bhṛgu; of these, the first seems to be Aṭṭaka, author of x. 104, son of Viśvāmitra by Mādhavī (Mbh. Crit. Ed. 5.117.19), and the second is unknown unless the name is taken as Vamaka, which may be found in one of the later cyclic Saptarṣi lists for the various *manvantaras*. The Saptarṣis according to the vedic Anukramaṇi seem to be, in order, Bharadvāja, Kaśyapa, Gotama, Atri, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, and Vasiṣṭha (on ix.67, ix.107, x.137; seven ṛṣis mentioned without names in x.82.2, x.109.4). The one constant feature of lists naming the founder ṛṣis is their number - seven.

A surprising deficiency is that there is no Kaśyapa book of the R̥gveda. The name is mentioned only once, in the very last hymn of the ninth book (ix.114.2), which may be a later addition; the *anukramaṇi* tradition (which I generally accept whenever possible) ascribes to Kaśyapa several hymns such as for example i.99, 101-115, and the Kaśyapas are more frequent authors than any other group in the book dedicated to Eoma, namely the ninth, but this is hardly in keeping with the position of Kaśyapa in the gotra system. The name itself is totemic, having the secondary meaning of a tortoise. The objection that we know of no totemic rites in connection with a tortoise is negated by the injunction that one must be built into the fire altar (Śat. Brāh. vii.5.1); as the heads of all five main sacrificial animals, including man, horse, and bull are so utilized, the use of a tortoise is significantly totemic. Fainter is the indication one obtains from the inclusion of the tortoise in the "five five-nailed animals that may be eaten." Not only is Kaśyapa a prominent *gotra-kāra*, but no less an authority than Baudhāyana says that if by mistake both parents are found to belong to the same gotra, the embryo may be taken without blame as a Kaśyapa (GPN. p.136, *garbho na duṣyati, kaśyapa itī vijnāyate*), though others like Āpastamba would consider the child as an absolute outcaste, *cāṇḍāla*. Similarly, if one's own gotra and that of the family priest be both unknown for some reason, we have the authority of Satyāśāḍha, who seems to quote a still older source, to the effect that the gotra must be taken as Kaśyapa: '*gostrasya to aparijñāne kāśyapam go'ram iṣyate*' (GPN. p.187). The very same Satyāśāḍha states that Kaṇvas and Kaśyapas are not to be recipients of sacrificial fees: *na kaṇva-kāśyapebhyah* (Śat. śr. sūtra 10.4); the commentator Gopināthabhaṭṭa lides his bewilderment under the ridiculous explanation that Kaṇva means deaf and Kaśyapa the one-eyed! We have seen the Anukramaṇi and Brhaddevatā schemes relate the Kaṇvas to the Aṅgiras group, but Mbh. 1.64.25 calls the sage Kaṇva a Kaśyapa, inverting the ṛgvedic scheme. This ṛṣi has the position of stage-director in the Śakuntalā episode, which qualifies



him to a special claim on the Bharatas (Mbh. i.69.47-48), supposedly descended from the son of Śakuntalā (herself a daughter of Viśvāmitra by an *apsaras* Menakū = 'the woman'), but in any case a real historical people with a central position in the Ṛgveda. This is how Kaśyapa is gradually promoted to be a father of all creatures, fit to receive the whole world as his sacrificial fee (Śat. Brāh. xiii. 7.1.15). This again demonstrates the inner heterogeneity of Brahmin tradition, and proves that both Kaśyapas and Kaṇvas are latecomers into the vedic fold. Nevertheless, the seven traditional Brahmins groups are undoubtedly very old, no matter what their actual original names might have been. That the claims of Kaśyapa and the Bhṛguś could be permitted only means that a considerable part of the Brahmin priesthood acknowledged the special position of these later conscripts; this again supports the thesis that Brahminism itself comes into being by the adoption of indigenous pre-Aryan priests. Kaśyapa is a *prajāpati* later on, one from whom almost all living creatures are descended (Mbh. i.59.10 ff.), which would then account for the special importance attached to that gotra. The Agastyas are also not prominent in the oldest veda, though ascribed the authorship of i.166-191, mentioned in i.117.11, and x.60.6.

### THE ṚGVEDA AS A SOURCE-BOOK ; TVASṬR

5. We have therefore to look at the central groups left to us if the oldest source, namely the Ṛgveda, is to be analysed. These groups are the Bhṛguś, Aṅgīrasas,\* Atriś, Vasiṣṭhas, and Viśvāmitras. Of these, the first two are closely associated. The story of Cyavana's rejuvenation, for example, goes back to i. 117.13, the hymn being ascribed to Kakṣivān who is an Aṅgīras, while Cyavana (or here Cyavāna) is supposedly Bhṛgu; but the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (iv.1.5.1-13) is doubtful whether the aged ṛṣi was the one or the other. Gṛtsamada and the Gārtisamadas are Bhṛguś in the gotra lists, but the *anukramāṇi* calls him son of Śunahotra Aṅgīras at the beginning of his special book, ii. Vatsa is still a Bhṛgu-Jamadagni gotra (my mother's) but the earliest known ṛṣi named Vatsa is called son of Kaṇva (viii. 8.8), hence a *kevala-aṅgīras*. Nodhas Gotama says in i.58.6 that the Bhṛguś have brought fire to mankind, and in 1.60.1 that Mātariśvan had brought fire as a gift to the Bhṛguś; this is confirmed by x.46.2,9—a hymn ascribed to the principal Vaiśya gotra founder, Bhūlandana. Even the Viśvāmitras have the same ideas, as expressed iii. 5.10. But the association of the Aṅgīrasas with fire and the first discovery of fire is also well attested, as for example in i.83.4. The Atriś have one peculiarity which distinguishes them from the other particular families of ṛgvedic seers: they alone are mentioned often outside their own book. In the Kaṇva book, for example, viii. 35-38, 42, etc. we find them prominent, while viii. 36 is by

---

\*It may be noted that whereas all Gotamas and Bharadvājas are Aṅgīrasas, the converse does not hold and authorship attributions in books viii and ix seem to prove the existence of Aṅgīrasas who were neither.

Syāvāśva and the Atris or the Atris alone. They also occur in vi. 50. 10, vii. 68.5, vii. 71.5 and are therefore respected by or associated with both the Bharadvāja-Aṅgiras and the Vasistha groups. We cannot expect much in the way of special features from these. It might be objected here that the Aṅgirasas and to a lesser extent the Bhṛguś also appear prominently outside their own books. Actually, a distinction has to be made between the remote deified ancestors, those in the middle distance on the dividing line between myth and history, and those contemporary with the hymn. These three stages are seen for the Aṅgirasas in x. 62 (by the seer Nābhānediṣṭha), in a prayer addressed to the Aṅgirasas themselves; the important middle stage being in x. 62.7, which mentions unity with Indra, i.e. going over to the Aryans. A tendency to respect the legendary and scorn the modern ṛsis is manifest in the Śat. Brāh : "Now when the Bhṛguś or the Aṅgirasas attained the heavenly world, Cyavana the Bhārgava or Cyavana the Aṅgiras was left behind here (on earth) decrepit and ghostlike" (iv. 1.5.1). The remaining groups are those of Viśvāmitra, and the Vasisthas. Before seeing what tradition has to say about these, let us consider for a moment the general nature of this tradition.

It is not the purpose of the vedas to provide the reader with historical information, for they were purely liturgical works in language that soon became obscure, with changed interpretation of many terms. Possible historical references have to be gleaned with caution, for they are fortuitous, and the main question before any reader is not only what many of the hymns mean but even whether a given character is human, or a supernatural being. For example, Indra is the principal god of human type, and next to Agni the most important. Was he a human being later deified?<sup>1</sup> It would appear to be a reasonable guess, but when Indra's help to such and such a person is lauded, it generally remains an open question as to whether it was help given by the god in answer to a prayer, as for example the Homeric deities helping their favourite heroes on the field of battle, or whether an Aryan chieftain actually appeared upon the scene in person and took part in the fight.<sup>2</sup> In some cases, the divine inter-

<sup>1</sup> Indra had been deified by some Aryan tribes as early as 1400 B.C. if we may trust the famous indentifications of Hugo Winckler, who found Aryan gods on Boghaz-koi tablets; E., Forrer, ZDMG. lxxvi, 1922, 174-239. The actual gods, as reported by Forrer (p. 250) are : 13. (the gods) mi-id-ra-aśś śi-il 14. (the gods) u-ru-va-na-aśś-śi-el (*var*, a-ru-na-aśś-śi-il), 15. (the god) in-tar (*var*, in-da-ra), 16. (the gods) na-śa-ad-ti-an-na,. The equivalents would seem to be Mitra, Varuṇa Indra (cf. Grassmann col. 213-214), and the Nāsatyas, but the question remains unanswered as to why the first two are mentioned in the plural (with the unique termination śil) when the honorific plural is never known for any god in Hittite records. The Aryan element in those records is not to be doubted, and so Forrer's statement that an Aryan tribe Manda (=the later Medes) seems to have existed near lake Urumiah has to be accepted. The terms *traivartana*, *pañcavartana* etc recognizable in their cuneiform equivalents, and the method of breaking in horses which they seem to set forth, are particularly interesting. See also P.-E. Dumont in JAOS. 67, 1947, pp. 251-253, for Indo-Aryan names in Mitanni, Nuzi, and Syrian documents.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of Agni, there is no ambiguity. Fire was always used for clearing land by burning it over, as in x. 28.8, Śat. Brāh ii. 1.2.21, and even for destruction of hostile cities and fortifications. The Mahābhārata (1.214-219) story of burning down the Khāṇḍava forest shows the combination of a sacrifice to Agni, land-clearing, and military operation.

pretation is not in doubt, and whether Vṛtra was a real person (perhaps a Paṇi) or not, killing him as a demon of darkness ranks Indra with Ahuramazda, Ashur, Marduk and a long line of Tiamat-killers. But Indra's chariot, weapons, and killing of specific people leaves little doubt that in some cases at least, human actions are meant. One is sometimes tempted to equate *asura* with Assyrian. It would make better sense to regard the Asuras as human, if not Assyrians, at least in x.138.3, ii.30.4 and vii.99.5, for the interpretation that these Asuras were gods worshipped by the foe is quite unconvincing. Their traditional battle-cry *helayo helayah*, reported by Patañjali as an example of barbarous speech, is still familiar and recognizable in "Hallelujah." As a general principle, however, we may note that the more remote the event, the greater the tendency to regard it as superhuman rather than human. This may be taken as a reasonably safe guide. Now one tradition which I shall utilize with special emphasis concerns king Sudās and his people. These are helped by Indra, and as the battles take place with "ten kings" (by actual count of scattered references, nearer three times that number) in quite well-determined river valleys, we are safe in taking the reference as historical.

The second point is a matter of geography. There existed Aryans outside India, even in the oldest days, and there is no evidence for the hypothesis that all spread out from India, so that the Indo-Aryan tribes of the R̥gveda must be taken as invaders. The god Viśvakarman of x.81,82 has a great deal in common with extraneous deities like Ashur (perhaps himself explicit in x.31.6) or Ahura-mazda, being the only god with both arms and wings (x.81.3); the storm-gods, the Maruts, cannot be unconnected with the Kassite Maruttash. The general story is of an advance to the east, the *Drang nach Osten* being proved by the displacement of names such as the Sarasvatī, identified with the Hilmand, with a stream in Arachosia, and so progressively down to a stream in south-east Punjab which, for all Indic tradition, is the real Sarasvatī. This is unfortunate in one way, as some doubt is raised thereby whether the events connected with Sudās happened in India at all, for the story could have been transferred with the river names. The answer is that there is no reason to doubt the accounts which mention the Yamunā and the Gaṅgā but nothing further east. The wholesale transplantation of stories not known in any other Aryan tradition would be extraordinary. Also, we have ample archaeological evidence to the effect that before 1500 B.C. fully developed cities of a pre-Aryan civilization were destroyed by invaders, so that the fortified cities (*pura*) and fortresses (*durga* v. 34.7) destroyed by Indra have a definite existence.

There is ample evidence for the co-existence of more than one stream of tradition, even in the oldest sources. The first man is Manu in i.36,19, but also Yama in x.135.1-2; and as the first mortal (voluntarily choosing death for the

sake of posterity in x.13.4 ; in Iranian tradition, because one of his subjects violated a taboo against beef-eating), Yama is also lord of the dead. Both the name and the kingly function exercised by Yama seem to make this the proper Indo-Iranian tradition. There is a third candidate who appears very late, namely Puruṣa-Nārāyaṇa, mentioned only by the first part of the name in x. 90, but with increasing prominence later on ; this indicates that he belongs to an older tradition which is only later assimilated. He is the first sacrifice, but then Yama is both first sacrifice (x.13.4) and sacrificer, while Manu is also the first sacrificer (x.63.7) ; both Yama and Manu are sons of Vivasvat (x.17.1 ; viii. 52.1) but both Manu and Puruṣa are autogenous. The etymology of Nārāyaṇa is later given as the god who dwells in the flood-waters (*nārā*), but the word, if Sanskrit, seems to mean merely "son of man". The similarity of particular details is due not to the unity of these clearly divergent representatives but to the need for adopting them to the vedic, fire-sacrificing ritual and cults. Another candidate for seniority seems to have faded out of the picture. Tvastṛ makes images of the gods, and seems to have, in some such manner, power to make the gods behave accordingly. In ix.5.9, he is the first-born, *agraja* and the adjective *agriya* i.13.10 gives him precedence ; x.7.90 shows that he is peculiarly associated with the Aṅgirasas and fire. Indra cannot have been the original anthropomorphous chief god of the vedic Aryans, for Varuṇa seems to have occupied that post and been superseded according to x. 124, perhaps when the Indic Aryans took to a life of constant fighting and conquest as in the properly vedic period. Possibly iv. 42 also has this supersession of Varuṇa by the powerful war-god for its theme, and shows us in its later portion that apotheosis of a human warlord is possible, for king Trasadasyu is called a demi-god (*ardha-deva*) in iv.42.8-9.

The god Tvastṛ, whose name continues to mean carpenter (AV.xii.3.33. ; Amarakośa 2.10.9;3.3.35), reappears in various minor ways in vedic mythology, either directly or through his 'son'. Viśvakarman in x. 81.3 has eyes, faces, arms in every direction—characteristic of the later Brahmā ; he created or rather fabricated heaven and earth : *niṣṭatakṣuh* (x.81.4), but the root *takṣ-tvakṣ* is also responsible for Tvastṛ. It will be shown from analysis of Iranian legend that a many headed god like Viśvakarman should be Vācaspati, as in x.82.7. The speech-goddess *vāc* being primarily the river Sarasvatī and in any case a water-goddess (x.125.7), other connections between rivers, many-headed gods, and Tvastṛ will, not surprisingly, appear. In x.82.3,5,6 Viśvakarman is specially connected with the embryo of the universe (cf. v.42.13); Tvastṛ is always fashioner and protector of all embryos, divine, human, or animal. It is peculiarly interesting to learn from x.17.1-2 that Tvastṛ's daughter Saraṇyu (= 'the flowing', hence a river-deity) was married to Vivasvat, giving birth to Yama-Yamī ; after her flight, her double be came mother of the Aśvins who relieve so many priests in distress. Viśvakarman is both creator

and destroyer (*dhātū* and *vidhātū* appear as weaving women, like the Norns, in Mbh, 1.3.172); the funerary hymn x.18.5-6 specially calls upon Tvaṣṭṛ to protect the living, though the end of the hymn sends the dead man to his fathers and Yama. The reason for Tvaṣṭṛ's being invoked appears in x.18.10-11 in which burial is first described as return to the earth-mother's womb. Thus we have the combination of two entirely different rituals and a succession of Yama to Tvaṣṭṛ-Viśvakarman, apparently by mother-right. Therefore Tvaṣṭṛ is not originally an Aryan god like Varuṇa, pushed into the background by Indra and the fighting life, but rather a cult figure from the pre-Aryan background, adopted at various times under different names which are Sanskrit adjectives. The faint similarity between Varuṇa's supersession and Tvaṣṭṛ's was utilized in ancient times : in x. 124.5-7, Varuṇa is virtually a supporter of Vṛtra against Indra (taking the obvious rather than the Sāyaṇa meaning) ; in iv.42.3, Varuṇa even proclaims himself Tvaṣṭṛ, perhaps in the adjectival sense, but in any case unique. These are clearly attempts at assimilation. The Ṛbhus who quadruplicate Tvaṣṭṛ's wooden cup (i.206 ; iv.33. 5-6) seem to be purely Aryan craftsman-gods of limited aspect. A carpenter-god implies the existence and relative importance of craftsmen among his worshippers. We know that carpenters would be important when chariots and heavy wagons (*anas*) were ; also that some indigenous craftsmen were far superior to those of the invaders. It would then seem that Tvaṣṭṛ first enters the pantheon as a god brought in by the pre-Aryan craftsmen. But this does not necessarily mean that he was only a craftsman-god among the pre-Aryans.

In the south, to this day, Tvaṣṭṛ is worshipped under the name of Viśvakarman by the few surviving image-makers of the old school. They form a caste (*sthapatis*) by themselves, and still claim the right of wearing the sacred thread. In view of all this, it might be considered ridiculous to propound the view that Tvaṣṭṛ is borrowed or adopted from the pre-Aryans. Let me, therefore, point to Sāyaṇa's gloss on the word *bṛsaya* which is either a name or means wizard. On i. 93.4, the commentator says "*bṛsaya*'suras *tvaṣṭā*," though the supposed, Asura is here connected with the Paṇis by the text of the ṛk. On vi. 61.2, commenting upon *viśvasya bṛsayasya māyinaḥ*, Sāyaṇa again says "*Bṛsaya iti Tvaṣṭur nāma-dheyam*". Now Tvaṣṭṛ having a clear position among the gods, to the extent of being included in every *āpri*-hymn, to call him an Asura Bṛsaya would have required great courage on the part of a devout fourteenth century commentator\*, unless there had been a very clear tradition to that effect which could not be contested. As will be seen, we should have been driven to this conclusion even without the added help of Sāyaṇa's report.

\* Sāyaṇa again calls Tvaṣṭṛ an Asura when commenting upon iii.48.4 but Prajāpati on iv.42.3, Viśvakarmā on i.32.2; i.61.6; i.85.0. One god entering into the pantheon under different names would make it easy to develop the later monotheistic syncretism. RV.ix.5.9; *tvaṣṭāram agrajām gopām puroyāvānam āluve; indur indro vṛṣā hariḥ pavamānaḥ prajāpatiḥ* shows an early beginning of such identification which is also to be seen in x.125, and iv.20, for other gods,

There is a possible (but insufficient) materialist explanation for the decay of *Tvaṣṭṛ*, namely the changing social relationships within Aryan society, due precisely to the conquest. The craftsman-god has much less honour than the war-leader god, as would be natural. With this we also get the greater urgency of ritual and a differentiation, then barely visible, between the functions of priest and king (iv.50.7-11). There is the corresponding rise of an altogether new god (of prayer or of the sacrifice) *Bṛhaspati*, who has varying degrees of respect, from a trifling mention in the *Viśvāmitra* book (iii.20.5 ; iii.26.2. = *agni* ; iii. 62.4-6, but this is a *Jamadagni* hymn in all probability), to having entire hymns dedicated to him in the properly Brahmanical books, as ii. 23 to ii.26.

The last note is about the structure of vedic society. The caste system is peculiarly Indian, yet the four castes are mentioned in just one *ṛgvedic* hymn (x.90) the famous *Puruṣasūkta*, quite obviously a later addition duplicated in the last of the vedas, the *Atharva-veda*. The four-caste system is mentioned nowhere else in the *Ṛgveda*; nor are the two lower castes, *Sūdra* and *Vaiśya*. *Brāhmaṇa* in the sense of one belonging to the priesthood, with the special function of speech, is rare occurring only in the newest layer (vii.103 ; x.16.6 ; 71.8-9;88.19;90.12;97.22; 109.4). *Kṣātra* in the sense of the rulers or rule, and *kṣatriya* do occur both of gods and men ; but the book need not emphasize this, seeing that there is no competition. There can be no question of *purohita-gotras* exclusively, for the priesthood is not the exclusive prerogative of one caste ; in ii.1.2. = x.91.10, *brahman* is actually separated from all other priests. Even later, we have ample proof that the *kṣatriya* could officiate at the sacrifice, for all that the Brahmanical scriptures enjoin is that he should not officiate at the sacrifices of others as do the Brahmins; nothing prevents him from officiating at his own *yajña*. Even here, we find the story of *Devāpi* (*Bṛhaddevatā* vii.155-viii.10 on R.V. x.98-101) who did so officiate at the ceremonies for his crowned younger brother *Śamtanu*. This is of some importance for us in the bearing it has on the caste system at its oldest stage, and its relation with the *gotras*.

### VIŚVĀMITRA AND VASIṢṬHA

6. If we assume that all Brahmins were Aryans from the first, and that they were the priesthood which developed entirely from within, there is very little that analysis can tell us except that our legends are meaningless. But if we make no such hypothesis, then the most instructive tradition is that of the rivalry between *Vasiṣṭha* and *Viśvāmitra*. Later tradition has *Viśvāmitra* a *kṣatriya* who did his best to become a Brahmin in jealousy of *Vasiṣṭha*, and succeeded. The tradition is uniform that he was originally not a Brahmin but a ruler and member of the warrior caste, a *rājarsi*, though there is no

mention in most of the oldest records\* of his actually having been a king. It does not need detailed reference to the *Ṛgveda* to prove that the *Viśvāmitras* are themselves *Kuśikas* (iii.33.5, iii.53.9-11, etc.). But the *Anukramaṇī* calls the third book that of *Viśvāmitra*, not of the *Kuśikas*, as it should clearly have been denoted ; in conformity with this Brahmanical method of labelling the entire clan after one great representative, we get in our later gotra lists the *Kuśikas* (owl-totem) generally indicated as a branch of the *Viśvāmitras*, which is again a characteristic inversion deriving from the adoption of a foreign system whose totemic basis had been forgotten, the clan system. As for the original position of the *Kuśikas*, it might be recalled that *Indra* is invoked as *kauśika* in i.10.11, and this seems unique among the 'Brahmin' clans as far as known, for *aṅgirastamas* in i.130.3 and *vasiṣṭha* in ii. 36.1 are direct adjectives, not patronymics. The Brahminization, in its surviving form, of the *Viśvāmitra* book may even be attributed to the *Jamadagni* influence so clearly visible therein. The *Vasiṣṭhas* have a special claim to priority in the priesthood, for the tradition is uncontradicted that they *first of all the Brahmins* "saw" *Indra* and began to worship him, whence they have first place at the fire-sacrifice. (*Bṛhaddevatā* v. 156-159 ; *Tait.Sam.*iii.5.2).

We are rather fortunately placed as regards this legend, for the *Ṛgveda* has preserved for us books of both families. Both are priests in the service of king *Sudās*, who could himself exercise priestly functions, being the reputed author of x.133. The senior priest is *Viśvāmitra*, the eponym standing for the entire group ; the gotra name, as has been shown, is really *kuśika* = the owl, a good bird totem. A famous hymn is iii. 33, by *Viśvāmitra* to the two Punjab rivers *Vipāś* and *Śutudru* which he crosses with heavily loaded wagons of the *Bharata* tribe. This is apparently referred to in iii.53.9 and 11, where *Sudās* is the king is made to cross safely by *Viśvāmitra*, while iii.53.12 calls down a blessing of *Viśvāmitra* upon this tribe of the *Bharatas*. The implication is that *Sudās* and *Viśvāmitra* are *Bharatas*. This seems to be partially confirmed by vi.16.19, where the ancestral fire of the *Bharatas* is called the lord of *Divodāsa*, which is the name of *Sudās's* father or paternal ancestor.

✓ But the *Vasiṣṭhas* also claim to be the priests of *Sudās*, in their own book, and there is ample support for this. This disposes of the fiction that the gotra of a *kṣatriya* is that of his priest, for it would follow that *Sudās* *Paijavana* changed gotras or had more than one ! We have to examine the question of priority between these two clans which occupy the priesthood in succession for the same people. Here for once we have unequivocal testimony : "Like sticks used to drive oxen were the *Bharatas* split and enfeebled (= *arbhakāsas* ;

\*The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (xxi.12.2) may refer to some other *Vasiṣṭha* in calling the seer the son of *Viḍu*, though the same accounts calls *Viśvāmitra* king of the *Jahnu*s, which would seem to refer to the two founder *ṛsis*. But the conflicting double account of *Vasiṣṭha's* birth in *RV.* vii, 33.11-18 wherein he is born of a water-goddess as well as from a jug which received the semen of *Mitra-Varuṇa*, will appear to be of special interest in the sequel.

according to Sāyana, "with few children") ; then Vasiṣṭha became their chief priest (*purohita*) and from the Tṛtsus developed progeny (*viśas*)" (vii.33.6). The statement is perfectly clear, and the special Vasiṣṭha prayer for issue is to be seen in vii.4.7-8. Our verse above means that the Tṛtsus were a branch of the Bharatas—though the name is taken by some as synonymous for all the Bharatas, which looks unlikely unless it is from some other language. Vasiṣṭha was not originally their priest, but he *became* the *purohita* at some later stage, and then the tribe multiplied. Actually, in vii.33.10-11 Vasiṣṭha derives his origin from Mitra-Varuṇa<sup>1</sup> and the very next verse from an *apsaras*,<sup>2</sup> both of which mysterious legends have been amplified later. This, with the absence of an animal or tree totem, would strengthen the implication that Vasiṣṭha (whose name is merely an adjective proclaiming his superlative glory) was not as other Aryan men.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he cannot be taken as a divine being

<sup>1</sup> Of course, we have other descendants of the gods. Bhṛgu is sometimes a descendant of Varuṇa ; x.16-19 are by sons or descendants of Yama, x.135 by a Kumāra Yāmāyana; x.161 by Yami. Among sons of Indra are counted Vinada, author of x.20-26, the ape Vṛśākapi of x.80, and Jaya, author of x.180. All gotra names ending in *-stamba* are Bharadvājas.

<sup>2</sup> Apsu is good Sumerian for the sweet (potable) waters both above and below the earth and the *apsaras* (in spite of Grassmann's derivation *a + psaras*) is a water deity. One may note other Sumerian enemies of Sudās. Certainly, Enki has features that remind us of Yama ; his being a god of the *apsu*, and sleeping (after creation), are reminiscent of the later Indian Nārāyaṇa. The reason for not giving way to this sort of speculation about the Sumerians is the lack of clear documentary connection between the two cultures, and the great difference in dates, though nothing prevents the legends and cults being common property of pre-Aryan peoples some of whom later became Brahmins. The other difficulty is our ignorance of the actual phonetic values which were assigned to Sumerian ideographs at various times and places ; a personage whom textbooks of a generation ago called the "patesi of Shurpura" is now known as the "isag of Lagash." So, those who wish to follow in the footsteps of L.A. Waddell should find plenty of latitude of their conjectures. Let me present conjecture-mongers the Egyptian picture of the world-cow while Rgveda ii. 13.8 mentions a Nārmara whom someone is sure to equate to the Pharaoh Narmer-Menes. Then take the Yakus (vii. 18.19) as the Hyksos, and so on.

<sup>3</sup> Sāyana's gloss as well as the Bṛhaddevatā comment seem to take *māna* in vii. 33.13 as referring to Agastya's birth from a jar, begotten from the joint semen of Mitra-Varuṇa. Here, it may be pointed out that Vasiṣṭha stands in a special relationship to Varuṇa not only in his descent but in the intensity of his feeling of guilt, demonstrated in the four hymns vii. 86-89. In vii. 84.4, the seer asks what his sin or betrayal : *ava druḡdhāni pītryā rja* ; the next ṛk pleads action against the singer's will and the seventh promises service of the humblest sort : *aram dāso na mīḥuse karāṇi*. In vii. 87 the tone of self-abnegation of the lot, vii.89 seems charged with this sense of guilt acquired by unspecified but necessary action : *kratavah samaha dīnatā pratipañ jagamā suve ; mīlā sukṣatra mīlaya*. Nothing of this is shown by any other seer of the Rgveda, though they all honour Varuṇa as the first-born, just, benign, and peaceful god. We might venture upon the interpretation that Vasiṣṭha was really guilty of having abandoned the ancestral cult in favour of more paying practices, such as the *yajña* and worship of the war-god Indra ; it is for this that his descendants had to ask forgiveness. In this case, vii.88.4 would even acquire a special significance in its statement that Varuṇa had made a *ṛsi* of Vasiṣṭha. When and where this supposed transformation occurred is not clear, but it must have been early to give the Vasiṣṭhas their traditional priority in *yajña* ritual (Bṛhaddevatā v. 166-169; Sat. Brāh. xii.6.1.41, ii.4.4.2, etc.), Aryan tradition also. Vasiṣṭha speaks of being taken up on the ship of Varuṇa, and Kakivān sings (i.116) of days away from the shore would hardly be expected on the upper Indus or any lake in the Punjab. Quite incidentally, the father of Bhujyu is Tugra (i.116.3, 117.4), which is also the name of an enemy of Indra (vi.20.8 ; vi.26.4 ; x. 49.4).



because he is actually the priest of a decaying clan, and vii.18, which describes the victories of Sudās over many hostile kings, ends with a description of the gifts to Vasiṣṭha ; these gifts would be uncalled for if some of the victories were not due to a Vasiṣṭha's incantations. The first battle (vii.18.5-8) is on the Paruṣṇī, but there is at least one other in vii.18.19, on the Yamunā. This virtually spans the whole of greater Punjab, if the Yamunā is to be understood as the modern river of that name (though it has been suggested that the name, indicating merely the "twin river", might again denote the Paruṣṇī ; but x.75.5 which has the only ṛgvedic mention of the Gaṅgā seems clear for our interpretation). Now we have noted that the general movement is to the east, specifically proved in this case by Patañjali's remark that the adjective "eastern" for Bharatas is superfluous, as there aren't any Bharatas except in the east : *bharata-viśeṣaṇam prāg grahaṇam anarthakam, na hy aprāñco bharatāḥ santi* (commenting on Pāṇ.2.4.66 ; later commentators take Auddālaki as an example of a Bharata). Whence Viśvāmitra's passage of the Beas and the Sutlej must be an earlier event, and the priority of Viśvāmitra is therefore not in doubt. The inversion consists in that Viśvāmitra is made the upstart by later Brahmanical tradition in direct contradiction to the clear historical development.

If Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra were both Brahmins as the term is understood by later writers, and the Aryan priesthood confined to the Brahmin caste, the logical development would have been the adoption of Vasiṣṭha into the Viśvāmitra or Kuśika gotra. The story of Śunaḥśepa (Ait.Brāh.vii.13-18 ; the names of the three brothers are a suspicious feature) does show such adoption, even of one chosen as sacrificial victim (cf. v.2.7 ; i.24.12-13). Indeed this adoption with the changed name of \*Devarāta is made responsible for the double marriage restrictions upon the Devarāta gotra though contrary to the accepted results of adoption in tribal society. Even to this day, Brahmanical marriage restrictions are circumvented by adoption into some other gotra, which also forfeits inheritance rights. But Vasiṣṭha is emphatically called the first Brahmin priest, whence Brahminism is foreign to the original Aryan system. It sufficed, therefore, that Vasiṣṭha be adopted into the tribe, not necessarily into the gens of the original tribal priest, Viśvāmitra. It follows that Viśvāmitra, though a priest, is originally not a Brahmin ; this is attested by his title of *rājarsi*, applied also to several other kṣatriya priests, as for example the five (supposed) authors of i.100, the three of x.179.

While references to Sudās and his victories are scattered throughout the Rgveda (though with highest frequency by Vasiṣṭha), the name Tṛtsu occurs nowhere outside the seventh book. There is a faint possibility that the whole of the Tṛtsu group (including ancestors of Sudās) was adopted into, and not

\*Śunaḥśepa, son of Ajigarta, is the traditional author of i.21-30 ; the RV. knows a Bharata Devavāta in iii. 23.2-3. The intended victim must have been a Jamadagni (cf.p.23).

a splinter of, the Bharatas ; but there is no clan name now extant which can be derived from Tṛtsu. The adoption seems at least to have been that of Vasiṣṭha and went to the extent of a common style in hairdressing ; vii.33 begins by describing the Vasiṣṭhas as *dakṣiṇatas-kapardinas*, with hairtwist on the right side, and *kapardin* is used only of the Tṛtsus (vii.83.8) in describing human beings. The actual practice survived late, as we see from the appendix to the Gobhila Gr̥hya-sutra\* : "The Vasiṣṭhas have a hairtwist (or braid) on the right, the Atreyas have three twists, the Aṅgirasas five scalp-locks, the Bhṛḡus have completely shaven heads, and the others wear a crest." This is to differentiate between gotra-groups, and "the others" here are the Viśvāmitras and possibly the Kaṇvas, so far as the main Ṛgvedic families go.

### THE DEATH OF A PRIEST: TVĀSTRA

7. The rivalry between the Viśvāmitras and the upstart Vasiṣṭhas is plentifully attested in later tradition, while iii. 53.21-24 are stanzas which still pass as curses against the Vasiṣṭhas, so strong that were one of them to hear the particular verses, his head would split into a hundred pieces (they are still capable of giving anyone a headache !). On closer reading, these stanzas actually do seem to be a mixture of curse and lament that the Bharatas are beginning to prefer strangers to their own, the ass to the horse ; there is no reason to doubt that they reflect the displacement of the Kuśikas by the Vasiṣṭhas. We are told (Bṛhaddevatā v. 112-120) that Viśvāmitra was deprived of his senses by Vasiṣṭha and speech (*vāk sasarpārī*) had to be supplied by Jamadagni. The brief hymn x.167 to Indra is given joint authorship of Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni, which supports this close association. It follows that here Jamadagni is not on the same side as Vasiṣṭha and their separate rivalry is attested by Tait.Sam.iii.1.7 ; v.4.11. Later tradition makes Jamadagni a sage at once hot tempered and forbearing ; capable of stopping the sun yet killed unresisting by kṣatriyas ; in revenge his son Paraśurāma completely wipes out all kṣatriyas from the face of the earth thrice seven times—though the Vedas have nothing of all this (Jāmadagnya being merely the supposed author of x.110). This is one more of the inversions, with passage of time and rise of the Brahmins : it was the kṣatriya who did the killing, and not conversely. In fact, even the Vasiṣṭhas are supposed not to have escaped unscathed, for the Bṛhaddevatā vi.28,33-4 reports "Now in the fifteenth and in the eighth

\*For this stanza and a careful discussion of gotra-pravara exogamy as well as correspondence between the traditional lists and the classification implicit in Pāṇini's derivations, see John Brough, "The Early History of the Gotras" in JRAS 1946, pp.32-45 ; 1947, pp.76-90. Though the learned author's approach and point of view are entirely different from those adopted in this note, it is remarkable that he reaches the conclusion that at the time of composition of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, the entry of the Jāmadagnyas into the Brahmanical fold was (probably) still comparatively recent. My thanks are due to Prof. Brough for suggesting some corrections, though we still differ on the main question.

(stanza) of the hymn (RV.vii.104) the son of Varuṇa (Vasiṣṭha); while as it were lamenting, his soul being overwhelmed with pain and grief, utters a curse. Vasiṣṭha was at that time pained as his hundred sons had been slain by Sudāsa who, in consequence of a curse, had been transformed into a demon (*rakṣas*). Such is the sacred tradition." Again, the R̥gveda does not report this but the Tait. Sam.vii.4.7 does; such a tradition in the face of all the favour supposedly shown Vasiṣṭha by Sudās cannot be devoid of truth<sup>1</sup>. I suggest that *some* Vasiṣṭhas were so killed, perhaps some of those not regularly adopted into the Tṛtsus. Killing the priest or his son is a fashion set by Indra himself in beheading Viśvarūpa Tvāṣṭra, whose three heads he (or his double Trita, ii.11.19; x.8.8-9) struck off. This counts as a sin only in far later times, while we still have the Tvāṣṭreya gotra (GPN.156.18) among the Jamadagnis. The three heads of Tvāṣṭra became varieties of partridge (Bṛhaddevatā vi.151) and two of these bird totems certainly remain in the gotra lists, namely Tittiri and Kapiñjala, though neither is among the Jamadagnis proper. For that matter the demon Rāvaṇa, the warrior villain of the Rāmāyaṇa in later and more eastern legend, counts also as a Brahmin, and surprisingly enough the gotra is found in the Vasiṣṭha group (GPN. 113.11, 177. 22, 177.1) though Vasiṣṭha is traditionally the chief teacher of Rāma! Even the mild Atri did not escape as is seen by Saptavadhri's prayer for release from imprisonment (v.78.5-6) and by x.143.1-3, i.117.3, x.39.9, perhaps referring to Atri's release from a fiery pit.

The lasso as a weapon of war is used by the Sagartian contingent of Xerxes's cavalry (Herodotos vii.84), and by individual heroes in the Shah Nameh. This may be the original *pāśa* from which freedom is desired, perhaps symbolically, in several hymns. The gloss ascribes viii. 67 to fishes caught in a net and praying for freedom, which could have been dismissed as a myth had it not been for the fact that the Matsya tribe appears in vii.18; and in the Mahābhārata as the people of king Virāṭa. The Vaphio gold cups show us nets being used to catch wild bulls while the god Ningirsu is shown on Eannantums' stela (stèle des vautours, in the Louvre) enfolding the men of Umma in a net and crushing those who try to escape, whence its use for prisoners<sup>2</sup> of war is also possible.

<sup>1</sup> The burning by the Saudāsas of a son of Vasiṣṭha named Śakti, is also reported by the Śātyāyana and Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇas (H. Oertel, JOAS xviii, 1897 pp. 15-18, particularly p.47). For the cannibal Saudāsa in later fable, Jātakamālā 31 etc.

<sup>2</sup> We seem to have a reference to both divine and human imprisonment (of Brahmins) in iv, 12.5 ūrvād devānām uta martyānām. The *yādrah paśuḥ* (viii, 1.31) could be a Yadu prisoner of war, particularly when read with viii, 6.48 : *śravasā vādvam janam*. The traditional Yadu capital Dvārakā cannot have been the modern port of that name in Saurāṣṭra. We have a clear narrative of the Yadus including Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, being driven out of Mathurā by Jarāsamdha. They go *westwards* to found the new city in the safety of a mountain barrier : Mbh. 2, 12, 9 ; 2, 13, 44, 49, 66. This is the logical direction, considering the desert to the southwest of Mathurā ; the original Dvārakā may thus have been Darwaz in Afghanistan, or the capital of Kamboja in Buddhist records.

duism never developed an established church, and that the Brahmin caste began to serve the general population by ritual, rather than the warrior class by *yajña*, only after the rise of Buddhism. In the earliest days (as in Rome and Greece), it was the right as well as the duty of every head of a patriarchal family to perform priestly functions later reserved for Brahmins; and knowledge of vedic Sanskrit was common without the prolonged study it necessitated later. If, under such circumstances, we find the beginning at least of endogamous castes, it is necessary to inquire what *external* forces would lead to and accelerate this type of partition. The major feature is the conquest; it will be shown that this does account for the *śūdra* caste. But it is difficult to believe that no other portion of the conquered population survived besides the helots; that we should nevertheless find the reappearance of Indus Valley motifs, including multiple-headed and many-armed deities—particularly Brahmā. That cities like Mohenjo-daro could exist without class divisions is quite incredible in view of what is known of ancient society, and if their armament does not appear from known excavations (which are certainly incomplete) to have been very good, it implies the existence of some other method than pure force for maintaining the class division. This method, so far as known, can only be religion, and that in turn implies the existence of a strong, fully-developed, and well-organized priesthood. I may point out in this connection the importance of the desert bordering the river (as in Egypt and Mesopotamia) for this not only makes the development of agriculture, and later of the city-state, possible as well as necessary, but also economizes the energy spent upon defence against wild animals, barbarians, and in cutting down forests. The intervening desert is an excellent natural barrier against external enemies till they learn the advanced military technique necessary for crossing it and taking walled cities. The need for internal force is minimized by the priesthood. After the Aryan conquest, nothing would be easier than the absorption of some upper layers of the conquered society, and the most attractive would be the priesthood, even more important than the technicians in any primitive society. Of course, this would greatly intensify the development of classes among the conquerors as soon as they began to settle down; which is precisely what we find on comparing the *Rgveda* with the *Taittiriya Samhitā* and later documents. As further support, I might point out that a considerable number of ancient stories appear rather late, albeit with claim to antiquity—as for example the flood legends and the *purāṇas* in general, though some of the material is undoubtedly pre-Aryan.

In this direction, it is also necessary to remark that matriarchy survives only among the least Aryanized of the people found in India today. If the conquered had even a remnant of this system, it would be easy for them to preserve their group structure for a while after adoption into various patriarchal gentes. Thus we should not be surprised at finding *Dirghatamās* called

duism never developed an established church, and that the Brahmin caste began to serve the general population by ritual, rather than the warrior class by *yajña*, only after the rise of Buddhism. In the earliest days (as in Rome and Greece), it was the right as well as the duty of every head of a patriarchal family to perform priestly functions later reserved for Brahmins; and knowledge of vedic Sanskrit was common without the prolonged study it necessitated later. If, under such circumstances, we find the beginning at least of endogamous castes, it is necessary to inquire what *external* forces would lead to and accelerate this type of partition. The major feature is the conquest; it will be shown that this does account for the *śūdra* caste. But it is difficult to believe that no other portion of the conquered population survived besides the helots; that we should nevertheless find the reappearance of Indus Valley motifs, including multiple-headed and many-armed deities—particularly Brahmā. That cities like Mohenjo-daro could exist without class divisions is quite incredible in view of what is known of ancient society, and if their armament does not appear from known excavations (which are certainly incomplete) to have been very good, it implies the existence of some other method than pure force for maintaining the class division. This method, so far as known, can only be religion, and that in turn implies the existence of a strong, fully-developed, and well-organized priesthood. I may point out in this connection the importance of the desert bordering the river (as in Egypt and Mesopotamia) for this not only makes the development of agriculture, and later of the city-state, possible as well as necessary, but also economizes the energy spent upon defence against wild animals, barbarians, and in cutting down forests. The intervening desert is an excellent natural barrier against external enemies till they learn the advanced military technique necessary for crossing it and taking walled cities. The need for internal force is minimized by the priesthood. After the Aryan conquest, nothing would be easier than the absorption of some upper layers of the conquered society, and the most attractive would be the priesthood, even more important than the technicians in any primitive society. Of course, this would greatly intensify the development of classes among the conquerors as soon as they began to settle down; which is precisely what we find on comparing the *R̥gveda* with the *Taittiriya Saṃhitā* and later documents. As further support, I might point out that a considerable number of ancient stories appear rather late, albeit with claim to antiquity—as for example the flood legends and the *purāṇas* in general, though some of the material is undoubtedly pre-Aryan.

In this direction, it is also necessary to remark that matriarchy survives only among the least Aryanized of the people found in India today. If the conquered had even a remnant of this system, it would be easy for them to preserve their group structure for a while after adoption into various patriarchal gentes. Thus we should not be surprised at finding *Dirghatamas* called

Māmateya after his mother, a custom to be observed in the final Brhādāraṇyaka Upaniṣad line of teachers.

One sign of conflict between the Brahmin and kṣatriya castes, after full development of the system, appears in the original meaning of x.109, which seems to have been composed for the return of a Brahmin's wife abducted by a kṣatriya. One obvious reason for the later appearance of the Jamadagnis and the still later rise to pre-eminence of Bhṛgu is this previous enmity. These people were still being killed by the kṣatriyas when the Viśvāmitras were being ousted by the Vasiṣṭhas from the Bharatan priesthood. The objection will undoubtedly be made that the later Brahmins could have been Aryans from some extra-vedic branch. Why could the Jamadagnis, with their Indo-European name, not have been vrātyas? In the first place, the vrātyas were first differentiated from the rest long after the Bhṛgu-Jamadagni group was well established (though not necessarily in all parts of the country) and the vedas fully developed. In the Rgvedic age, the term vrātya could not have been used to distinguish extra-vedic Aryans because all Aryans were then wanderers while the development of the vedas itself reflects the rise of settlements. The vrātya tribes do not need the vedas simply because they continue to wander eastwards, into territory without a great civilization comparable with that of the Indus valley. At that later stage when the vrātyas proper have to be distinguished, the adoption of their priests would not only be unnecessary but highly improbable for the simple reason that their priesthood—if indeed it had a separate existence—would be much less developed than that of the main vedic Aryans. This can be seen from the *vrātyastoma* ritual, created later for the adoption of a vrātya, not of his priest, into the vedic fold; from book xv of the Atharva-veda, which seems written to placate the vrātyas; from the term *brahmabandhu*, applied to Magadhan Brahmins who associated themselves with the vrātya ceremonies, and even now used of \*Brahmins without learning. The great vrātya tribe is that of the Licchavis, mentioned with respect by the Jains, and the earliest Buddhists, while maintaining a high social position down to the Gupta period at least. We have yet to hear anything of their priesthood. The philological argument from the name carries less force now that Hittite records have been read; also, adoption being a form of rebirth, a non-Aryan name would be the first to change. Even without adop-

\* Śarabha is called *ṛṣibandhu* in viii.100.6 but without the forceful contempt that goes with the termination *bandhu* later on. The Licchavis are kṣatriya vrātyas according to Manusmṛti 10.21 var. *nicchivā*), known to Buddhist literature generally as Vajjis (=the wanderers). Patañjali on Pāṇ. 5.2.21 : *nānājātīyā aniyatavṛttitaya utsedhaśīrṣināḥ saṃghā vrātāḥ* shows that any tribal organization outside the Brahmin ritual and four-caste system could be called vrātya, foreshadowing modern guild-castes and professional tribes. The Mahāparinibbānasutta shows that the basic rules of the Buddhist saṃgha were derived from Aryan tribal constitutions, specifically that of the Licchavis. For a survey of the Brahmin literature (without realization that sūtras concerned only with reconciling vrātya observances with vedic ritual say nothing about the actual life led by the tribes) see J. W. Hauer, *Der Vrātya* (Stuttgart 1927; vol. I only). The vrātya Grhapati of Pañc. Brāh. xvii. 1. 14, 17 could easily be the tribal chief with the usual priestly functions, and no other explanation will fit as well.

tion, conquest favours a new style in names, as seen from Greck names adopted by Jews. Proponents of the "extra-vedic Aryans" theory would have to postulate rather complicated relationships between groups of Aryans not known to have existed ; at the same time, the recurrence of Indus Valley types in later iconography would be very difficult to explain.

### ADOPTED PRIESTS

8. Looking closely at the first list of Sudās's enemies in vii. 18.5-7, we find the following\* : Śimyu, Turvaśa, Yaksu, Matsya, Druhyu, Bhṛgu, Paktha, Bhālāna, Viśāṇin, Alina (and perhaps The Śivas) ; in vii.83.7, the ten kings opposing Sudās are called *ayajyavaḥ*, "without the fire sacrifice." The notable occurrence here is of the Bhṛgu, who cannot then have been merely Brahmin priests. This is to some extent supported by the surviving designation *bhārgava* ("the roaster") for a potter, which is quite natural if fire were the particular technique of the Bhṛgu, as it appears to be in the Ṛgveda. Their chariot receives special mention in iv.16.20 and x.39.14 by the phrase *bhṛgavo na ratham*. Hence, they are a complete tribe, with all the professions. If their name survives only as that of a Brahmin gotra, it must be because some of them managed to become priests of the Aryans. That they were not always Aryans themselves would follow from vii.18.7, which specifically mentions Indra, as the friend of the Aryans, bringing aid to the other side. That the Indus valley culture could exist without strong class differences is incredible, and their priest class must have had specially refined ceremonial, which would enable them to be adopted fairly easily into the priesthood of the conquerors, provided they took up the new cults.

It is quite simple now to show that there are other elements besides the Bhṛgu which are so assimilated. Kutsa, for example, counts as a Bharadvāja gotra with Kautsa (GPN.63.14,165.21,61.4) ; it is therefore natural to find Kutsa the author of i.94-8. But in the body of the veda we read conflicting stories about him, for he is at times favoured by Indra and at times crushed ; the first may be seen in x.49.4 and the second in i.53.10. This can be explained

---

\*Some of these names may be adjectives, but this seems a reasonable way to make up the *dāśarājña* ; just which people are qualified as *śivās* is not clear, so possibly The Śivas are one more tribe. The second battle is assumed to be distinct from the first.

by our present thesis of progressive assimilation of a Kutsa tribe. The Pūrus\* are mentioned in i. 108 with the Yadus, Turvaśas, Druhyus, Anus, all originally hostile to Indra and the Aryans. The particular portion of the hymn is undoubtedly late; but it is to be noted that Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Pūru are all five made sons of king Yayati (the first two by Devayāni, a Brahmin (Bhṛgu) daughter of Sukra, preceptor to the Asuras) in later legend (Mbh. 1.78.9-10). Kṛṣṇa (=black), the incarnate god of the Mahābhārata, is himself a Yadu. A Kāṇva named Kṛṣṇa is the poet of viii.85, a hymn addressed to the Aśvins. It is notable that the seer is called "black" by name, like the Aṅgiras author of x.42-44; in the Atharva-veda ii. 25, *kaṇva* means "evil spirit", to be exorcised. It would be simplest to regard this not as a fortuitous coincidence, but as indicative of some Kāṇvas having been adopted from the dark pre-Aryans, of whom the unadopted portion was submitted to the usual process of demonization with the passage of time. Just when these five people became Aryans is not clear, but certainly the brave king Pūros defeated by Alexander in his invasion of the Indus valley is (with his nephew) the last Paurava known to history, so that some of these ancient lineages actually existed down to a late period, and had to be explained by a suitably rewritten tradition. This tradition never disguises the hostility between the dark (hence un-Aryan) Kṛṣṇa and Indra, which seems to go back to viii. 96. 14, 19 (accepting the reasonable Sāyaṇa gloss). We even get the Purukutsa combination as a king-name, probably the representative of an amalgamated tribe; in our Brahmin gotra lists the name is found among the Bharadvājas (GPN.61.14), which would be impossible except on our hypothesis. In fact, references in book vi. make it clear that some Bharadvājas were priests of Purukutsa's son, hence the formation of that gotra among the Bharadvājas. The descendant Kuruśravaṇa embodies the first mention of the Kurus, in his name (x.32.9; 33.4).

When we come to *kevala* groups, the origin of the inverted rule that the priest's gotra is that of the king becomes still clearer. Vītahavya is a Bhārgava gotra (GPN.34.4-5) but the Sṛṅjaya Vaitahavyas of Atharva-veda v.18-19 are rude kṣatriyas who slaughter Bhṛgu's cow; the sage is helpless and the cow herself takes revenge upon the insolent warriors, who are destroyed. But this

\*Identification is particularly difficult in the case of the Pūrus, for the name can be an adjective for plentitude, or a tribe of people in general, as well as a specific tribe named Pūru. In vi. 46.8, the particular tribe is meant, being mentioned along with Tṛkyi and the Druhyus; similarly in i.103.8. But their position even as against the Vasiṣṭhas and Sudās is not clear, for vii.18.13 speaks either of having beaten or of hoping to defeat (*jeṣma*) the tricky-voiced Pūru\*; in vii. 19.3, Indra is spoken of as having helped the Pūru king Trasadasyu; in vii. 96.2 the phrase *adhiṣṭiyanti pūraṇa* has been stood by some as indicating that the Pūrus were then settled on both banks of the Sarasvatī. The adjective *mādhraṇvāc* is also used of the Panis in vii 6.2, the Dasyus in xv.25.10. Sudā. might even be made out a Pūru by i.83.7. Hopkins in JAOS xv. pp. 252-283 outdoes the most ridiculous of Indian pan-dits in deducing that the *dāśarājña* was a conspiracy led or instigated by Viśvāmitra (pp. 261-266). The basis seems to be his main discovery, namely that vii.18 contains derisive allusions to Viśvāmitra as often as possible. Just how this escaped the Indian tradition, which is generally so hostile to Viśvāmitra, has yet to be explained; but undoubtedly some lineal descendant will appear to rectify the omission made by Hopkins!



would leave the gotra and pravara unexplained, so we have a still later story to round out the narrative, that Bhṛgu magnanimously and magically converted the refugee Vītahavya into a Brahmin merely by telling his pursuers that there was no kṣatriya in the hermitage. Vītahavya as an adjective is applied to Sudās in vii. 18.3, presumably in the sense of he whose libations are agreeable to the gods ; the name occurs as that of the author of vi.15, and explicitly in vi. 15.3 calling down blessings upon him. But the sixth book is of the Bhara-dvājas, whence we again have a contradiction. This may be resolved by the explanation that *some* Sṛñjaya Vaitahavyas, not necessarily connected with the singer of vi. 15, had a Bhṛgu as their family priest. But inasmuch as the kṣatriya was not by any means excluded from the priesthood, properly the function of any tribal leader or family head, those Bhṛguids who survived in this particular line had to be adopted by tribal rule into the Vītahavyas, whence by the later antithetic inversion we get the formation of a Vītahavya pravara among the Bhṛgus. This process is very clear among the ten extra families enrolled among the Bhṛgus and Aṅgirasas, as shown by the king-names that form the supposedly Brahmin pravaras. It will be fairly obvious that, at least as regards these special *kevala* families, the pravara develops by adoption by some Brahmin group of a kṣatriya family name. Mudgala is a Kevala-Aṅgiras group in the lists, but the Mudgala of x.102 is a splendid fighter. Though not in the Veda, the Purāṇas make Viṣṇuvṛddha son of Trasadasyu, hence a kṣatriya, though the name is in the Brahmin pravara lists. The Vena of x. 93.14 seems to be a non-Aryan king.

With the exception of people within the tribe or cult, as in the case of Indra himself or Sudās, Ṛgvedic names of a tribe and its leader seem to be identical, particularly in speaking of people not intimately known to the hymn-singer. This agrees with what we know of tribal society in other places. The MacDonald would be the head of the clan MacDonald in Scotland. Not less than ten different leaders named Appius Claudius headed the Claudian gens in Rome after its incorporation under the first Sabine head (Attius Clausus) ; if Latin records were as diffuse as the Sanskrit, the deeds of all of them would have been inextricably confounded. The distinction between heads of families and ordinary members appears in Pāṇini's grammār (see J. Brough, *loc.cit.*, for the significance of the *yuvan*). Vd. xii.7 shows that the period of mourning among the Iranians for the head of a family was six times that even for a parent. For my purpose, the designation of whole clans by a single ṛṣi's name (for one Viśvāmitra or Vasiṣṭha can hardly have composed the entire books in their respective names) yields further support for the adoption theory. What needs careful proof is the statement that some of these adopted priests must have belonged to pre-Aryan Indian groups.

The distinction between Brahmin and kṣatriya priestly traditions even after their merger may be seen in the position of Viṣṇu, who is a very minor

god in the Viśvāmitra book.<sup>1</sup> But three complete hymns to Viṣṇu by Dīrghata-mas (i. 154-6) show a totally changed relative emphasis. The sage himself, according to the Bṛhaddevatā iv. 11-30, was the blind son of a Bṛghu mother, and in his old age cast into the river which carried him safely eastwards beyond the Aryan pale to Aṅgā.

## PRE-ARYANS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

9. It is still necessary to show that some of these new recruits to the vedic fold were non-Aryans,<sup>2</sup> for there is no doubt that there did exist non-vedic Aryans; among the Indians, it sufficed to refer to the *vrātya* Licchavis. So, it might be suggested that the whole fight with Sudās's enemies was in fact a

<sup>1</sup> Apart from stylistic and metrical variation, as well as the subject matter, the mere incidence of hymn dedications may be used as a guide to clan differences. The ninth book, being dedicated to Soma, and the Vāḷakhilyas as later appendages, have been discarded; in doubtful cases, I follow Grassmann as far as possible. The standard hymn order within books or groups allows us to emphasize dedications to Agni, Indra, and all the rest. Among the "rest" have been counted even those hymns where Indra or Agni, or both have a share. This gives us the following table :

Book	Agni	Indra	Rest	Total
ii	10	12	21	43
iii	29	24	9	62
iv	15	17	26	58
v	28	12	47	87
vi	16	31	28	75
vii	17	15	72	104
viii	14	45	33	92
i	45	41	105	191
x	30	44	117	191
Totals	204	241	458	903

Modern statistical tests give information that agrees very well with what we know from other considerations. The Viśvāmitra book (iii) differs from all the rest, as would be expected from the real Aryan kṣatriya tradition. Books i and x may be grouped together. Books ii, iv., vi can also be combined among themselves, which proves the Bṛghu-Aṅgīras unity of dedication. The Kāṇvas are closest to this group in spite of their great predilection for Indra, while only Atri comes near Vasiṣṭha, though none too close. (Calculations by Mr. S. Rāghavachari for the chi-square test). In support, we may recall that the eighth book, though Kāṇva by tradition and with a good unity of metre and style, is unquestionably of mixed authorship; not only other Aṅgīrasas but Atri, Bṛghus (including Jamadagni and Uśanas), Kāśyapa, possibly a Vasiṣṭha Dyumnika (viii.87), Trita Āpīya (viii, 47, but this is impossible as the final verses show), and even Manu Vaivasvata are given a share in the authorship, by the Anukramaṇī tradition. Only Viśvāmitra is stubbornly excluded, and this is highly suggestive.

<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, the Soma book contains eight hymns ascribed to a Kavi Bhārgava, who is identical with or the father of Kāvya Uśanas, who is in turn the author of three more. But the famous Devayāni story of the Mahābhārata shows this personage as preceptor to the Āsuras, which can be explained only on our present hypothesis of assimilation of non-Aryan priests, not necessarily in India. In the Rgveda, Uśanas is mentioned almost exclusively by the Aṅgīrasas: i.51.10-11 (Savya); i.83.5 (Gotama Rahūgaṇa); i.121.12 (Kakṣivān); iv.26.1 (Vāmadeva); vi.20.11 (Bharadvāja); .iii.23.17 (Viśvama-nas, son of Vyāśva); ix.87.3 (Uśanas himself!); ix.97.3 (Vṛṣagaṇa, supposedly a Vasiṣṭha); x.40.7 (Ghoṣā, daughter of Kakṣivān). Otherwise *uśanā* is desire, of which Grassmann takes the name as a masculine personification. One can't expect this in Aṅgīras books, where Bṛhaspati is an Aṅgīras (vi.73.1) and even Agni (viii.84.4) in a hymn ascribed to Uśanas. Without discussing his identity with Kai Kāōs or Kavi Usa of the Iranians, it is fairly clear that he must be a figure of the transitional period.

civil war among Aryans (as in part it must have been), that the hostility which can so amply be proved down to later times is professional, between the warrior and priestly castes, and at most derives from the ancient hostility among different Aryan tribes. After all, Kuruṅga is called a Turvaśa king in his *dānastuti* by Kaṇva, viii.4.19, and could be an Aryan; more ambiguously, Kaṇva begs Indra to let him see Yadu-Turvaśa again in ṛk 7. Not only in vii.83.1, but also in other hymns (vi.33.3, vi.22.10, vi.60.6) are both Aryan and non-Aryan (called Vṛtras here) enemies mentioned when praying to vedic gods for protection. In iv.30.7, Indra takes Yadu and Turvaśa across dry (or unbathed; the meaning is obscure) but kills two (presumably non-vedic) Aryans Arṇa and Citraratha on the other side. There is, then, evidence for the progressive recombination of Aryans and non-Aryans into vedic and extra-vedic groups. In vii.83.1, Indra-Varuṇa are to stand by Sudās and strike enemies, both Aryans and Vṛtras. But our point is easily proved.

Tura Kāvaṣeya is famous teacher in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, a leading priest in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, and prominent in other Brahmin tradition, though the direct gotra does not seem to have survived. But his father, Kavaṣa Ailūṣa (seer of x.30-34 and priest of Kuruśravaṇa, x.30) is forcibly ejected as *dāsyaḥ putraḥ*\* by Brahmins, to die of thirst from which he is saved by his river hymn (x.30, because of which the sacred river Sarasvatī followed him into the desert; cf. Ait.Brāh.ii.19). The ancestral representative Kavaṣa is overthrown in vii.18.12 along with the Druhyus, which should complete the story. But it might still be objected that *dāsī* means only a slave girl, and there is nothing to show difference of race, even though a slave girl's son would certainly be disqualified.

Dāsa in the greater number of ṛgvedic citations means a human foe conquered by the Aryans in battle, Indra *yathāvaśam nayati dāsam āryaḥ* (v.34.6 and others). They have their own cities, strong enough to be called brazen or iron; (ii.20.8) *hatvī dasyūn pura āyaśīr ni tārīt*. Dasyu is taken as synonymous at times with demons, and again with *dāsa*, which shows that the strife is very old: (iii.12.6) *Indrāgnī navatiṃ puro dāsapatnīr adhūnutam*. Some of these cities are seasonal, particularly autumnal (*śārādīḥ*): *sapta yat puraḥ śarma śārādīr dardhan dāsīḥ Purukutsāya śikṣan* (vi.20.10) which incidentally show that Purukutsa was befriended by Indra at that time, whatever the components of his name may have been earlier. They have a special colour *yo dāsam varṇam* (ii.12.4) which is not that of the Aryans: *hatvī dasyūn prāryam varṇam āvat* (iii.34.9). They are always different in religion (cf. Manusmṛti x.44,45), which is of far greater importance than the colour. They have not the fire-sacrifice: *ayajvānaḥ* (i.33.4), nor the proper cult and are possessed of black magic: *māyāvān ābrahmā*

\* A similar reproach by Medhātithi against Vatsa Kāṇva was disproved by the accused (Pāñc. Brāh. xiv, 6.6).

*dasyur arta* (iv.16.9), besides being black and possessed of cities : (iv.16.13) *pañcāśat kṛṣṇā nī vapah sahasrā atkaṃ na puro jarimā vi dardah*. They are treacherous, without the Aryan observances, and hardly human (x.22.8) : *akarmā dasyur abhi no amanur anyaurato amānuṣaḥ ; tvam taṣjāmītrahan vadhar dāsasya dambhaya*. Just what the designation *anāśas* ("noseless" or "faceless" ?) applied to them in v.29.10 means is not clear, but it surely refers to their different appearance.

Only in three cases does *dāsa* clearly mean a servant or slave, an early reference to the helotage to which a great part of the subjected people sank. Of these, x.62.10 referring to gifts made by Yadu and Turva to the bard mentions either two slaves or portrays the humility of the donors, but the names as well as the reference being part of the *dānastuti* may indicate a later addition. The reference viii.56.3 in a Vālakhilya can be ignored. In vii.86.7, the seer speaks of serving the god like a *dāsa*, which can only mean slave or servant, not enemy. The rare mention shows that the new relation was emergent, not fully established. Therefore, we are led to wonder whether Divodāsa means "slave of heaven", or whether the period is early enough for the name to indicate a *dāsa* who had been adopted by the other side. I myself incline to the latter interpretation, seeing that *dāsa* has generally the meaning of a specific people from whom the *kūdra* caste and servitude developed by conquest. In any case, the termination *dāsa* as part of a name is not to be seen elsewhere than with Divodāsa (and in later orthography his son "Paijavana" Sudās). Trasadasyu (son of Purukutsa) does not seem to mean the Dasyu named Trasa, but he who makes the Dasyus tremble.

The concept of tribal property in a migratory pastoral society enables us to sketch an outline of development for the *kūdra* caste. The Indus valley city dwellers could not have been fed without a comparatively large ancillary agrarian population. The invaders' way of life made such prisoners useless at first, for without agriculture a human being could produce very little surplus beyond that needed for his own maintenance. A prisoner would be sacrificed or adopted, as the *Śunaśēpa* story tells us. If the agrarian population of the Indus valley had been effective as fighters, the conquest would not have taken place, or at least not been so devastating. They must have been too numerous to adopt en masse, but not dangerous enough to be killed off altogether. Thus the survivors would form a group by themselves, and whatever they could produce by their own methods, as well as their labour, would belong to the conquering tribe as a whole. This is the first caste, initially a difference between Aryans and *dāsas*, as the word *raja* for caste and colour shows in conjunction with the recorded fact that the Aryans had a different colour from their predecessors in India. However, the existence of a caste, of surplus-producing labour, would necessarily promote rapid class and caste-differentiation among

the conquerors; it certainly inhibited the rise of large-scale chattel-slavery in India. The wandering vr̥tyas alone preserved the older tribal institutions down into historical times, having need of neither Brahmin nor śūdra within the tribe; kingship with them remains a tribal office of small importance even when the tribe developed into an oligarchy over a tributary population. Brahmin scriptures continue to give a fixed theoretical status of a helot for the śūdra, always distinguished from Arya: one who is not eligible for initiation, barred from handling weapons, even from owning property, and whose function is solely to labour for the benefit of the three higher castes—though we know that this was on occasion tacitly contradicted by the rise of a śūdra to the position of warrior, chieftain, or king, in historical times.

The conquerors must have destroyed cultivation as well as the cities; otherwise they could have settled down like their cousins in Egypt, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia as a new layer on top of existing class-relations of production. It is well-known that without irrigation the Punjab plains can support only a comparatively small population along the rivers, the rest being desert. Nowhere in Alexander's time do we hear of any cities comparable in size and organization to Mohenjo-daro. On the other hand, we find the common vedic myth of Indra killing a demon to free the pent-up waters (sometimes called cows), which is invariably taken to denote a nature myth of the rain-god piercing clouds to cause precipitation. But we have a separate rain-god *parjanya* to whom entire hymns are dedicated (v.83; vii.101,102). Indra's action is described in terms that can only mean that *the river-dams were shattered*; we know that a little to the west of Mohenjo-daro, there still exist tremendous prehistoric dams of this sort, though now useless in the absence of sufficient rain (Marshall, p.3). The breaking of dams would destroy the very basis of agriculture, whence the Aryans would have to move their cattle to fresh pastures after a few years. Perhaps the clearest description is to be seen in iv.19.5,4,8: Indra shakes the ground as the wind the water, overthrows the mountains, forcibly bends down what was firm; the rivers hasten forth, all the stones roll away like chariots; for many days and years did Indra let the rivers run after the fall of Vṛtra, he freed the streams that had been bound (*badbadhānāḥ sīrāḥ*, the dammed rivers\*). Only ignorance of the fact that there had been a civilization with fully developed agriculture in the desert, before the Aryans, could make anyone interpret this as a myth of rain-making. Similarly for i.32.8-10; viii.96.18; we hear of seasonal barriers in v.32.2, and vii.18.8 speaks of vain attempts at diverting the Paruṣnī river, perhaps one of the causes of Sudās's wars. In ii.15.3 *vajreṇa khāny atṛṇan nadīnām* has been interpreted as Indra making canals for the rivers, but this quite unique action on the part of

\*The particular word for dam might have been *rodhas* or *rodhana*, i.38.11; ii.13.10; iv.22.4; x.48.2. In ii.15.8, *riṇag rodhamsi kṛtrīmāṇi* shows that the obstacle removed by Indra was artificial, not natural; the other references can at worst be taken to mean walls or river-banks,

Indra may be doubted, because the verb and tool both indicate smashing, which is possible for a dam, not for irrigation channels. Besides the *dāsa* as a source of labour power, the humped Indus cattle were also an acquisition of the conquest; they are mentioned explicitly in x.8.2; x.102.7, and perhaps in viii.20.21, and their truly Indian origin has generally been admitted. The use of the horse and of iron was known to the invaders before their irruption, according to archaeologists. We have here one reason for the victory of the Aryans over the indigenous population which knew neither.

Heterogeneity in the pre-Aryan people cannot be doubted. They cannot all have been residents of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa with but a single profession! Even to support the inhabitants of a big city like either of these, there must have been a considerable food-growing ancillary population apart from the craftsmen in the cities, of whose social position we still know nothing, but who would be the logical candidates for the name and position of *Dāsa*, or *Dasyu*. All I can suggest is that a portion of the conquered rose instead of falling, and that they could only do this by adopting Aryan methods of fire worship, undoubtedly with some additions. Some of them must have had fire cults of their own, as for example the Bhṛgu-Āṅgiras group so often associated with the first discovery of fire. A few like Divodāsa\* may even have been enrolled into the ruling *kṣatriya* class, for the Aryans had come across many different people in their wanderings, and purity of "race" at so early a period means nothing in comparison to the cult observed; adoption of a stranger needs only the formalities of initiation, and one becomes a *kṣatriya* merely on account of prowess in battle. It seems clear to me that the formation of an internal Aryan caste system, essentially the separation of the Brahmin in function and discipline from the *kṣatriya* and the setting of both above the householder *vaiśya*, after the *dāsas* had been conquered, must have been accelerated by the assimilation of a subjugated priesthood; for otherwise there is no reason for demarcation into endogamous castes. The Indic Aryans coming, according to the tradition, with the father of Darius I, after Herzfeld p.30, p.88) with more primitive tools and over cultures which were far more locally concentrated. The question can only be settled with more archaeological evidence; the purpose of such a discussion as the present is primarily to show the intelligent archaeologist what to expect, perhaps where to excavate, and how to interpret his finds.

As a preliminary, connections may be pointed out between certain obscure features of the *Rgveda* and actual finds in the Indus valley. The three-

\* Divodāsa is a gift of the river Sarasvatī to Vadhryaśva, according to vi.61.i. As Sudās is both Pañjavana (though no Pijavana is known) and a descendant or son of Divodāsa, there is some possibility of adoption here.

headed seated deity of the famous Mohenjo-Daro seal, our fig.1, may be taken for Tvāṣṭra, if the number of heads be actually three; there may be a fourth head away from the observer, which would make the deity proto-Brahmā. But the three-headed Tvāṣṭra cannot be entirely independent of other three-headed creatures on Indus valley seals. In E.J.H. Mackay's "Further excavations at Mohenjo-Daro" II, Pl. LXXXIII.24, XCVI.494, XCIX.B and Marshall's earlier work (Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus civilization, London 1931) III. Pl. CXII.382, we find a seal depicting a three-headed bull. Now iii.56.3 refers specifically to such a bull in the Ṛgveda, while the entire hymn is to several otherwise mysterious multiple deities. So far, it has not been possible to demonstrate *dakṣiṇatas-kapardinas* on any seal but a god with braided hair is to be seen in our fig.2 (Mackay Pl. LXXXVII.235); the god, along with a priest and a row of seven human figures who are attendants at the sacrifice all show long hair-braids (in Mackay II, Pl.XCIV.430, Pl.XCIX-A = Marshall I, Pl. XII.18). Kapardin should rather mean with twisted than braided hair, but the matter is not settled. Punch-marked coins also yield occasional homo-signs with hair-twists or braids (Durga Prasad, JRASB.XXX.1934, Pl.21, nos.132-3) but the coins belong to the Mauryan period, and are tribal, not Brahmanical, as I interpret the evidence. The row of human figures at the bottom of the last seal referred to show a horn-like decoration on the head besides the braid; this might qualify them for the title Viṣāṇin (vii.18.7), while the god of fig.1 has a headdress which certainly has two (buffalo?) horns for its components. The animals surrounding the deity are to be interpreted as totems, on the great seal of fig. 1.

Marshall (p.15) misses the significance of the cup-like depressions on the shoulders of the Harappa red stone statuette. They are not meant for fixing ornamental discs, for in that case the little boss in the center would be unnecessary; the intention is clearly to fix an extra pair of arms which could be swivelled around, just as the head is meant to be turned in the neck-socket. Marshall takes the other fragmentary Harappa dancing statuette\* as with three heads or faces, though only the stump of a thick neck remains; it had not more than two arms. But the four-armed figure had become so classical as to be given the status of an pictogram in the Indus script. It is rather amusing to see Langdon (Marshall, p.446, *signs* 183,184) leave the particular homo-sign

\*It might be as well to point out here that the Harappa grey stone image fragment which Marshall takes as an ithyphallic dancing Siya actually represents a young girl dancing. Bronze dancing-girl statuettes have been found in Indus excavations. A comparison of plates LXXX and LXXXI in Vats or the corresponding plates in Marshall will show that the Harappa sculptors could delineate the difference between male and female in every line, not merely in the sexual organs. Also, the seven holes in the neck do not suggest a three-headed image but rather some elaborate head-dress or coiffure pegged into place, the head itself being turned to the figure's right. The two holes below the waist-line correspond precisely to the two bosses of the girdle in such terra-cotta figurines as Vats LXXVII.51,53; the belted skirt or apron must have been of some different material held in place by pins into the holes.

unexplained, or call one variety "man supporting two clubs", when an extra pair of arms, or snakes, or rivers springing out of the shoulders could be the only possible explanation, as may be confirmed by looking at the corresponding seals in the volume of plates. The reduction to a hieroglyph may indicate that the type originates in or at least is closer to the Indus valley than to Mesopotamia. The transition from the Indus representations of a deity with an extra pair of arms to the Mesopotamian god with rivers flowing out of his shoulders may be seen in Vats, pictograph 383r (pl. CXV) and seal 35 of pl. LXXXVI. Possibly, his symbol 388 a might also have developed from the common source. Mackay (pl. LXXXVI. 8) reports a unique two-faced clay image fragment, the faces being beardless and slant-eyed whence the connection (if any) with the two-faced Mesopotamian Usmu is not direct. RV. i.51.5, *sadnābhīr ye adhi śaptāḥ ajihata* 'those who sacrificed upon the shoulders (and were destroyed by Indra)' might indicate cults related to the above Indus pictograms or rather to their originals.

The absence of fuller archaeological evidence from the Indus valley forces us to consider parallel Mesopotamian seals, permissible because the existence of a common element to the two cultures is admitted\*. The Hydra (Nāga, Śeṣa) appears with five or seven heads (Frankfort p. 72, fig. 26; Pl. XXIII.j); much later, human figures with two animal heads, goat and stag (*ibid.* p. 271). As the labours of Herakles originate in these seals, the three-headed Geryon-Cacus, or a Kerberos, would have linked up with the Indus seals. However, Ea (originally Enki, a water-god like Nārāyaṇa) has a *two-faced* attendant, Usmu according to Furlani, who performs the functions of minister and herald, i.e. is equivalent to a human priest or priest-king. The two rivers flow generally from Ea's shoulders, occasionally from a jar in his hand. His other attendant, a bearded naked athlete of the Gilgames-Herakles type, also sometimes holds such a river-jar. Frankfort Pl. XXVIII.k shows both on a Babylonian seal, in such a way that the rivers might seem to emerge from the hero's shoulders; this seems to be the general case later, c. Pl. XXX-IX.i; in XLIV.m the river goddesses themselves might be the two attendants flanking the hero from whose shoulders stream the waters. On Pl. XLIV.i (a peripheral seal) the two streams emerge from a naked goddess's shoulders, as well as those of a much smaller male, perhaps her son. As the water-hero goes back at least to Akkadian times, we must see in him a representative of Ea, and the two-faced attendant must be another such, like the goat-fish which is later Ea himself. This will have to be used in interpreting Indus

\*Rather reluctantly. *Am. Epigraphic Soc. Proc.* (London 1935), p. 11; C.J. Gadd *Proc. Brit. Acad.* xlviii, 1932, pp. 191-216; H. Frankfort *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1923), pp. 294-295. My special thanks are due to Mr. P.D. Barnett of the British Museum for references, particularly to BM 93115. For the seven antediluvian sages, C.L. Woolley, *JRAS.* 1929, pp. 612-713; Zimmer, *Zeit. für Assyriologie* (N.F.) 35, 1924: p. 151 ff. Both Gogemah and Enkidu appear on Indus seals.



valley evidence, and Rgvedic references.. The goat-fish symbol of Ea (Frankfort, Pl.XXV.d ; XXVIII. k ; this seems to me the original *matsya-avatāra* and *aja ekapāda* ) is reversed on the Mohenjo-Daro 'sacrifice' seal, in that the animal before the god is a ram with the head of a fish (first pointed out by Fr. H. Heras S.J.). The sun-god has, like some other deities, rays emanating from his shoulders; usually three from each but the number is not fixed. This must be the original depiction of *saptaraśmi*, the vedic adjective. Other deities



Fig. 1. The Three-faced Indus God  
(After DK. 5175)



Fig. 2. "The Sacrifice"  
(After DK. 6847)



Fig. 3. Resurrection or liberation of the Sun-God from his mountain grave. (After BM 89115)

have vegetation replace the rays (Frankfort Pl.XX,c,e,j,k). On the Gudea seal (Frankfort p.143) the dragon-god Ningiszida shows two snakes or dragon, rising from his shoulders, like the later god *Tīšpak*, XXV, e, which relates both to the Zohak of the Shah Nameh. Occasionally, as on the Hammurabi stele, the rays curl up at the end, and Pharaoh Ikhnaton's reliefs tell us that they could terminate in hands, whence it is natural that they should develop from or into supernumerary arms. The best cylinder seal for our purpose is fig.3, from BM 89115, Frankfort Pl.XIX,a, which shows the sun-god being resurrected or liberated from his mountain grave by Ea and a goddess (Ishtar). The sun and the goddess show rays emanating from their shoulders, the central rays of the goddess terminating in what might be taken as hands. Two rivers, proved to be such by the fish swimming therein, stream out of Ea's shoulders, and he is followed closely by the two-faced attendant. As for the goddess, whose various traits are fully enough developed (on seals) by the time of the first Babylonian dynasty to prove her identity with Ishtar, the rays radiating from her and her evoking the sun would make her also a dawn-goddess. As such, she has a great deal in common with the Indian *Uṣas*, worshipped even in the plural in the *R̥gveda*, too prominent for a mere goddess of the dawn. Indra comes into violent conflict with her, shattering her car (ii.15.6; iv.39.8-11; x.138.5; x.73.6); this has, fortunately, no real interpretation as a nature myth, and can only indicate a clash of cults. If now *Uṣas* were a mother-goddess (for which one can easily find *R̥gvedic* indications), like Ishtar, her bringing out the sun (originally Tammuz) would still be remembered after the Aryan conquest and would enable her to claim a modest position as dawn-goddess, even after Indra had put her to flight. It is known that Enki-Ea is originally the god of the land, not of the waters. Frankfort p.116, fig. 32 shows us Inanna-Ishtar seated as priestess before her own image-altar, receiving homage from some devotee; she holds the two-river jar in her hand. Thus the naked goddess (on Syrian group II seals) from whose shoulders the two rivers stream is an old survival, and Ishtar must—possibly under some other name—have been the earlier river-deity displaced peacefully by Ea. Her consort Tammuz is bewailed as both husband and son, the root-word *damu* meaning both. This is quite natural, and wherever we have a clear historical course of development within the culture, patriarchal cults develop in precisely this manner from the matriarchal, by consortship of a son or husband with the priestess. To revert to the common substratum for the Indic and Mesopotamian river-civilizations, it may be pointed out that the horned headdress of Mesopotamian gods, though more complicated, again connects them with the three-faced Indus god, as well as the deity on the 'sacrifice' seal. The latter seal has seven attendant figures with braided hair, and the number is interesting though they lack individuality. The seven sages (*ṣaptarṣis*) are not only an Indian group, but highly reminiscent of the seven Mesopotamian antediluvian sages, whose images are actually found buried in groups of seven.

Marshall (pp.64-5) takes the deity and ministrant figures in the 'sacrifice' seal to be female which seems quite unlikely to me, while the animal is ascribed a 'human' face instead of the quite obvious fish, which, argues, lack of care in examination, or myopia.

The row of seven figures marching single file hand in hand, but in the opposite direction appears again on a fragmentary seal (Vats, *Excavations at Harappa*, New Delhi 1940 pl. XCI. 251). The principal difficulty lies in proving their connection with the seven Mesopotamian 'ancient *apkallu* who were before the flood in Shuruppak.' Their line of descent in India is clear enough. RV. i.24.10 calls the stars of Ursa Major *ṛkṣāḥ*, the Bears; Sat Brāh. ii.1.2.4 makes the Pleiades (*kṛttikās*) wives of these Bear-ṛṣis. Sat-Brāh. vi.1.1.1 even claims that these ṛṣis wore themselves out with toil creating the universe, which fits the ṛk iv.2.15; Sat-Brāh. ix.2.3.44 tells us that these seven were addressed as 'seven tongues' and *were made into one person*. The idea of our seven primary groups is obviously much older than the beginning of the present clan system. The seven, sages, *aś-vipras* or *ṛṣis* are called 'our ancestors' by the Brahmin seers of R̥gvedic hymns, particularly by the Angirāṣas in iv.42.8 which makes them present when Durgahā's son (Purukutsa) was taken prisoner; and vi.22.2; *tamu naḥ pitaro navagvā sapta viprāso abhi vājyanta*. This might seem self-contradictory as the Seven cannot be split into the Nine or the Ten, but association of the seven sages with the Navagvas, and Daśagvas is repeated in i.62.4, and perhaps ix.108.4 where Dadhiañc appears as a Navagva. At the very least, we can say that they are pre-Aryan associates of a mother-goddess in creation. The goddess survives later as Uṣas, daughter of the sky, after being smashed up by Indra as an evil-plotting female (iv.30.8.11). The Mizar-Alcor combination in Ursa Major is still known as Vasiṣṭha and Arundhati, but we have several other versions in which the smaller companion star is the common wife of all seven of the sages (Mbh. 1.188.14).

It is clear, though difficult to prove, that the unnamed seven laid low by Indra (x.49.8) and whose enemy Indra became from his very birth though they had till then been without an enemy (viii.96.16) are these seven sages. Their supposed consorts, the Pleiades, are to be seen often enough as a constellation on Mesopotamian cylinder seals.

Uṣas as a mother goddess connected with the seven sages appears explicitly in iv.2.15: *adhā mātur uṣasā sapta viprā jāyemahi prathamā vedhasā nṛn*; 'we seven sages will generate men from mother Uṣas who (will become) the first ritualists; we shall become Angirāṣas, sons of heaven, we shall burst the rich mountain, shining forth'. Mother-goddess figurines are perhaps the commonest Indus city finds, one type being bird-headed, like the dove-headed Venus of the early Mediterranean culture. Marshall p.52 describes the seal on plate

XII, no. 12 which shows a mother-goddess upside down, giving birth to vegetation<sup>1</sup>, hence presumably the earth-mother; the other side represents her or another female deity seated, with streaming hair, approached by some male worshipper. This last is mentioned only because Marshall interprets the scene as the sacrifice of a female by a man, for which the seal itself shows not the slightest evidence. The Aṅgīrasas bursting the mountain, a common enough figure of speech, is highly suggestive, when we compare the action of the Sun-god on the Sargonid seal, with v.45.1-3. Only the saw is needed to complete the description. But the R̥gvedic scenes are remarkably well depicted on Frankfort Pl. XVIII a, where the god of light bursts the mountain and causes the gates to be thrown open.

One important difference has to be emphasized when considering these resemblances. Weapons such as spear or lance-heads found at Mohenjodaro have been so flimsy that they could have served only for decorations in some ceremonial; this contrasts strongly with the sturdy bronze tools found in the same deposits, and with the war-materials in Mesopotamia. Allowing for the painful incompetence of our archaeologists, it still seems evident that the mechanism of violence was less developed than one would expect in a city of this size, even though it was primarily a trade and manufacturing center.

The archaeological evidence for battle and conquest being undeniable one may venture to identify Harappa with the Hariyūpīyā of vi. 27.5, making the assumption that the locality has preserved its name through the millennia. The hymn praises Indra's shattering the front line of 130 panoplied Vṛcīvats whereby the rest of the army was broken in the battle on the Yavyāvati river<sup>2</sup>; thus Indra handed over the Varasikhas and Turvaśa to Daivavāta, which may be Sṛñjaya as well as Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna. Rather than press such identifications, which can have little value till we read the Indus valley script, attention may again be called to the two seals above. The (three-horned) trident which the supernal figure wears on his head in the 'sacrifice' seal (fig.2) is related to the buffalo-horn headdress of the three-faced god in the better-known seal of fig. 1, as well as to the three faces of that god, and the later tri-śūla symbol. The adjective *śṛṅgin* does occur occasionally in the R̥gveda; (Agni described as) Tvaṣṭṛ seems to be three-horned according to v. 43.13 and we have noted the Viṣāṇin tribe, labelled *śivāsas*, in vii.18. Lastly, anyone with

<sup>1</sup> RV. x. 72.3,4 speaks of an original mother-goddess<sup>5</sup> from whom creation came into being; *ullārapśadas* means 'with feet in the air' (for parturition) while *Sāyana* takes this to mean 'tree' which would seem to connect the st with the particular seal whereof the interpretation seems doubtful to me, the 'vegetation' resembling a crab.

<sup>2</sup> Pañc. Brāh xiv. 7.2 says that Gauriviti, descendant of Śakti, performed the 35-year *sattra* to reach great benefits on the banks of the Yavyāvati (presumably the old Rāvi). This is the only other place where I have been able to find either of the two place-names above. As Daivavāta is a Bharata, Gauriviti a Varisṭha, the whole account is unusually consistent and has a historical appearance.

the three-peaked headdress as on the sacrifice seal could be called *trīśaṅku*, and as the figure is between heaven and earth (probably a god descending for the sacrifice), we have here one possible source of the Viśvāmitra-Trīśaṅku myth.

For the first identification of the later cemetery at Harappa as Aryan, cf. V. Gordon Childe, "New Light On The Most Ancient East" (London 1935, 223-4) ; R.E.M. Wheeler 'Ancient India' no. 3, 1947, 81 ff, gives a discussion of the archaeological evidence for Aryan conquest and occupation at Harappa ; for the ponderous incompetence of Marshall's and Mackay's excavation of Mohenjō-Daro ibid. p. 144.

### IRANIAN PARALLELS

10. There is no doubt that Indo-Aryan society as reorganized with Brahminism opened up the swampy lands of the Gangetic basin, so that caste was an essential feature of more efficient means of production, the development of fixed settlements, and the state. The word *brahman* for the priesthood is not to be found outside India ; and whereas exogamous patriarchal gentes within the tribe or community are known to have existed among Latin and Greek societies after the Aryan invasion of those respective territories, we have no general example of fire-priesthood as the exclusive prerogative of a hereditary caste, though occasionally a gens has the rights of chief priesthood for some particular cult. There is, however, a rudimentary caste system and a fire-priest caste among a neighbouring Aryan people, the Iranians ; this case has to be considered in detail.

Our sources\* of knowledge for the Iranians are the fragmentary Avestan and Pahlavi religious texts, plus the reports of Greek travellers and historians. The first group of documents is lacunary, of late redaction as shown by the reference to the followers of a heretic Gaotema (Yt. xiii. 16, now identified with the Buddha and not Nodhas Gotama), and in addition bears the stamp of a thorough religious reform, that of Zoroaster, which succeeded with the Achaemenids in the 6th century B.C. Comparison with the R̥gveda is difficult. Greek notices supply foreign travellers' accounts far superior to anything comparable for that period in India, but are occasionally hostile and sometimes

---

\* I follow : for Avestan sources, James Darmsteter's translation in the Sacred Books of The East, vols. 4 and 23 (Oxford 1895). For the general background, Maneckjee Nusservanji Dhalla's 'History of Zoroastrianism' (New York 1938) seemed to be competent ; for most of the contested points, Herzfeld's discussion in his 'Zoroaster And His World' (2 vols. Princeton, 1947) seems quite reliable, with a few possible exceptions such as the identification of soma with the vine. p. 551. Herodotus is cited from the familiar translation by Rawlinson, with the abbreviation Her. Other abbreviations : Vd. = Ventidad, Yt. = Yast.

not credible. Taking all these into consideration, the presence of at least one major stream of common tradition between Indic and Avestan Aryans is not to be doubted. Apart from the language of the *gāthās* and old Persian inscriptions, so similar to Sanskrit, we have the common fear of the demons called *yāhu*, worship of *Vāyu*, love of the sacred *haoma* = *soma* drink, and the basic position of the fire cult. Steady contact had been maintained through regions known to both people, as for example 'Vackereta of the evil shadows' (= *Kābūl*), and the land of the seven rivers (= the Punjab), the seventh and the fifteenth respectively of the sixteen regions created by Ahura Mazda (Vd.i). King Yima is much more prominent in the Vendidad (Fargard ii) than Yama in the *R̥gveda*, but the identity is not in doubt; the Avestan *Sarasvatī* ("the beautiful Harahvaitī" of Vd.13) is the *Arghand-āb*, and not one of the seven rivers in India. *Verethraghna* is the "glory made by Ahura Mazda" (Vd. xix.37, and Yt. xiv); Indra has been made into a demon by the reform, though still under the title of *daeua* (Vd. xx.43, x.9). Then there is the rather ambiguous position of the golden-heeled *Gandareva*, a demon (Yt.v.38, xix.41), but not without respect (Yt.xiii.122, xv.28); he has been transferred to the deep though the Indians place him in the atmosphere.

For our main purpose, we have to note specifically the three supposed castes of the Iranians (Vd.i.16, three races, from the Azerbaijan). But the division into fire-priests, warriors, and husbandmen is not a degradation of the last as it was for the *Vaiśya* in the *Taittirīya Samhitā* and later Indian scriptures, for they are descended from the three sons of Spitama Zarathuštra who is himself not only the first and foremost fire-priest (Yt.xiii.94) but the first warrior and the first plougher of the ground as well (Yt.xiii.88). The husbandman is honoured on earth, and his progenitor supreme in the Var of King Yima (Vd.ii.). We have therefore a division into classes, not castes. Now the Avestan title of the fire-priesthood is *āthravan*, which is undoubtedly the vedic *atharvan*, and again shows an ancient unity of tradition to which Zoroaster reverted in clearing off the bloody (and of course uneconomic) sacrifices that obscured the (supposed) original purity of Aryan worship, whereas Buddha and the Jains took up the philosophy of *ahiṃsā*. The Iranian *Athravan* leads the way after a path has been purified from the extreme pollution of a funeral (Vd.viii. 19). The *Athravans* who read, and their pupils, will beg knowledge and prosperity of *Ardivi Sūra Anūhita* (Yt.v. 86). Yt. xiii. 147 says "here are the *āthravans* of all countries" come to worship the *Fravašis*, while Yt.xvi.17 refers to the *Athravans* sent afar, presumably wandering (even mendicant) missionaries. The fine qualities of an *Athravan* are given in Yt.xix.53, and the caste still monopolizes the priesthood among the Parsis, theoretically endogamous though not rigidly so in practice.

On the other hand, western travellers know of Iranian priests as *Magi* though Zoroaster uses *magus* and *magopat* only as adjectives, with the meaning of

great. The original Magi were one of the six tribes of the Medians (Her.i. 101), who were a western branch of the same race, first subject to the Assyrians, then independent and overlords of the eastern Persians, and finally conquered by the latter but in close alliance nevertheless after Cyrus and Darius I. Yet the Greek tells us that the Magi took a peculiar delight in killing all living things except dogs and men (Her.i.140). The special protection given to dogs (Vd. xiii *et passim*) is, of course, a feature of ancient Persian means of production and of the high status of the husbandman; the dog in the Avesta is the most useful of man's friends in the protection of the household and of cattle. The killing of all sorts of lower animal life which Herodotos notices is sanctioned, and even demanded by Vendidad xiv.5-6. For our thesis, it is of special interest to note that the Magi recovered their original position of respect,\* and continued as an "honorary tribe" to be priests (with readjustment to the new reforms) but that they had first undergone attacks similar to those suffered by the Bhrgus and other early Brahmins. In particular, the story of Darius and the false Smerdis (Her.iii.61 seq., fully supported by the inscriptions of Darius) and the festival of the Magophonia (Her.iii.79) show that special action had to be taken against the Magi as a whole, but that massacre did not end their priestly function. For that matter, we also know that some of the older gods had to be readmitted into the pantheon (Herzfeld p.401, 408-9) though with suitable changes. In other words, we have a parallel to the happenings in India, and for similar reasons: conquest and reassimilation, with a conquered (though here Aryan) clan imposing itself upon the priesthood by virtue of superior ritual.

The R̥gvedic *atharvan*, though belonging to so remote a past as to appear more than human, and without a surviving gotra (unless we infringe upon sacred tenets of philology to relate *athar* to *atri*) to commemorate his existence, still occupied a far more important historical position than would appear by the comparatively rare citations. In x.14 and x.21.5, he is associated with Yama while in x.120.9 we have Bṛhad-diva as an *atharvan*; but the signal honour given in x.120 to the supposed ṛṣi and the actual meaning of the name itself seem to reflect the stature of someone like Ahura Mazda, who is himself a sky-god (Her.i.131) sublimated and an *Athravan* (Yt.i.12). In x.48.2 Indra Vaikuṇṭha declares that he protected *Atharvan* and *Trita*, and bestowed upon them the cattle released from *ahi*, presumably *Vṛtra* referred to as a snake; an Avestan parallel to the Paṇi episode is perhaps the prayer of cattle to Mithra, for release from the den of the *Druj* (Yt.x.86). In viii.9.7, as in ix.11.2, *atharvan* is clearly the fire itself upon which soma is sprinkled. In vi.47.24, the *Atharvans* and *Pāyu* *Bharadvāja* receive ten special chariots and a hundred

\* To the extent of imposing exposure of the dead in spite of original burial (Her.i.140, Herzfeld p. 747) or cremation (Herzfeld p.748). Dhalla takes the Magi as west-Persian priests, *Athravans* as eastern.

head of cattle from Aśvattha ; the same Pāyū Bharadvāja as the supposed seer of x.87.12 mentions the atharvan flame as most effective in driving away *jātudhāna* demons. The bones of Dadhyañt Ātharvaṇa are used by Indra to kill the nine nineties of his dark enemies : i.84.13 *indro dadhīco asthabhir vṛtrāṇy apratiṣkutaḥ ; jaghāna nasaṁsī nasa*. In fact, Atharvan is explicitly the first *yajña* sacrificer according to i.83.5 and x.92.10 while the atharvan fire-drill or method of lighting the fire is lauded in vi.15.7 as in vi.16.13-14 ; the last ṛk calls Agni by Indra's titles, *vṛtrahāṇam purandaram*, which shows again that fire was used as a poliorcetic weapon by the early Indic Aryans, and incidentally explains how the Avesta could separate Verethraghna from Indra. The most important of all references to Atharvan is x.14.6 where we have an association in the same line with Aṅgiras, the pitṛs, the Nine seers (*navagrā*), and the Bṛhgu, the last of whom also appeared in x.92.10. At this stage, we note that the ṛks containing any reference to Atharvan are overwhelmingly of Bharadvāja or Gotama origin, i.e. of Aṅgiras authorship. Later, the whole of the Atharva-veda is called the *Atharvāṅgiras*, (cf. Mbh.5.18.5-8) and the special combination appears with the highest eminence in that veda. Finally, we have seen that the Bṛhgu-Aṅgiras combination also exists, which shows just why the extinct Atharvan was important in India : *The Atharvan is the proper fire-priest of one Aryan group, and association with him was the means whereby the Aṅgirasas and the Bṛhgu climbed into vedic priesthood*. This gives us much the same historical development as that of the Magus in Persia. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad i.2 we have the line of teachers as Brahmā-Atharvan-Aṅgīr-Bharadvāja Satyavāha-Aṅgiras. This is a step towards the final inversion to be found in still later traditions which makes Atharvan an Aṅgiras, the very first.

However, not everything can be explained by parallel historical developments, and like the name of the river Sarasvatī, there is possibility of a legend being transferred. The story of the hero Thraetona and the demon Azi Dahāka is here of considerable interest. The Persian hero of the Āthwya clan performs a great sacrifice of a hundred stallions, a thousand oxen, and ten thousand lambs to Drvāspa (Yt. ix.13-14) or Ardvi Sūra Anāhita (Yt.v.33-34) or Vayu (Yt. xv.23-24 ; cf. Yt.xvii.33-34) for the destruction of the snake. Azi Dahāka himself, "the three-mouthed, the three-headed, the six-eyed, who has a thousand senses, that most powerful fiendish Druj, that demon baleful to the world" makes the same sacrifice in the land of Bāwri (= Babylon) to Ardvi Sūra Anāhita (Yt.v.29-31) and to Vayu (Yt.xv.19-21) "in his accursed palace of Kvirinta" in order to destroy the seven habitable regions of the world (Karshvar), but his great sacrifices are rejected. The hero Thraetona Āthwya prays successfully to destroy him and set free his "two wives, Savanghavāc and Erenavāc, who are the fairest of body amongst women, and the most wonderful creatures in the world" (Yt.ix.14). Now a three-headed demon is known to the R̥gveda as Trisiras Tvāṣṭra, and in the slaying, Trita Āptya has



been seen to be associated with Indra (x.99.6, x.8.8) which has been taken as sufficient for the identification by most scholars. The divine Vāc, of which the Ṛgveda knows more than one variety, though not as the wife of Trīśiras, is the speech monopolized by our Brahmins, later deified as Sarasvatī. The legend deserves a little closer analysis. The Avestan Thrīta is the first healer and founder of medicine (Vd.xx), but a member of the Sāma family, which again sounds familiarly vedic. Traitana occurs only once in the Ṛgveda, as the pre-Aryan or demon (*dāsa*) whose blow at Dīrghatamas recoils upon himself, leaving the sage unharmed, to float down the river : i.158.5 *śīro yad asya traitano vitakṣat svayaṁ dāsa uro aṁsāv api gḍha*. It is possible to see the discordant features at a glance; the great difference of territory between the four-cornered Varena (Tabaristan), for which Thraetona was born to smite Azi Dahāka, and the eastern portion of the Indo-Aryan domain is significant. In addition, Azi Dahāka survives to tempt Zarathuštra : "Renounce the good Religion of the worshippers of Mazda, and thou shalt gain such a boon as Vadhaghna gained, the ruler of the nations" (Vd.xix.6). Yet the historic substance of the legend is enhanced by analysis. In the first place, Azi is a king, as shown by his palace and great sacrifice, which was not only repeated by his slayer but (near lake Urumiah = Caecasta) by Kavi Husravah, "He who united the Aryan nations into one kingdom" (Yt.v.49,32, ix.22); at the White Forest by the 'murderer' Aurvasāra fleeing from Husravah (Yt.xv.31); and by Xerxes (Her.vii.43, 113; cf.i.50). His connection with Babylon is curiously supported by later legend, for the Shah Nameh describes him (= Zohāk) as with two snakes springing from his shoulders (cf.p.27 of the Shah Nameh translation into English verse by A. Rogers, London 1907). Zōhāk is not an ordinary king but a successor to Yima-Jamshed himself. The black snakes that issued from his shoulders (as the devil kissed him there) appear on Mesopotamian seals as shoulder-rays from the sun, dragons from the shoulders of Tīšpak-Ningiszida or rivers issuing from the shoulders of Ea or the hero Gilgameš of Sumerian legend; from them to the four-armed characters of the Indus valley seals and later sculpture is only a step, the actual transition probably being in the opposite direction. Śīsupāla (Mbh.2.40.1) the Cedian was born four-armed and three-eyed. The god (?Sun) on Hammurabi's stele has curved flames issuing from his shoulders. Thus, the legend is rooted deep in the historic tradition of Aryan conflicts with great pre-Aryan civilizations in the Indus valley as well as in Mesopotamia; we know that these civilizations had long, continuous co-existence and intercourse, as well as many common features, probably some common origins. In this case, I should be inclined to consider the event itself as having occurred in the Indus valley.

Just what the snake-demon signifies I cannot venture to say in this context, especially as his connection with the cult of the Mother-Goddess and pre-patriarchal family life is known, but not preserved in either of the two Aryan sources under discussion. However, other heroes conquer multiple-headed

snakes as for example Herakles and the Hydra, or the Indian counterpart Kṛṣṇa and Kālīya ; yet the Hydra has one head which is immortal, and Kṛṣṇa only subdues Kālīya without killing him. The vast though inobtrusive current spread of the nāga cult need not be given in detail. One major Hindu holiday is dedicated to the cobra. Cobras are regarded by many (my mother, grandfather, uncle, and cousins among them) as embodying ancestral spirits, and the live snake himself generally forms an appendage of most rustic temples. Śeṣa's bearing the whole earth on his multiple hood goes back much further than the obviously recast legend in Mbh.i.32. Viṣṇu sleeps upon the great (many-headed) cobra, Śiva wears him as a necklace, and the cobra's protective hood is reared above the phallic symbol of Mahādeva. The chief cobra Takṣaka escapes being burnt down with the Khāṇḍava forest (Mbh.1.218.4; the whole episode is one of land-clearing in the typical Aryan manner, by firing the woods and slaughtering all inhabitants), and is barely saved from Janamejaya Pārikṣita's fire-sacrifice by his human nephew Āstika. The name *takṣaka* is related to *takṣan* = carpenter, hence to the god Tvastṛ; and to Takṣaśilā, (the Greek Taxila) which was the capital after the Mahābhārata war. Thus Taxila to Kurukṣetra must have been the territory of a tribe or tribes which had a cobra totem or cult. Nāgas remain extraordinary craftsmen in Indian folklore, demonic beings able to assume human form at will. Kṛṣṇa's elder brother is usually taken to be an incarnation of the great Nāga. The demon Vṛtra is called *ahi* in the veda, but the snake of the deep *ahir budhnyas* remains an object of worship. References to *ahi* are scattered throughout the veda with the important exception of the Viśvāmitra book. Here, the word *ahi* is found only twice (iii.32.11 and iii.33.7), in both cases referring to Indra's killing of the demon Vṛtra in order to release the waters. The peculiar difference between Vṛtra or Triśiras and Azi is undoubtedly to be explained by the historical differences in the relations between the Aryans and the conquered people in India, as against the Aryans and their Assyrian enemies in Persia. As for the Aṅgiras Dirghatamas (Bṛhaddevatā iv.11-12), his name itself shows association with darkness (explained away by his blindness, i.147.3 ; iv.4.13), hence with the Vṛtras who are the enemies of Indra and the Aryans. But in spite of the familiar royal persecution he left descendants who became Brahmins in the main priestly lineage, while Taitana left his mark only upon a very distant branch of Aryans. Thus even this legend supports the contention that the development of Indo-Aryan sacerdotal tradition is by assimilation of a pre-Aryan element, which has special connection with the Brahmin caste, particularly in its original stages. With the Zoroastrians, success meant that over vast territories inhabited by far more numerous peoples which had diverse customs of their own and in some cases law-codes going back to Hammurabi. Therefore, the development of a new gotra system among the Magi was not necessary. In India, on the contrary, the conquest meant destruction of the

Indus valley urban cultures, reorganization of society into castes, and progressive opening up of new, sparsely settled, and heavily wooded territories to the east. This gave opportunity for each group of priests to be attached to or adopted by several Aryan clans, which must have been the origin of Brahmin pravaras.

### TRITA ĀPTYA; THE ORIGINS OF EPIC AND SAGA

11. The Avestan Vadhaghna can be equated without difficulty to Indra himself under the title of *vadhasnu*, bearer of the death-dealing weapon, though *vajrin*, *vajra-hasta*, etc. are the usual adjectives. *Vadhasnu* is actually used of Soma (= *indu*) in ix.54.3. We hear of the gods shooting down upon men (v.41.13) and Agni breaking down walls (vii.5.5) with a *vadhasna*. Indra's weapons have the same name in i.165.6 (*vadhasnaih*); equivalent forms *vadha*, *vadhar*, etc. are found in considerable profusion: vii.83.4, Indra-Varuṇa *vadhanābhīr vanvantā*; So, Triśiras being a *purohita* of Indra might be reflected in the association of Azi Dahāka with Vadhaghna in the Avesta.

Of the block of seven hymns (i.51-57) ascribed to Savya Angiras and all dedicated to Indra, i.53 begins "Let us sing a hymn to great Indra, dedicate chants to him in the abode of Vaivasvata". The location is reminiscent of the Var of Yima. "Thou (Indra) hast crushed under thy irresistible chariot-wheel the twice ten tribal kings with their 60,099 men, who fought against kinless (*abandhunā*) Suśravas. Thou didst aid Suśravas with thy support, Indra; with thy protection thou gavest to the victoriously advancing (*tūrva-yānam\**), Kutsa, Atithigva, Ayu into the hands of the great young king" (i.53.-9-10). I suggest that this fits the Avestan Husravah very well, though here the title of Kavi is not mentioned, and the opponent Aurvasāra is not recognizable.

Even more instructive is the series of references to Trita Āptya. Let us first report what the meticulous Grassmann (col. 557) has to say: "Trita is originally 'the third' and therefore set up against a 'second' (viii.47.16).1) Designation of a god who is probably obliged for his name and worship (i.187.1; i.163.2.-3; 1.52.5; viii.7.24) to a pre-vedic point of view, because of which he also occurs often in the Zend. Already in the R̥gveda, his original being appears obscured, in that he shows to a certain extent as the background for the world of vedic gods. Thus he appears in a definite manner as the prede-

\* I treat *tūrva-yāna* as an adjective, without yielding to the temptation to take that and the allied *turanyu* as "Turanian". It is an adjective of Agni in i.174.3, of Cyāvāna in x.81.2. It seems to be a name by itself in vi.18.13; that *rk* repeats the substance of i.53.11 above without the name of Suśravas. *Sāvāna* turns the meaning completely around and makes Indra here the protector of Kutsa, Ayu, Atithigva. One may compare x.49.3-5, 8 where the same characters (and a Savya) appear while 3.8 speaks of Indra helping Atithigva against Karañja and Parnaya. Velankar, in the *Ann. Bhandarkar. O.R.Inst.* xxiii.1942.657-668 (on Divodāsa and the other Atithigvas) identifies Kutsa with Ayu and Atithigva for the hymn under discussion, while making out a good case for more than one Atithigva and several Kutsas (which latter is clear, the name being representative of a tribe).

cessor of Indra, who strikes down demons just like him and frees the imprisoned streams ; for this relationship i.52.5 is particularly characteristic, where it is said of Indra that he broke the defences of Vala like Trita. 2) So he blows upon Agni (v.9.5 ; x.46.3), discovers him, establishes him in the houses of men. 3) He leads Varuṇa-Soma to the sea (ix.95.4) and even seems himself to be Varuṇa (viii.41.6). 4) He appears in alliance with other gods (ii.31.6 ; ii.34.10,14 ; v.54.2 ; viii.12.16), namely also 5) with the winds (x.64.3 ; x.114.4) and 6) with Soma (ix.32.2 ; ix.34.4 ; ix.37.4 ; ix.38.2 ; ix.86.20 ; ix.102.2, 3 ; ii.11.20), so that the fingers that purify the Soma appear as Trita's virgins (ix.32.2 ; ix.38.2), the Soma stone as Trita's stone (ix.102.2) and Soma as coming to Trita (ix.34.4). So he is represented 7) as living in the far unknown distance (i.105.9) and therefore 8) carried away to Trita (viii.47.13, 17) is equal to carried very far away. In all these conceptions, he appears with the qualification *āptya*, as also in meaning 9. But besides this conception of Trita as a higher deity, he appears also 9) as a lower god (i.102.1 ; ii.11.19 ; x.48.2 ; x.99.6 ; x.8.8) who performs labours in the service of Indra or 10) calls upon the gods for help (i.105.17 ; x.8.7) when fallen into a well. Finally 11) in the plural, a whole class of gods is so denoted (vi.44.23) in whose abode Indra found the nectar of immortality".

This shows that Trita, though faded, had at one time a substantial following. The whole nexus can very well be explained by our present hypothesis if the course of historical development be taken into consideration. One may remark that viii.47.13-17, where evil demons and nightmares are exorcised away to Trita *Āptya* need not just mean driving them away to a far distance but may also be in the nature of a curse upon Trita. In any case, Trita's distance in time and place from the ṛgvedic seers and the major stream of tradition need not be doubted, particularly as he finds no mention in the Viśvāmitra, Vāmadeva, and Vasiṣṭha books. The higher forms of Trita must indicate his antiquity and ancestral position for some clans, say the *Āptyas*, while the prayer from a well might preserve a memory of his actual humanity. Very significantly, Indra is himself called *āptyam āptyānām* (x.120.6). Knowing what we now do of the Aryan invasion, it seems plausible that Trita is Indra or one of the invading Aryan chiefs, later collectively deified under the title of Indra\*. His separation from Indra is helpful, seeing that some time after the conquest Indra has to be worshipped by *brāhmaṇas* in spite of the still-remembered killing of their ancestors, and destruction of their gods and cities. In fact, we have seen from the Avestan tradition that Aži Dahāka is literally a *vācaspati* as the husband of two kinds of *vāc* ; the word *vācaspati* is used without

\*Against my interpretation of Trita, see A.A. Macdonnell, IRAS. xxv. 1892 pp. 419-496, identifying Trita with Agni ; in the same vein, M. Fowler JAOS vol. 67-1947, pp. 39-66. But there can be no possible doubt that Trita is a double of Indra at least in the one performance that interests us most, namely the killing of Trīśiras.

further definition in ix.26.4, ix.101.5, x.166.3, while we have *vācaspatim viśvakarmānam* in x.81.7. Vācaspati is peculiarly Brhaspati or Brahmanaspati, and so it is not surprising to find Brhaspati as with seven (instead of Trisiras's three) mouths, *saptāśyāsas* in iv.50.4, while iv.51.4 has *yenū navagve aṅgīre daśagve sap-tāśye revatī revatī ūṣa*. Brahmanaspati may have developed later (cf. x.68, Brhaspati rivals Indra's seats; Brahmanaspati as the creator, x.72.2) quite naturally into the four-headed Brahmā, which confronts us again with the possibility of purely internal growth. But the archaeological evidence pointed to above, and what is known of theogony in general, would make it extremely unlikely that a multiple-headed god was invented out of nothing by the Brahmin class as their own special creator. The alternative interpretation is that one aboriginal Brahmin god at least survived in their memory, and was re-adopted into the new pantheon after the priests had become Aryanized. The Brahmin demon Rāvaṇa killed by Rāma had sprouted as many as ten heads!

Brhaspati is not the only god to grow out of comparatively brief mention in the R̥gveda into quite overpowering glory. Viṣṇu is a known example, and Puruṣa in x.90, even more striking as Nārāyaṇa. These are clearly foreign additions to Aryan cults, but a parallel to Brhaspati is better seen in Prajāpati. He begins as an adjective, being Savitr in iv.53.2, and Soma pavamāna in ix.5.9. A cow has been given by Prajāpati in x.169.4 and x.184.4 addresses to him part of a prayer for offspring. The very late x.85.43 shows him as a god. An entire hymn is dedicated to him only in x.21, where he is mentioned in the last *rk* by name; later comment has made the interrogative *kaḥ* of the refrain into a name for Prajāpati, perhaps from ancient memories of the significance of the word as a man's soul or essence (as it also was in Egyptian). The crowding into the last books is clear proof of a later date than for Brhaspati.

Memories of Brahmanical adoption of strange ways in distress survived quite late. We know that the ascetic tradition in India goes back to period far earlier than that of the Buddha, and that many of these ascetics were specially learned, as well as versed in the mysteries. For a development purely within the jungle, this would be impossible. On the other hand, if some of the (originally) unassimilated and unenslaved priestly survivors of the pre-Aryan culture took to the forest and eked out a painful existence on the margin of slowly growing settlements, the high respect accorded to ascetics is explained, as well as the gradual merger of the two streams in later philosophy. Manusmṛti 10.108 speaks of Viśvāmitra accepting dog meat from the hands of a Cāṇḍāla, but there is no vedic support for this, and as the book is of Bhṛgu redaction (Ms.11.59-60), we may pass this by. The two previous ślokaḥ are confirmed. Ms.10.107 proclaims that hungry Bharadvāja, with his son, received many heads of cattle from Vṛdhu Takṣan. The reference is found in the R̥gveda (vi.45.31-33) in a genuine Bharadvāja *dānastūti* of king Br̥hu,

the most generous of princes, who victoriously achieved chieftainship of the Paṇis like Urukakṣa Gāṅgya. When we recall that the Ṛgvedic Paṇis are regularly maligned as greedy, mercantile, and even cattle-stealers (x.108 gloss) Vṛtra himself being a Paṇi at times, or that they are demons—which means old enemies of the Aryans, it is clear how Bharadvāja had sinned. However, he had another Aṅgiras predecessor, Vāmadeva. Ms.10.106 tells us that starving Vāmadeva was unstained by eating dog's flesh, and this is again supported by a *rk* of Vāmadeva (iv.18.13) where the seer narrates that in distress he was reduced to seeing his wife in degradation, and to cooking a dog's entrails. But this is no less a *dānastuti* of Indra, in older form, than Bharadvāja's to Bṛhu; for Vāmadeva concludes that then the Falcon (Indra) brought him Soma. This can only mean granting the right to Soma, which implies granting membership in the tribe, i.e. adoption as an Aryan follower or priest of Indra. Says Vāmadeva (iv.24.10) "Who will buy from me, for ten cows, this Indra who is mine? After he has defeated the enemies, let him return (Indra) to me". This has been interpreted as hawking an image or fetish of Indra for hire, a unique practice in the Ṛgveda not supported by any authority. But hiring out the ṛṣi's services for a specific occasion, to secure the aid of Indra in battle, would seem far more natural, would fit the context of the hymn better, and is also the traditional Brahmin practice. Getting Indra back is essential; "What use to you (Indra) are the cows of the Kikāṭas" (iii.53.14) shows such an attempt at enticing Indra away from others. As for the specific mention of those who did not believe in Indra, we have two quite distinct classes: those who are the enemies belonging to the aboriginal population (vṛtras, dasyus, etc.) and those who are treated with more circumspection (2) though denying Indra, as in ii.12.5, viii.100.3. These might be *vrātyas*, extra-vedic though Aryan, but later tradition like that of the Bṛhaddevatā says explicitly that the reference is to particular seers, Brahmins who had once denied Indra and then "seen", i.e. acknowledged him. There is no reason to doubt this, and it supports our main contention.

This tale of woe, being found in all layers of the Ṛgveda, is no later invention; x.33 begins as a song of hunger by one who has barely escaped death by starvation. The numerous *dānastutis* cannot be separated (as done so often by Grassmann) from the hymn proper. In the first place, similar praise is found in the body of other hymns, in the same metre. Secondly, Malinowski's experience with Trobriand Islanders' folklore shows that the coda is an integral part of the story, prime cause of its preservation. The record of gifts to the singer could have been important only if they were comparatively rare, life-saving events whose chanting was at once grateful remembrance and incentive to other donors. The properly historical names of the Ṛgveda occur for the greater part in such *dānastutis*. One can see groups like the Bharadvājas and the Kaṇvas cast about for protectors among all sorts of chieftains. Even

the two *dāsa* chiefs Balbūtha and Tarukṣa are praised to the utmost by Vaśa Aśvya, and it is their generosity to him that, presumably, brings them under the grace of Indra and Vāyu in viii.46.32. This, incidentally, shows that Brahminism cannot be a purely Aryan growth. Thus the hostility to Yadu-Turvaśa (vii.19.8) and friendship in vi.20.12 are explained because Vasiṣṭha and Bharadvāja were then priests to different, hostile tribes, and called upon Indra to support their own party. The all-importance of giving to Brahmins, so nauseatingly familiar to any reader of classical Sanskrit, goes to iv.50.7-11 (which would fit into any Purāṇa) and is the economico-theological basis for the priest's special sanctity and development into a caste apart.

Most important of all, these appended verses of gratitude *provide the transition between fixed, sacred hymn, and improvised, 'fluid', popular lay*; hence the deliberate change of metre in the *dānastuti*. The Mahābhārata epic, for example, is a re-edited collection of such lays about the main theme of a great civil war. Every digression (particularly genealogical) called for by any of the characters is made at once, which is clear proof of improvisation. The prologue has a vedic hymn to the Aśvins (Mbh.1.3.60-70; not out of place in the context) and claims that the work is a veda, which could hardly be admitted on the strength of a solitary hymn. One may therefore conclude that the glorifications (*māhātmya*) which intersperse the various episodes, telling of immense merit to be gained by listening to the particular story recited, make up for the disappearance of other hymns with which the minstrel must, in older days, have begun his set portion; the *māhātmya* is a later guarantee that the sanctity originally provided by the hymn has somehow been preserved. The Mbh being of Bhṛguid recension, with a fragment surviving of a rival compilation by Jaimini, we have here another encroachment by Brahmins; the professional bard (*sūta*; one actually recites the extant Mbh. according to the work itself), is of mixed caste—son of a vaiśya by a kṣatriya woman—which points to an ancient respectable origin of the guild, before class differences had developed into impassable caste barriers. The idea of caste-mixture is the Manusmṛti method of enrolling such guilds into the caste system. The cheerful poet of ix.112.3 says : *kārur aham tato bhiṣag upala-prakṣiṇī nanā*, 'I am a hymn-composer, father is a herb-doctor, mother grinds corn', all as professionals, for profit; this is certainly not the Manusmṛti idea of a family. The irregularities of Mbh *triṣṭubh* metre approach the vedic rather than later classical models. I suggest that the long tradition of free improvisation accounts in greater part for the 'fluidity' of the epic text as compared with the rigidly fixed veda or Pāṇinian *aṣṭādhyāyī*, though all three were orally transmitted for a while, and the two last for a much longer period than the growing epic. Vyāsa's stepping out of the role of poet to direct the actual characters of the epic may indicate some sort of stage-direction and the acting of scenes to accompany the recitation; this would account for the miming of Bhārata-yuddha episodes in Balinese tradition, derived from South-east India.

## TRISIRAS AS PURE MYTH

12. The proposition must now be considered that all Rgvedic stories are pure myth, from which no historical information is to be derived. The very survival of a myth indicates the existence of a class of people interested in repeating it till such time as it came to be recorded. Generally, in primitive societies, this implies connection with ritual and the priesthood that survives by performing that ritual. The existence of an early written version of the Rgveda is extremely unlikely, though not absolutely impossible; Indic as well as extra-Indian Aryans had had violent contact with ancient literate civilizations. Writing was unnecessary at the intermediate pastoral and pioneering stage, from which settlements gradually arose to develop into kingdoms of an entirely different type. The priesthood was all the more necessary, and there is no reason to doubt the generally accepted theory of an entirely mnemonic transmission of the oldest veda in its early days. The point, however, is not material in our case.

Identification of ancient city ruins in the Indus valley with Dasyu cities destroyed by Aryans can no longer be stigmatized as Euhemeristic. Thus, the ritual that developed at the earliest period could not be the Yajurvedic-Brahmanic rite but something connected with, or influenced by, these clashes. The later veda preserves little or no trace of this, even in symbolic form, simply because the social, political, and economic situation had changed completely. Looking specifically at the story of Indra (or Trita-Thraetona) striking off the three heads of Tvāṣṭra, we find its narration and survival almost a casual feature of the Rgveda. Later vedas use it only to introduce more prominent stories, such as the killing of Vṛtra, which motivate purification and Soma ceremonies. Therefore, the initial ritual, if any, has faded. Yet we have the three or four-faced god and several three-headed beasts on Mohenjo-Daro seals, as well as broken images with a human torso and one or more head-sockets. Moreover, the *trimūrti* continues to this day, with a totally different theology, as representing a deity synthesized from three later gods, of whom the four-headed Brahmā is one (though allotted only one of the three heads). Finally, there is now no striking off the heads of the image, which shows that both ritual and myth follow changes in the relations of production. If the Tvāṣṭra story indicates any Aryan ceremonial, it can only be the killing of a priest by the king, for priestly gentes continue to derive their name from Tvāṣṭra, even from his severed heads; the line of descent from Brahmā at the end of Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad iv. shows two Tvāṣṭras. But the only other such parallel story is the striking off a horse's head from Dadhyañc Ātharvan (also in that line of descent), which head continues to be immortal and prophetic in lake Śaryanāvant, and from which perhaps Indra fashioned a powerful weapon, like Samson from the jawbone of an ass (Brhaddevatā iii.22-23; Rv. i.84.13-14; Sat.Brāh.xiv. i.i.18-25). This is the exact opposite of what has been propounded about such



myths<sup>1</sup> : That they represent the periodic sacrifice of a king. Here, instead of the priest sacrificing the king, it is the god-king who beheads his own priest. This cannot be taken as yet another Brahmin inversion, for the vedic priesthood grew steadily in power, and there is no reason for it to have taken a step against its own inviolability. The killing of Vṛtra might conceivably be related to a periodic human sacrifice, seeing that *vṛtra* also denotes dark non-Aryan enemies; whence some ritual for victory over them, or sacrifice of prisoners after a battle, would not be unlikely. For Tvāṣṭra, no such explanation seems to be possible.

Study of the Iranian counterpart Azi Dahāka shows us that we have to do with a non-Aryan king or priest-king. The motif of an initially monstrous king is strong enough to reappear in India down to Śiśupāla, king of a historical people Cedi. He is three-eyed, which is really equal to three-headedness, as will be seen, and four-armed at birth; killed by a later god, the dark Kṛṣṇa, after many trespasses have been forgiven. It is possible to conclude, following the reasoning of those who favour such analysis, that *the myth portrays, in its initial stages, the killing of a pre-Aryan priest-king somehow connected with the later Indo-Aryan priesthood*. The killer does not succeed to, but *retains*, sovereignty over the Aryan pantheon. There is nothing like a sacred marriage connected with the story, and the patriarchal society of the Ṛgveda does not allow anything of the sort to be fitted in. Later antagonism between *kṣatriya* and *brāhmaṇa* can explain neither the formation of the story nor its Iranian version, supplying at most a cause for its repetition, or for the usurpation by Bṛhaspati of some of Indra's saga. Thus, the "ritual" is at best adopted from the pre-Aryans, which would normally imply adopting some of the priesthood therewith.

It seems much more reasonable to admit what has already been demonstrated for Greece<sup>2</sup>: That conflict between gods indicates conflict between two

<sup>1</sup> A.M. Hocart : *Kingship* (London 1927) ; Lord Raglan : *The Hero* (London 1930). I am sorry to say that Hocart's evidence comes from a much later (for India) period, and has been reported in a fashion that needs correction. Raglan's analysis also seems incomplete, for I can show from personal experience how real historical characters have had myths attached to their names without any corresponding ritual or drama to account for the transference of older stories. Attention has to be paid to the class of people among whom the myth is current, and also to the pre-existence of a written tradition, or of other classes, which may provide the raw material for folklore. Yet these two works contain much that is suggestive and valuable, in contrast to the works of diffusionists like W.J. Perry.

<sup>2</sup> George Thomson : *Aeschylus and Athens* (London, 1944) ; *Studies in Ancient Greek Society : The Prehistoric Aegean*, (London 1949). But the direct analogue is not possible with the material we are now discussing. Indrāṇī, the wife of Indra, is a very late addition to the Ṛgveda, and the great female deities like Durgā-Pārvatī, Lakṣmī, etc are much later. Umā in the Ṛgveda does not appear to have any connection with the later goddess whose physical merging into the hermaphrodite Śiva indicates just what was shown for Greece, seeing the position she still occupies as Durgā, an eastern mother-goddess. The female deities of the Ṛgveda appear negligible, or local, like the dawn goddess *usā*, the goddess of birth Sīnīvālī, or the river goddesses led by Sarasvatī. I suggest that at the early stage, the invaders had an overwhelming victory. Only later did they find it necessary to admit these older elements, along with the people who preserved that culture or its remnants. Otherwise, we should have a course of development the very reverse of that generally found, from the patriarchal back to matriarchy. Then, why the least Aryanized of India's primitive tribes have the matriarchal system would be difficult to explain. My suggestion would also account for the fact that many very old legends, such as those connected with the flood, appear only at the post-vedic stage. What synthesis lies back of the multiple-headed Indus valley images cannot be analyzed from available sources, but undoubtedly, they had composite deities also. My own explanation follows in the next section.

or more cultures which were thereafter fused. In India, this fusion did not go to the extent of continuing the urban life of the older period, though that was essentially what other Aryans did further to the west. Had the amalgamation achieved nothing more than the formation of a helotage (the *śūdra* caste) from the conquered black Dasyus, there would be no such indelible mark left upon the Brahmin priesthood and tradition. Moreover, there is ample evidence for the existence of dark-skinned Brahmins in antiquity, the possibility being also admitted by Buddhists (*Dīgha Nikāya* 4) but not by Brahmins from the northwest (*JBBRAS* vol.23, 1947, pp.39-46); such clear evidence of racial admixture did not lead to any loss of caste. This completes the alternative line of reasoning, bringing us to the same point as before.

### ŠURVIVALS OF MOTHER-RIGHT IN THE R̥GVEDA

13. The question of matriarchy\* and group-marriage has only been skirted in the previous sections. I now propose to show that even in our oldest available documents there exists clear evidence to support our arguments, without violence to logic and with improved meaning. Such re-interpretation is necessary as the original simple meaning had become incomprehensible in the intervening millennia of a totally different form of society. Following the vedas, epics, purāṇas, gṛhya-sūtras, and smṛtis in chronological order, we find at times a reversal in the accepted sequence of development. Matriarchal features appear later, as for example *strīdhana* (property inherited in the female line), and recognition of consanguinity on the mother's side. These are due not to retrogression in the means of production but to absorption of the remaining pre-Aryans by comparatively peaceful methods. Matriarchy and the most primitive forms of exogamy are known to survive only among the least Aryanized of India's tribes. The leading R̥gvedic gods Agni, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Mitra have no real consorts, for Varuṇānī, Agnāyī etc. (like the male Sarasvatī for Sarasvatī) are palpable fictions which never took hold; the noticeable fact is that they should have been thought necessary at all. The slightly better drawn Indrānī (x.86) never establishes herself in the pantheon. Viṣṇu develops his supreme importance only in the later period when he has already married the sea-born Lakṣmī. Śiva-Rudra can become the great god because of his wife Pārvatī; he has often to appear as a hermaphrodite assuming half her body, so essential is her cult. The conclusion is irresistible that these divine marriages not only represent the fusion of the invaders with a set of predominantly ma-

---

\* This is treated to some extent (for modern Dravidian India) by O.R. Ehrenfels : *Mother-Right in India* (Oxford 1941). The author's citations of our oldest sources : re perfunctory, second-hand, and irrelevant or inaccurate because of consequent misinterpretation. The comparison on pp.180-81 Ehrenfels believes to have been Nayar civilization at its height is particularly superficial and misleading, the supposed features not being exclusive.

triarchal pre-Aryan peoples, but even that the absence of such cult-fusion helps Buddhism push the older unmated vedic gods into the background, in spite of the grip maintained by vedic ritual. For direct reference to an earlier stage without forbidden degrees of marriage, we seem to have Ait. Brāh.iii.33.1 which speaks of everything as created out of the incest of Prajāpati with his own daughter. The incest, without naming Prajāpati, goes back to RV.x. 61.5-7, and must be much older. Ait. Brāh.vii.13 even says, "therefore a son his mother and sister mounteth," though such promiscuity must have belonged to a distant and repugnant past of the contemporary Aryans as shown by the Yama-Yamī dialogue. The sun-god Pūṣan is called 'lover of his own sister' in vi.55.4-5., while the gods actually marry him off to the sister Sūryā in vi.58.4. Both the Achaemenians and the Śākya had traditions of brother-sister marriages. In the Ṛgveda the minor canine goddess Saramā (x.108 ; i.62.3; i.72.8; iii.31.6; iv.16.8; v.45.7-8) finds stolen<sup>1</sup> cows as messenger of Indra. The termination *mā* was not understood by the later priesthood except as a negative injunction, depriving the name of all meaning. But the list of female deities or demons whose names so terminate increases immediately after the Ṛgvedic period : Umā, Ruśamā (Pañc. Brāh. xxv.13.4), Rumā, Pulomā, Ramā, Halimā (Mbh.3.217.9) etc; they are undoubtedly mother-goddesses<sup>2</sup> at one stage of their mythological existence. In x. 40 the levirate is clearly mentioned : *ko vā śayutrā vidhaveva devaram maryam na yoṣā kṛṇute sadhastha ā*, but the very word for widow and the institution of widowhood shows us that the Aryans had long shaken off their own traditions of group-marriage and mother-right. Therefore, the direct references from the Ṛgveda which are cited in the following paragraphs are much more likely to represent absorption of pre-Aryan custom than an uncalled-for reversion to ancient practice.

My main argument is the following. A single child with many mothers is characteristic of a society in which group-marriage is the rule. "A child gives the name of mother not only to her who bore him but also to all his maternal aunts. A European not familiar with these relationships is surprised when he hears a native (of New Britain) boasting of having three mothers. His confusion is increased when the alleged three mothers stoutly assert '*amital qa kava iva*, all three of us bore him'". This is quoted from J.G. Frazer's *Totemism And Exogamy*, (London 1910, vol. 1, p.305, footnote), being itself apparently taken from P.A.Kleintitschen's *Die Küstenbewohner der Gazelle-halbinsel*. We shall now proceed to show just this attitude in some hymns of the Ṛgveda.

<sup>1</sup> Saramā's tracking down cattle stolen by the Paṇis is unquestionably a later story, to explain a legendary strife. No Ṛgvedic hymn which refers to Saramā says anything about the cattle having been stolen. The goddess presents a blunt, aggressive demand from Indra to the Paṇis, apparently for their own cows, in x. 108. The other references generally show that 'cows' can be understood as rivers; best of all in vi. 10.8.

<sup>2</sup> For Mā as a mother-goddess, cf. Amarakośa I.1.20; what connection exists with the Hittite goddess of the same name is not known.

It may be objected that a plurality of mothers may indicate only polygamy. A moment's thought will make it clear that in a polygamous gentile patriarchal society, the father's *gens* and the mother's *name* become important; this is precisely what we do find in the oldest Pāli literature.

The usage in question—a single child with several mothers—is found explicitly in vii.2.5 : *pūrvā śiṣum na mātārā rihāne* ; i.140.3 : *tarete abhi mātārā śiṣum* ; and in viii. 99.6. The plural or dual 'mothers' in the sense of parents is excluded, though even this would be highly significant. Pāṇini vi.3.33 : *pitarāmātārā ca chandasi* only shows that the compound could be used in the dual sense, as in Rv. iv.6.7 : *na mātārāpitarā*, to mean parents. By itself, *mātārā* as dual would at least indicate two mothers, which suffices for our purpose. Where a specific interpretation is given (as occasionally by Sāyaṇa) we have the parents as the sky and earth : *dyāvā-pṛthivī* ; but both are feminine and x.64.10 calls the great sky also a mother : *uta mātā bṛhad-divā*. The common Sanskrit appellation for ancestors is *pitarah*, 'fathers', showing how natural patriarchal usage had become. Correspondingly we have the masculine 'father sky' *dyaus-pitā* (i.90.7; i.164.33 etc.) as in Greek, and Latin. Why should this one god common to all known branches of Aryan mythology appear as a *mother* so often in the R̥gveda ?

Soma had several mothers: *tvām rihanti mātarah* (ix.100.7 ; also ix.111.2). In fact he was born of seven mothers, ix.102.4 : *jajñānam sapta mātarah* who are sisters, ix. 86.36 : *sapta svasāro abhi mātarah śiṣum navam jajñānam*. These seven mothers are presumably the seven rivers : (i.158.5) *nadyo mātṛtāmāḥ* ; i. 34.8 : *sindhubhiḥ sapta mātṛbhiḥ*. The point is that they jointly bear a single child while there is no mention at all of the father in spite of the patriarchal nature of the society in which these hymns were chanted ; note again that the Greek rivers were masculine. Further, though a river is very useful to pastoral nomads, the superlative worship in *ambitame nadītame devitame sarasvatī* (ii.42 16, "o most excellent of mothers, rivers, goddesses, Sarasvatī") seems characteristic of the pre-Aryan riparian urban cultures. The connection between *ambā*=mother and *ambu* or *ambhas* for water is neither fortuitous nor to be explained psychoanalytically in this case but a fundamental attitude to be expected among people whose entire civilization owed its birth and its existence to the river. The primary sanctity of a river like the Ganges as a cleanser of sin belongs to a later period of Brahminism, though apparent even in x.17.10. These river-mothers might be meant in the famous line *yahvī ṛasya mātārā\**

\* In this phrase, the dual *mātārā* is taken to mean night and Ugas in i.142.7 and v. 5.6 ; the sky and earth in the remaining cases, but without internal evidence in ix. 102.7. This classical interpretation shows its own inconsistency, strengthened by ix.33.5 which has the plural, along with the adjective *brahmī*, which is unique in the RV and may therefore indicate connection with special Brahmin cults. Further, Sāyaṇa gives *udakasya* as an alternative meaning for *ṛasya* even on v. 5.6 ; vi. 17.7 ; x. 59.8, river-mothers, perhaps of two rivers. By itself, *yahvī* is used in the sense of river, quite unambiguously in ii. 35. 9 ; iii.1.4, 6, 9 ; i.72. 8.—and even of the seven rivers.

(v.5.6;x59.8;ix.102.7;ix.33.5;i.142.7, and vi.17.7 with the added qualification *prāṇe* = ancient) 'the never-resting mothers of truth' (or justice, *ṛta*; but note that Sāyaṇa on v.12.2 takes *ṛta* to mean water). The cult of the Mothers did exist, and was very ancient; if derived from that of the rivers, one would expect the process to have taken place among people who still retained the matriarchal stamp.

The most interesting fact about such a multiplicity of mothers is its consequent effect upon the child. The deified fire, Agni, is also born of several mothers (x.91.6), specifically the seven blessed mothers (i.141.2), without an apparent father. We remark parenthetically that the fire-drill and the simpler fire-plough have only two essential components, the 'parents' of the fire generated by their friction; the comparison with human procreation is so natural that both portions of the *araṇī* are not generally regarded as mothers. Fire is described in one place as seven-tongued (iii.6.2), a natural figure of speech for the flames. But one hymn earlier we have Agni as with seven heads (iii.5.5.) : *pāti nābhā saptaśṛṅṣāṇam agniḥ*, in one of his forms at least. Thus it is logical to find that Soma also has seven faces or mouths in ix.111.1.

The correspondence of one head per mother can be still better proved from a myth which has been recorded later, namely the birth of Skanda (Mbh. 3.214.ff). He has actually six mothers, the Pleiades, whence his name Kārttikeya. But his other name *ṣaṣmātura* clearly means "with six mothers", and he has six heads: one from each mother as we are told explicitly in most accounts of his birth. The Mahābhārata story is a bit mixed in its details, saying that he was fathered by Agni who was enamoured of the seven wives of the seven ṛṣis (identified with components of Ursa Major; these 'husbands' are presumably later, seeing that they never gain the importance of the Mothers, nor of the collective vedic gods like the Maruts, Rudras, Vasus). Agni's rejected wife *svāhā* (merely the sacrificial call) then successively assumed the form of six of these seven ladies to couple with the fire-god; the combined semen was poured into a lake to generate the dread Skanda. The duplicated ṛṣi-wives are cast out on suspicion of unchastity, and adopt Skanda as his mothers. The great Mothers (of the whole universe, but seven in number) are asked to kill Skanda, but they too adopt him jointly instead. The story is an obvious effort to combine several versions into one while retaining and explaining away the six mothers with no particular father. Skanda being identified with a form of, or oftener as son of, Rudra, we have a still later purāṇic story wherein he is begotten of the seed of Śiva which Pārvatī forces upon Agni in her anger at the interruption; this forms a sort of prefatory addition to the other story.

Sarasvat is variously given as son or consort\* of the river goddess Sarasvatī, just as Dakṣa is both father and son of Aditi. The confusion, natural consequence of development from matriarchal cults, suggests the identification of Tvāṣṭṛ with Tvāṣṭra, at least in principle. Gods with several heads would be associated with the cult of several confluent rivers. To continue: Ṛgvedic Viṣṇu has a wife (*sumajjānaye viṣṇave*, i.156.2) and several mothers (iii.54.14) while viii.20.3 equates him to Rudra and the much later Viṣṇu-smṛti (1.56) calls him Saptasīrṣa without explanation. Both blocks of the firedrill can simultaneously be mothers of Agni (v.11.3). Thus Agni or his heavenly representative the sun (born of heaven and earth) is *dvimūlā* in i.31.2; i.112.4; iii.55.6-7; he is three-headed in i.146.1 but more naturally four-eyed in i.31.13 and *divisīrṣa* in the Śabdacandrikā. The elephant god Gaṇeśa is also *dvaimūtura* (Amarakośa 1.1.140). The Bṛhadratha king Jarāsaṃdha was born of two sisters, in two separate halves later joined together (Mbh.2.16.12-40), which rationalizes the two-mother tradition. Rāma emulates Indra and Thraetona in killing a three-headed demon Trisīras (Raghuvamśa 12.47; also Rāmāyaṇa). The Śabdakalpadrūma refers to Kālikāpurāṇa 46 where Hara is called Tryambaka for having been born of three mothers. Böhtlingk-Roth give Trisīras as an epithet of Kubera (whose three legs relate him to the triskelis and the three-strider *tripāda* Viṣṇu) as well as Śiva who in turn is made four-headed in the Tilottamā episode (Mbh. 1.203.26) and known both to literature as well as iconography in a five-headed *pañcamukha* form. Nāgas with two, five, seven heads occur in Mbh. 1.52.20, carrying us back to Mesopotamian seals. Even the old Aryan god Varuṇa is once called four-faced (v.48.5 *caturāṇika*), and again lord of his seven sisters (viii.41.9) thus substituting for some pre-Aryan deity; Indra as *saptahā* (x.49.8) was too open an enemy (cf. viii.96.16) for this assimilatory treatment. The names Navagva and Daśagva, meaning of nine and ten parts respectively, give clear indication of ancient Ṛgvedic groups of nine or ten priestly clans of equal status with the oldest Aṅgirasas (x.62.6; the Navagvas are against Indra in i.33.6?). Yet each is used often in the singular as representing the conjoint group. This could easily arise from or give rise to the many-headed representation, as for example the 'first-born' ten-headed Brāhmaṇa of AV.iv.6.1, or a seven-faced Daśagva Aṅgiras in iv. 51.4. Tvāṣṭṛ creates Bṛhaspati from the essence of everything (ii.23.17) and also creates fire (x.2.7; x.46.9; ii.1.5); but the latter embryo is generated by ten maidens (i.95.2) symbolizing the fingers that twirl the fire-drill, reminiscent of the Vestals. Agni is three-headed and *saptaraśmi* in i.146.1, just as Tvāṣṭra is in x. 8.8; Bṛhaspati is *saptaraśmi* and *saptāśya* in iv. 50.4. As for mother-right, Namuci's army recruited women (v.30.9) to the derision of Indra. The Mothers join Skanda's army (Mbh. Vulgate, Śalyaparvan), and have still to be propitiated by his worshippers. The cow-mother Pṛeṇī is mother of the Maruts, and in

\*Qingu, taken as consort by Tiamat after the killing of Apsu, seems also to be Tiamat's son (Langdon's translation of the *Enuma Eli*, ii.34, ii.41). Similarly Tamnuz and Ishtar.

viii. 101.15 'mother of the Rudras, daughter of the Vasus, sister of the Adityas' yet never rises high in the pantheon. In view of this rather mixed theogony, not much can be made of the phrase *śivas tvaṣṭā* in the āprī-hymn v.5.9, for Indra is called *śivatama* in viii. 96.10. Indra is also *ajātaśatru* (v.34.1 ;viii.93.5), *bhīma* in many places, even *viṣṇu* in i.61.7 and perhaps *rudra* in viii. 13.20. That is, many of the later god-names are pure adjectives so that the fact of a god having a good Sanskrit or Indo-Aryan name does not necessarily make him a god of the Aryans from his beginnings. Even the solitary occurrence of *lakṣmī* (x.71.2) in the Ṛgveda is as an adjective.

The clumsily patched Skanda legend with its gaping seams is particularly revealing. Without it, we should have assumed, as is done for the modern *trimūrti* and Dattātreyā, that a multiple-headed god is merely the fusion of that number of male deities, i.e. of their cults, leaving the ancient Brahmā unexplained. But let us first look at the completed patriarchal transformation of such multiple parentage. The introduction of Agni in the Skanda story takes us only half-way. We have noted that two great gotra-founder ṛṣis with fictitious names, Vasiṣṭha and Agastya (also known as Māna), are born of the combined seed of Mitra and Varuṇa, from a jug or a lotus: two fathers but no mother; this method of generation appears down at least to the *siddha* Bhartṛhari, Bharatarī or Bhartri of the Kānphāṭā sect. The essential is the denial of a mother,\* these great men being *ayonisambhava*, not of woman born. I suggest that this ingenious device became necessary because a patriarchal society had invaded and conquered by force, but these ṛṣis became nevertheless 'originators' of *gotras*. Later the seven sages are born directly of the four- (in some versions even five-) headed god Brahmā, without female intervention. Yet the names of the 'seven' are seen to be discordant among the various lists, while the one sage not born of Brahmā at all is *kusika* Viśvāmitra, the only true Aryan gotra-founder. He is really a stranger to the seven, even though his book in the Ṛgveda is permeated by Jamadagni influence. Now not only do the seven mothers, the river-goddesses, continue to hold their high position in the Ṛgveda, but the divine representative of the priesthood, Bṛhaspati, is several times called seven-faced (iv.50.2 etc; Sāyaṇa often takes *saptāśya* as denoting the Maruts, fathered by Rudra). The conclusion is that *a pre-existing matriarchal form of society shows itself through the myth of several mothers jointly giving birth to a god with an equal number of heads or faces. These*

\* An even better example is the Mandhātṛ legend. The king is perhaps mentioned in i.112.13, viii.40.2; the word elsewhere in the Ṛgveda means 'pious'. In the Mahābhārata (3.126) we have his father Yuvanāśva drink enchanted water in Bhṛgu's āśrama (an inversion of bathing in the enchanted pool), and so become pregnant, the son being ultimately born through his side and (in the vulgate Droṇaparvan 82) suckled on Indra's finger. This is a complete repudiation of maternity, as with the couvade. Mbh.3.127 has rationalization, by reversal, of the many mothers. Jantu is born jointly of king Somaka's hundred wives, then sacrificed in a *yajña*, by which each of the hundred mothers conceives a complete son. (cf. Kathāsaritsāgara 13.57-65). The Southern recension substitutes *jyēṣṭhāyām samajāyata* for *strīṣāṃ samajāyata*, rationalizing still further.

mothers, as representatives of local tribes or gentes, are later replaced by eponymous Brāhmin ancestors, the *ṛsis*. Indus valley seals show male animals (single and multiple) which may be interpreted as totemic. The polycephalic god is also present and the civilization has therefore *started before and gone beyond* the stage of pure worship of his mothers, the rivers or other goddesses. It will be objected that so highly developed a civilization could not have retained matriarchal tradition to such an extent as our analysis requires, but actually there is nothing against it. The main conditions are a relatively undisturbed and rapid advance from the primitive to the urban stage, made possible by the river and its isolating desert; further, the comparative unimportance of fighting and the warrior in the development of the civilization. Archaeology, though incomplete, supports this, whatever the means (naked force, or religion) adopted by that extinct society to preserve internal class divisions; the transformation of the many-headed god into Brhaspati and Brahmā suggest religion rather than violence. Even in the epic period, rivers continue to bear heroic sons; the great figure of the Mahābhārata war, Bhīṣma, is born of the Ganges and a human father, Śaṃtanu.

Turn now to Trisīras Tvāṣṭra. This personage is supposedly the son of the ancient creator-god Tvāṣṭṛ; a priest—though the father is nowhere called that—whence it is a sin to kill him; and in some way an immortal god-priest or else the hymn describing his own killing (x.8) could not have been ascribed to him against all reason by the Anukramaṇī. The 'father' Tvāṣṭṛ is later enrolled among the Ādityas as well as among the Rudras; he shares the adjective *viśvarūpa* with his son, but has not three heads. Nothing is said about the mother who bore so remarkable a son, one who is associated with rivers in legend. One would guess that he is the son of three mothers, whether also of Tvāṣṭṛ or not. It cannot be a mere accident that we find another (nameless) god with three mothers, of whose father there is no mention at all, and who is early identified with Rudra. This is Tryambaka = 'with three mothers', worshipped according to vii.59.12: *tryambakam yajāmahe sugandhim puṣṭivardhanam*. The Taitt. Sam. i. 86 calls Tryambaka Rudra and tells us that his animal is the mole. Later we have Tryambaka translated as 'three-eyed', for which there is no philological support but which does serve to eliminate the three mothers; it also explains the three eyes of Rudra-Śiva. We have another reference in ii.56.5: *ula trimālā vidatheṣu samrāṭ*, to an unnamed god (probably Agni) who has three mothers and is supreme in the divine assembly; the hymn, it will be recalled, deals with several triple deities. This *trimālā* is glossed by Sāyaṇa as *trayāṇām lokānām nirmālā*, creator of the three worlds; which, though silly as an explanation, gets rid of the awkward and incomprehensible three mothers while showing that the reference was supposed to be to some high god. The conclusion is again that one branch of culture contributing to the



Ṛgveda had a living tradition in which maternity could be joint and paternity quite unimportant. It is for this reason that Tvāṣṭra's severed heads could give names to Brahmin gotras, for they must actually represent matriarchal gentes to begin with. It is not the mother-goddess who has three faces, like Hecate or Artemis among the Greeks, but the son born of three mother goddesses. Just what ancient chain connects our myth to the story of Herakles killing the three-headed Geryon, capturing Kerberos, or decapitating the Hydra we cannot consider here, for we have not as yet enough glyptic evidence from the Indus and Mesopotamian regions.

This can be rounded out by other myths, usually dismissed as trivial but which can now be seen to form connective tissue in the body of vedic mythology. Indra drank the *soma* by force in Tvaṣṭr's house (iii.48.4; iv.18.3) thus presumably thrusting himself upon Tvaṣṭr's tribe, or depriving him of power, or both. It is thought by some that the father whom Indra took by the foot and smashed (iv.18.12) is Tvaṣṭr himself, but this is highly improbable. Indra's father is nowhere named, (nor is Indra reported anywhere as assaulting Tvaṣṭr) and his mother is doubtful too, though he is enrolled among the growing list of *ādityas*, sons of Aditi. The later *āditya* par excellence is the sun, while the first is Varuṇa; both Tvaṣṭr and Indra occur in a continuously expanding list, and it is not clear that Aditi was a pre-Aryan mother-goddess, being once even cited in the masculine gender. The later Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa (xii.5.18-22) reports that Indra suffered from eye-disease after killing Vṛtra, and was lulled to sleep by the daughters of Tvaṣṭr. These daughters generate fugitive Indra from the cows in which he had hidden himself; parallel versions show that the cows themselves are the daughters of Tvaṣṭr, so that the whole story is perhaps one of rebirth from several mothers, i.e. adoption. One may note that Durgā is called Tvāṣṭī (for Tvāṣṭrī) in the still later Devī-purāṇa, and a living cult of Tvaṣṭr (or his son?) seems indicated only by the Pāraskara Gṛhya-sūtra ii.15.5. The adoption of Indra by the daughters of his predecessor is meaningless by patriarchal standards; either Tvaṣṭr or his son would have had to adopt the war-god for its validity. What we do see is that not only did Aryans adopt some pre-Aryan Indic gods but assimilation in the opposite direction was also attempted. As for the three heads of Tryambaka becoming three eyes, we have a distant parallel in the Tvāṣṭra story. Śat. Brāh. iii.1.3.12-17 says that a special eye-ointment from mount Trikakud must be used. Trikakud means with three peaks, points (or even heads). The mountain was the transformation of Vṛtra's eye after that demon had been killed by Indra; but Vṛtra was the demon created by Tvaṣṭr to avenge his sons's murder by Indra. So the cycle is complete. The variant details of this and other similar narratives show that some background story, which could not be forgotten was adopted by several different people at various times for vedic purposes; the principle is the same as that of the starred reading in text-criticism, on a different level. It is at least plausible that this faded craftsman-

god *Tvaṣṭṛ* who is identified as creator with *Varuṇa* (iv.42.3) as well as the later *Prajāpati*, who appears as a *Rudra* as well as an *Aditya*, and who is connected with multiple-headed gods from *Trīśiras* to *Bṛhaspati*, is not originally an Aryan god with fixed position in the pantheon, but a figure from the pre-Aryan background which could not be suppressed altogether in spite of his conflict with *Indra*.

The three possible mothers of *Trīśiras* could very well be the original of a female tried which occurs repeatedly in the *Rgveda* (i.188.8 ; ii.3.8 ; iii.4.8 ; x.110.8), *Iḍā*, *Sarasvatī* and *Bhārati*. The last is the earth, perhaps here as a special goddess of the *Bharatas*. *Iḍā* is also the mother of *Agni* (iii.29.3) as personification of the lower wood of the fire-drill. Most important of all, she is the mother of *Purūravas* (x.95.18). Since this *Purūravas* is virtually the founder of the lunar line of kings, we have a complicated set of purāṇic legends making *Iḍā* a son of *Manu*, but transformed into a woman by stepping into a grove sacred to *Pārvatī*. The original legend had to be twisted, presumably because a line in the patriarchal world cannot be properly founded through a daughter of *Manu*. We have already seen the prototype of the metamorphosis in the ambivalence of the sky-god or goddess and such changes of sex are far too common. *Indra* himself (i.51.13 ; AV vii. 38.2. Śat.Brāh. iii.3.4.18) ; *Āsaṅga-Plāyogī* (*Sāyaṇa* at the beginning of viii.1, and the *Sarvānukramaṇī* ; *Bṛhad-devatā* vi.41) ; *Nārada*, king *Bhaṅgāsvana* (*Mbh.* 13.12, vulgate) and the 'monkey' *Rikṣarajas* (in a probably apocryphal addition to the *Rāmāyaṇa*) after bathing in enchanted pools ; *Sikhandīn* who killed *Bhīṣma* (originally and significantly named *Ambā* in a previous birth) all change sex, and sometimes both beget and bear children. The roots go very far back, for the *Tiraścī* of viii. 95.4 is the seer of the hymn, but the name is feminine in declension and masculine in usage. The grove and particularly the pool which effect the metamorphosis (which will be found even in a tale of the *Arabian Nights*, and the *Qissah Hālim Tār*) has sometimes been equated to the fountain of youth, as with the rejuvenating immersion of *Cyavana*\*. The actual transformation in the first instance being from male to female, they are much more likely to represent places dedicated to the mysteries and initiation rites connected with the cult of one or more mother-goddesses—places which men could enter only to emerge emasculated, performing thereafter the functions of women, presumably in the service of the goddess. Some such pre-patriarchal initiation must be the proper explanation of the verses at the end of viii.33, particularly 19: *strī hi brahmā babhūvitha* 'thou, O priest, art become a woman.'

The foregoing, I believe, will suffice to show how correct and useful a guide Engels's "Origin Of the Family, Private Property And The State" has

~~High, silly~~ *Cyavana* story is not a parallel at all, for the rejuvenation is performed by the *Aśvins* and the immersion itself is later (*Mbh.* 3, 123.15-17) than the *Rgvedic*, where the sage regains his youth by having his skin drawn off like a garment (7. 74.5 ; i.116.16). This is the older version, based upon a primitive wonder at a snake's casting off his skin to appear rejuvenated.

