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GIACOMO BENEDETTI

THE FIGURE OF THE R̥ṢI  
IN THE PAÑCAVIṢĀ BRĀHMAṆA

In the Pañcaviṣā Brāhmaṇa, as is natural for a Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda, the R̥ṣi is essentially the person who could see a Sāman, a Vedic ‘melody’ or ‘chant’, and who received a specific benefit from that. Of the four aspects of the R̥ṣi, namely 1) the priestly function in the sacrifice; 2) the creation and recitation of religious poetry and his connection with the sacred Word; 3) the divine inspiration and the faculty of spiritual vision; 4) his ethical and ascetic traits, we could say that the second, the creation of religious poetry is the main aspect, but, as usual in the Brāhmaṇas, through the ‘vision’ (the third aspect). However, since the Sāman has a *r̥c* or R̥gvedic ‘strophe’, as a base,<sup>1</sup> we should think that what is ‘seen’ by the R̥ṣi are not words in a metrical form (as in the vision of Mantras), but the way to arrange in a Sāmavedic chant some verses already seen and revealed by a R̥gvedic R̥ṣi. Having seen this chant, the R̥ṣi can apply it in the ritual (the first aspect). About the fourth aspect, it is sometimes said that before seeing the Sāman, the person in question had to practice *tapas*, the ascetic austerities which are able to bring a man (particularly a

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<sup>1</sup> As observed by Caland 1931, p.IX: “From a verse (a *r̥k*) a sāmān is made by musical notation, by certain changes as stretching of vowels, and repetition of syllables, and by inserting different sounds and syllables, sometimes whole sentences or verses. These insertions are called *stobhas*.” In *ChUp* 1.6.1.1-4 it is said: 1. *īyam evark / agniḥ sāmā / tad etad etasyām r̥cy adhyūḍhaṃ sāmā / tasmād r̥cy adhyūḍhaṃ sāmā gīyate* “This (earth) is the R̥k. Agni is the Sāman. This Sāman rests on that R̥k. Therefore the Sāman is sung as resting on the R̥k.” The same formula is repeated for the following sentences (1.6.2-6).

Brahmin) to the status of a R̥ṣi, stimulating, in this context, the vision of the Sāman apt to accomplish the wished purpose. Ethically, the R̥ṣis here do not find a special characterization as adherents of a righteous conduct, or of truth: there are some cases of bad actions which lead to grief or remorse in the R̥ṣi.

We can recognize a general narrative schema in the stories which tell how the Sāman appeared: a Brahmin (in few cases a Kṣatriya) has a problem or a desire; finally he finds the solution or the fulfillment of his desire through a particular Sāman, which he applies and which can be applied also by the present sacrificers, following the R̥ṣi's model and obtaining the same benefits. We can divide these stories according to the different benefits sought and obtained: one category are worldly benefits, which deal mainly with availability of food, rain, multiplication of cattle, of progeny, with the achievement (or recovering) of wealth and power and with more abstract and general purposes like stability, way of escape from a danger, and fulfillment of wishes. Another category is the inner benefit of overcoming grief subsequent to a bad action. Then, there is the religious benefit (which surely brings also worldly advantages) of union or covenant with Indra, which appears as the main deity in the Pañcaviṃśa. In the opposite sense, there is the repelling of demons or of evil. Finally, there is the supreme goal of the religion of the Brāhmaṇas: the attainment of the 'heavenly world' (*svarga loka*), which is alluded many times in connection with R̥ṣis by a particular formula which we will analyze below.

### **The R̥ṣi as Purohita**

Among the worldly benefits, at the most basic level there is the search for food. For a Brahmin R̥ṣi, it seems that the surest way to obtain constant nourishment was the office of Purohita, the official priest of a king and his family, with the function and

dignity of a minister and counselor, and of spiritual protector of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between the position of Purohita and food is affirmed in three cases, that of Dadhyañc (XII 8,6), that of Vāmadeva and that of Brhaduktha. In the first case, Dadhyañc, an important mythical figure already in the R̥gveda, is the Purohita of the gods (*dadhyañ vā āṅgirasō<sup>3</sup> devānām purodhānīya āsīd*), a role which shows the gods in the same position as the Kṣatriyas, and the Ṛṣi as a spiritual support of the deities themselves.<sup>4</sup> It is not said that he searched for food, but that the function of Purohita is the food of the Brahman (*annaṃ vai brahmaṇaḥ purodhā*), identifying the Purohita as the Brahman, the supervisor of the sacrifice, as was the norm at

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<sup>2</sup> See Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, pp.5-8; Mitchiner 2000, p.218; cf. AB VII 26, where the Purohita is described as ‘half of the self’ (*ardhātma*) of the Kṣatriya; VIII 24, where it is affirmed that the gods do not eat the food of a king without a Purohita, and that the Purohita, if pleased, brings the protector to the heavenly world and to power; VIII 25, where it is said that the Purohita is towards the king like the ocean surrounding the earth, and that a king who has a Purohita endowed with this knowledge (*evam vidvān*), protector of the kingdom (*rāṣṭragopa*) has no deaths of the young in his realm, and he does not die prematurely; VIII 27, where it is stated that a king who has the same kind of Purohita obtains friendship and repels the enemy; MBh 12,75.1-2, where it is said that the king preserves the kingdom, while the Purohita preserves the king, and that the king protects the subjects from the visible dangers, the Purohita from the invisible ones.

<sup>3</sup> To call Dadhyañc an *āṅgirasa* is considered an oversight of our author by Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.339, since normally he is called *ātharvaṇa* ‘son of Atharvan’. But, as observed by Pargiter 1922, p.218, the Purāṇic genealogies give the first Āṅgiras the name Atharvan, as the progenitor of all the Āṅgirasas, then the two epithets can be regarded as equivalent. Cf. RV 1.139.9, where Dadhyañc is mentioned immediately before Āṅgiras. It is also noteworthy that the role of Purohita of the Gods is normally assigned to Brhaspati, who is also associated with the Āṅgirasas, and called *āṅgirasa* in RV 4.40.1; 6.73.1; 10.47.6; 10.68.2 (cf. Schmidt 1968, pp.52-61).

<sup>4</sup> On the opposite side, in PB VII 5,20 Uśanas Kāvya (the famous Bhārgava Ṛṣi) is the Purohita of the Asuras, who is invited by the Gods to come to their side through the wish-cows, by giving the Auśana Sāmans which are identified as wish-cows. In this case, the Sāman is a revelation of the Gods, granted in order to obtain the priestly support of the Ṛṣi.

For the tradition of Uśanas as Purohita of the Asuras, cf. MBh 1,71. According to R.P. Goldman (followed by Talageri 2000, pp.176-179), Uśanas and the Bhārgavas were the priests of those Aryans who had the Asuras as their deities, that is, of the Iranians; as observed by P.O. Skjaervø (Erdosy 1995, p.170), we find in the Avesta a *Kauii Usan/Usaḍan*, which “both by name and by legends associated with him corresponds to *Kāvya Uśanas* of Indian tradition.”

least in the late Vedic times.<sup>5</sup> Finally, it is said that the verses related to Dadhyañc<sup>6</sup> are used in order to get proper food (*annādyasyāvaruddhyai*). The same final formula (*annaṃ vai brahmaṇaḥ purodhānnādyasyāvaruddhyai*)<sup>7</sup> is present in the other two cases, only it is preceded by the observation that by means of the respective Sāmans that they discovered, Vāmadeva and Brhaduktha came to the ‘Purohita’s office of food’ (*etena vai vāmadevo 'nnasya purodhām agacchad; brhaduktho vā etena vāmneyo 'nnasya purodhām agacchad*).

<sup>5</sup> See Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, pp.7-8, where are cited the opinions of Geldner (*Vedische Studien*, 2, p.144; 3, p.155), who maintains that the Brahman was since the beginning the Purohita, and of Oldenberg 1917, pp. 380-1, who holds instead that the Purohita was originally the Hotṛ.

<sup>6</sup> SV II.263-265=RV 1.84.13-15 (Caland 1931, p.288). They deal with the myth of Indra using the bones of Dadhyañc to fight with 99 enemies (*vṛtrāṇi*). According to a version of the myth, that we find in the Mahābhārata (MBh 9,50.5-33), but which can go back to the Rgveda (Söhnen 1989, p.422) those bones were taken from the body of the Rṣi, who accepts to give his life in order to fight the demons; according to another version, that we find in late Vedic texts (see below), the bones came from the horse’s head of the same Rṣi in the lake Śaryaṇāvāt. The detail of the horse’s head is already present in RV 1.116.12; 1.117.22; 1.119.9, and it is explained by this story: Dadhyañc received from Indra the revelation of the ‘honey’ (*madhu*), which in ŚB XIV.1.1.18-25 is identified with the secret of the Pravargya rite. Indra added that this revelation should not be shared with others, otherwise he would have cut the head of Dadhyañc. The Aśvins, desirous of knowing the mystery of the honey, find a stratagem to save the life of Dadhyañc: they substitute his head with a horse’s head, which was so the head cut by Indra, then substituted it again with the original head. The horse’s head fell then in the lake Śaryaṇāvāt, which Sāyaṇa places in the region of Kurukṣetra (actually, Sāyaṇa quotes the text of the Śātyāyanins, very similar to JB III 64, see Oertel 1897a, pp.16-18 = Hettrich-Oberlies 1994, pp.29-31; cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.364). Cf. BD III 18-24, where it is also said that this head emerges to grant boons. This detail shows that the lake was a site of pilgrimage, and the myth related to Dadhyañc is a testimony of the power attributed to the relics of a Rṣi. As it is said in the tale quoted by Sāyaṇa and in JB III 64, Indra, needing help to fight the Asuras, and having learned that Dadhyañc had gone to heaven, searched just for a ‘remaining limb’ (*pariśiṣṭam aṅgam* in the version of the Śātyāyanins, simply *pariśiṣṭam* in JB III 64), and found it in the horse’s head in the lake Śaryaṇāvāt in the mountains. About the geographical collocation, it is remarkable that in the Mahābhārata Dadhīca (which is the epic form of the name) is placed on the river Sarasvatī (cf. Söhnen 1989, p.423, n.15).

<sup>7</sup> This (apart from the correction °*rudhyai* for °*rudhyai*) is the lection given by the edition of Vedāntavāgīśa, whereas in the edition of Chinnaśwami Śāstri we find for XIII 9,27 *purodhā annasyāvarudhyai* and for XIV 9,38 *purodhām annādyasyāvarudhyai*. In this case, we have followed the lections of the first edition, which appear as more correct and which follow the same formula, as is typical of the style of this Brāhmaṇa.



Apart from this general consideration about the concrete utility of the office of Purohita for a Brahmin R̥ṣi, in the Pañcaviṃśa we find some interesting stories about the role of R̥ṣis as Purohitas of kings, a role subject also to some dangers, as we see in the tale about Vṛṣa (XIII 3,12):

*vṛṣo vai jānas tryaruṇasya traidhātvasyaikṣvākasya  
purohita āsīt sa aikṣvāko 'dhāvayat brāhmaṇakumāraṃ  
rathena vyacchinat sa purohitam abravīt tava mā  
purodhāyām idam idṛg upāgād iti tam etena sāmṇā  
samairayat tad vāva sa tarhy akāmayata kāmasani sāma  
vārśaṃ kāmam evaitenāvarundhe*

“Vṛṣa, the son of Jana, was the Purohita of Tryaruṇa, son of Tridhātu,<sup>8</sup> of the Ikṣvāku lineage. This Aikṣvāka was riding out, he tore apart a young Brahmin with (his) chariot. He (the king) said to the Purohita: «Under your office of Purohita such a thing occurred to me!» (Vṛṣa) through this melody revived him: that verily he had desired at that moment. The Vārśa melody is wish-fulfilling, (he who lauds) by means of it fulfils his wish.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This is a very interesting detail, because a similar name we find in the Purāṇic Aikṣvāku genealogies as reported by Pargiter 1922, p.145: Tridhanvan, father of Trayyāruṇa (of the generation no. 30 from Manu). In JB III 94, it is *tryaruṇa traivṛṣṇa aikṣvāka*, the same in Sāyaṇa’s paraphrase of the Śātyāyani Brāhmaṇa, whereas in Sāyaṇa’s commentary to RV 5.2 (ascribed to Vṛṣa Jāna), we read even *trasadasyu*, probably since in RV 5.27 *trasādasyuh*, *traivṛṣṇo* and *tryaruṇas* appear as names of the same king. Now, according to Keith Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p. 333, *trasādasyu* was there the patronymic of Tryaruṇa, that is ‘descendant of Trasadasyu’, who is acknowledged as a king of the Pūrus *ibidem*, p.327, on the basis of RV 4.38.1 and 7.19.3. Pargiter 1922, pp.133-4 accepts this description, but he distinguishes the Trasadasyu Aikṣvāku (of the generation no. 23) from the Trasadasyu Bhārata (which is a branch of the Pūrus), contemporary of Divodāsa (of the generation no. 63), stating that the Brahmanic sources confound the two (*ibidem*, pp.168-170). It is possible that the PB draws here on the genuine Aikṣvāku tradition (where maybe *traidhātva* was the original form), whereas the other sources confound the Aikṣvāku with the Paurava king. The constant insistence on the Ikṣvākus in the different versions, the observation of the JB about the ancient times (see n.11), along with the fabulous nature of the tale (possible sign of antiquity of the personages involved), can be testimony that the lection of the PB is right, that what is meant here is the remote king of the Solar lineage with his Purohita.

<sup>9</sup> The translations are elaborated by the present author, although drawing on the translations of Caland 1931.

This story is present also in BD V 14-16 and in an extended form in JB III 94-95,<sup>10</sup> where we find the interesting information that in the ancient times the Purohitas used to drive the chariots for their kings in order to supervise that they did nothing wrong.<sup>11</sup> This is a particular function of the Purohita, that shows his role as a moral supervisor of the king, and his constant presence also in the rides with the chariot out of the palace. The accusation made by the king here in XIII 3,12 seems to imply this supervision, but also a sort of magical influence of the Purohita on the events happening to the king, whereas in the version of the Jaiminīya Vṛṣa is accused (by the king and by the assembly of the Ikṣvākus) simply because he was driving the chariot, a fact that here is not attested. In the same version, the reviving of the child is done after the accusation in the assembly in order to find an escape, while here it seems that Vṛṣa revives him immediately after the accident, as in the version of the Bṛhaddevatā.<sup>12</sup> In any case, the Rṣi is here capable to give again the life through a Sāman: a similar power is attributed to Uśanas in MBh 1,71.9, where it is called *vidyā saṃjīvanī* and is used to revive the Asuras fallen in the battles against the Gods. In the Pañcaviṃśa this secret lore does not receive a particular name, the Sāman employed (named *vārśa*) is identified generally as ‘wish-fulfilling’ (*kāmasani*), whereas in the version of the Jaiminīya, is characterized as ‘medicine, expiation’ (*bheṣajam prāyaścittis sāma*), as well as ‘wish-fulfilling’ (*kāmasani*). In JB III 95 it is also said, as usual, that Vṛṣa ‘saw’ the Sāman (*sa etat sāmāpaśyat*), while here it is only implied. Then, it was believed that the vision of the Rṣi creates an instrument which opens virtually infinite possibilities, even overcoming death and restoring life: probably only Rṣis were considered able to attain such a result, but every desire seems to

<sup>10</sup> See Oertel 1897a, pp.21-23 (= Hettrich-Oberlies 1994, pp.34-36).

<sup>11</sup> *purā rājabhyaḥ purohitā eva rathān saṃgrhṇanty aupadraṣṭryāya - ned ayaṃ pāpaṃ karavad iti.*

<sup>12</sup> In this version, Vṛṣa does not use a Sāman, but Atharvavedic formulas: BD III 16ab so ‘*tharvāṅgirasān mantrān drṣtvā saṃjīvyā taṃ śiśum*’ “He, having seen Atharvavedic Mantras, and having revived that child...”

have the possibility of fulfillment through the sacred chant found and transmitted by the R̥ṣi.

An analogous power has the R̥ṣi Suśravas, mentioned in XIV 6,8 as the father of Upagu, Purohita of Kutsa:

*upagur vai sauśravasaḥ kutsasyauravasya purohita āsīt  
sa kutsaḥ paryaśapad ya indraṃ yajātā iti sa indraḥ su-  
śravasam upetyābravīd yajasva māśanāyāmi vā iti tam  
ayajata sa indraḥ puroḍāśahastaḥ kutsam upetyābravīd  
ayakṣata mā kva te pariśaptam abhūd iti kas tvā yaṣṭeti  
suśravā iti sa kutsa aurava upagoḥ sauśravasasyodgāyata  
audumbaryā śiro 'cchinat sa śuśravā indram abravīt  
tvattanād vai medam idrg upāgād iti tam etena sāmṇā  
samairayat tad vāva sa tarhy akāmayata kāmasani sāma  
sauśravasaṃ kāmam evaitenāvarundhe*

“Upagu, son of Suśravas, was the Purohita of Kutsa,<sup>13</sup> son of Ūru. This Kutsa cursed anyone who should offer a sacrifice to Indra. Indra (once) having met Suśravas, said: «Offer a sacrifice to me, I am hungry indeed.» He offered to him and Indra, with the sacrificial cake in his hands, having approached Kutsa, said: «He has offered a sacrifice to me, what has become of your curse?» «Who has offered the sacrifice to you?» «Suśravas» (Then) this Kutsa, son of Ūru, cut off, with a branch of the Udumbara-tree, the head of Upagu, son of Suśravas, as he was chanting (the Sāman). Suśravas said to Indra: «From your

<sup>13</sup> This Kutsa Aurava is present here and in JB III 198-201, where he is considered to be born from the thigh (*ūru*) of Indra (and that is probably why he is called also here in the PB *tana* ‘offspring’ of Indra), he had the same aspect as Indra, and he became the charioteer of the god. But he approached many times the spouse of Indra, so that he was finally driven away; however, in order that he may live, he was allowed to become a king. In this role, he forbids to offer sacrifices to the gods, but Indra convinces Upagu to offer to him, in exchange for the (heavenly?) world. After three such offerings, Kutsa kills Upagu and throws him in the water. Suśravas searches for his son in the water, and there he sees Indra in the guise of a Rohita fish. He lauds Indra with the Sāman and then the son is revived (it is noteworthy that Indra is seen here as the responsible for the resurrection of the child).

‘Kutsa’ is often mentioned in the R̥gveda, but he is called Ārjuneya in RV 4.26.1; 7.19.2; 8.1.11. However, in RV 1.53.10 we find a Suśravas helped by Indra and a Kutsa subjugated by the king Tūrvayāna thanks to Indra (see Keith-Macdonell 1922, vol. I, p.15 and pp.161-2; cf. RV 2.14.7; 6.18.13; 8.53.2).

offspring<sup>14</sup> has this sort of thing happened to me!» He (Suśravas) through this Sāman revived him. That, forsooth, he had wished at that time. A wish-fulfilling Sāman is the Sauśravasa, by it one fulfils one's wish.”

In this case, the R̥ṣi is not the Purohita but the father of the Purohita, and the child revived is his son himself, but the process of revivification appears to be the same as in the story of Vṛṣa, and also here the vision of the Sāman is only implied. According to the interpretation of Sylvain Lévi,<sup>15</sup> it is Indra who revives the child in exchange for the offering of food; this interpretation has the advantage to explain the accusation of the R̥ṣi, whose function is not clear in this context, but the interpretation of Caland, assigning to Suśravas the act, is probably the right one, because Suśravas is the subject of the previous sentence, and because in the subsequent sentence it is clear that he had desired the resurrection of the child, through the Sāman which bears his name, as in the parallel example of the Vārśa Sāman. Apart from this, what is impressive here is the need of the god Indra for the food offered by the R̥ṣi, and the direct and free relationship of the R̥ṣi with Indra, allowing even to accuse the god (indirectly, since 'his offspring' is explicitly the responsible). As is typical of the Pañcaviṃśa, Indra is the central deity and the main object of attention by the R̥ṣis.

Another parallel with the story of Vṛṣa is XV 3,6-7, because we find again the R̥ṣi as Purohita, and apparently in the chariot with the king:

6. *bharadvājasyādārasṛḍ bhavati* 7. *divodāsaṃ vai*  
*bharadvājapurohitam nanājanāḥ paryayanta sa*

<sup>14</sup> The ablative *tvattanād* has been translated by Caland “From thy part”, maybe influenced by the translation of Lévi (1898, p.146) “C’est à cause de toi”. But *tana* means “offspring, posterity”, and probably the legend, reported in the JB, of the birth of Kutsa from Indra was widely known. So, the accusation of Suśravas appears as belonging to a mentality centered in the lineage, where the faults of the son can be held against the father.

<sup>15</sup> See Lévi 1898, p.146, where he translates the sentence *tam etena sāmṇā samairayat* with “Indra se servit d’une mélodie pour le ressusciter.” And he adds: “Le miracle d’Indra ne fait que payer le service rendu.”

*upāsīdad r̥ṣe gātum me vindeti tasmā etena sāmṇā gātum  
a-vindad gātuvid vā etat sāmānena dāre nāsr̥ṇmeti tad  
adārasr̥ṣo 'dārasr̥ṣtvam vindate gātum na dāre dhāvaty  
adārasr̥ṣā tuṣṭuvānaḥ*

“There is the Adārasr̥ṣ of Bharadvāja. Various people (enemies) surrounded Divodāsa, who had Bharadvāja as his Purohita; he approached (his Purohita saying): «R̥ṣi, find me a way out (of this)!» For him, by means of this chant, he found a way out. This chant is a way-finder indeed. (They thought:) «By means of this, we have not run into a crack (*dāre nāsr̥ṇma*)<sup>16</sup>», this is the reason of the name Adārasr̥ṣ. He who lauds through the Adārasr̥ṣ finds the way out (of his difficulties), he does not run into a crack.”

Here the Purohita seems to be involved in a context of battle. According to JB III 244,<sup>17</sup> Bharadvāja was the Purohita of Kṣatra Prātardana in the Battle of the Ten Kings, surrounded by the Ten Kings at Mānuṣa.<sup>18</sup> We do not know a Kṣatra<sup>19</sup> in the context of the Battle of the Ten Kings, and the name seems also unknown to the Purāṇic genealogies, where his father or ancestor Prātardana is only a king of Kāśi, son of Divodāsa.<sup>20</sup> In

<sup>16</sup> For the meaning of this phrase cf. Bodewitz 1999, pp. 212-3, who objects against the translation of Caland “we have not fallen into a pit”, suggesting that “here the pitfall is metaphorical and *gātu* denotes a way out, but the metaphor is clearly based on finding a passable ‘road’ (*gātu*) without the risks of crashing with the chariot due to fissures or splits in the terrain.” He observes that the verb *sar* does not mean ‘to fall’, and that *dāra* is glossed by Sāyaṇa with *śvabhra*, which denotes “a hole or cleft into which animals flee when seeing a human being” in ChU I 9,7, therefore not “an enormous pit into which a man or a man with horse and chariot may fall.”

<sup>17</sup> See Caland 1931, p.394. In Raghu Vira’s edition, the tale begins in III 245.

<sup>18</sup> Mānuṣa is a famous place in Kurukṣetra, mentioned as a Tīrtha in MBh 3,81.53-55, where black antelopes, harassed by a hunter, plunged into the lake and became human, therefore the name (st.53: *tato gaccheta rājendra mānuṣam lokaviśrutam yatra kṛṣṇamrgā rājan vyādhenā paripīḍitāḥ avagāhya tasmīn sarasi mānuṣatvam upāgatāḥ*).

<sup>19</sup> A man called Kṣatra is mentioned only once in the Ṛgveda (4.44.10), in a list which includes R̥ṣis like Manasa or Avatsāra (cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.40 and p.202; vol. II, p.128).

<sup>20</sup> According to Pargiter, Prātardana belongs to the generation no. 41 from Manu, while Sudāsa, the hero of the Battle of the Ten Kings, belongs to the generation no. 68. According to the Anukramaṇī, Prātardana Daivodāsi is considered author of RV 9.96, and in KauU III 1 it is said that Prātardana Daivodāsi went to the world of Indra through his death in battle (see Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.30).

the Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā (XXI 10) Pratardana is a king who received the kingdom from his Purohita Bharadvāja,<sup>21</sup> so we can acknowledge a relationship between Bharadvāja (or the Bhāradvāja Gotra) and the kings of Kāśi Divodāsa and Pratardana, but we do not know how to relate them to the Ten Kings, who fought against the Bhārata king Sudās.<sup>22</sup> However, in the Pañcaviṃśa there is no allusion to that battle: in order to find an historical context we should rather resort to the epic tradition which tells that Divodāsa of Kāśi was attacked and defeated by the Vaitahavyas, so that he took refuge in the hermitage of his Purohita Bharadvāja, who performed then a sacrifice in order that the king may have a son able to defeat his enemies, namely Pratardana.<sup>23</sup>

In the passage of our Brāhmaṇa, the request to the Ṛṣi is directly inserted in the context of the battle, as it must be, since the name of the Sāman (*adārasṛt*) means ‘not running into a crack’, involving a very concrete danger. The king invokes his Ṛṣi Purohita to get an immediate escape (*gātu*) from the danger to fall (with the chariot) into a crack or pit, pressed by the enemies. So, the Ṛṣi is supposed to have the power to find a way of escape from difficult situations, obviously through the Sāman, which is then called *gātuvīd* ‘way-finder’.<sup>24</sup>

Actually, the ideal Purohita in the early Vedic times had to be a Ṛṣi, because only a Ṛṣi could have a successful relationship with the gods and the power to protect and foster the king with his kingdom. This is particularly clear in XV 5,24, dealing with the particular power of the Ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha as a Purohita:

*ṛṣayo vā indraṃ pratyakṣaṃ nāpaśyan sa vasiṣṭho  
'kāmayata katham indraṃ pratyakṣaṃ paśyeyam iti sa*

<sup>21</sup> See Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.29 and p.98. Cf. Pargiter 1922, p.154.

<sup>22</sup> The only hint could be the mention of *pratṛd* as the name of the patrons in RV 7.33.14, in a hymn actually dealing with the Battle of the Ten Kings, but made by a Vasiṣṭha.

<sup>23</sup> See MBh 13,31.22-28.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. RV 9.107.7, where Soma is called *gātuvittama ṛṣir vipro vicakṣanāḥ* “the best way-finder, Ṛṣi inspired, endowed with penetrating vision”. There the stimulating beverage is called Ṛṣi and the ‘best way-finder’, since it grants vision and inspiration, and also because he is able to invite the Gods (st.7c: *devavītama*), so that the ‘way’ appears here as the passage to the heavenly abode of the Gods.

*etan nihavam apaśyat tato vai sa indram pratyakṣam  
apaśyat, sa enam abravīd brāhmaṇam te vaksyāmi yathā  
tvatpurohitā bharatāḥ prajāniśyante 'tha mānyebhya  
ṛṣibhyo mā pravoca iti tasmā etān stomabhāgān abravīt  
tato vai vasiṣṭhapurohitā bharatāḥ prājāyanta sendram  
vā etat sāma yad etat sāma bhavati sendratvāya*

“The Ṛṣis did not see Indra face to face. Vasiṣṭha desired: «How could I see Indra face to face?» He saw this Nihava (chant) and then, he saw Indra face to face. He (Indra) said to him: «I will reveal to you a Brāhmaṇa, so that the Bharatas, with you as Purohita, will be multiplied, but do not tell the other Ṛṣis of me.» He told him these Stomabhāgas, then the Bharatas with Vasiṣṭha as Purohita were multiplied. This Sāman is associated with Indra. That there is this Sāman, (is) for the association with Indra.”

This privilege of Vasiṣṭha is mentioned also in TS III.5.2 and KS XXXVII 17,<sup>25</sup> with the difference that there instead of *bharatāḥ* there is *prajāḥ* ‘the progenies’ in a general sense. Then, the Pañcaviṃśa appears here as more historically detailed, and maybe more connected with the environment of the Bhāratas. This aspect can be seen as a sign of antiquity of this Brāhmaṇa.<sup>26</sup> Anyhow, the passage is very significant in our context because it says that the Ṛṣis could not see Indra: they are not depicted as omniscient, they have their own limits, and only Vasiṣṭha, because of his special interest in direct knowledge of this god, comes to have this perception, through a

<sup>25</sup> Cf. also BD V.156cd-7ab, where it is said that Vasiṣṭha could see Indra, invisible to other Ṛṣis, through ascetic practice (*adrśyam ṛṣibhir hīndram so 'paśyat tapasā purā*), then the god revealed to him the ‘portions of Soma’ (mistake or misreading for Stomabhāgas: *somabhāgān atho tasmāi provāca harivāhanaḥ*). Cf. Krick 1975, p.62, where the special relationship of the Vasiṣṭhas with Indra (and as a consequence their excellence as Purohitas) is already traced in RV 7.33.

<sup>26</sup> We can add the description of the Satras on the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī (which later are no more mentioned due probably to the drying up of the two rivers and to the shift of the centre of the Vedic culture; Witzel 1987, p.193, observes that “PB is very well informed about geographical details of *Kurukṣetra*, better than any other middle Vedic text”), and the absence of the united Kuru-Pañcālas, that are the main political entity in the other Brāhmaṇas (cf. Pargiter 1922, p.326).

Sāman which he has seen. It is not the god who reveals himself, but the Ṛṣi who has to search for him and to chant a special Sāman in order to pierce the veil which hides the god. Indra does not want to be perceived, on the contrary, when he is discovered, he reveals special formulas in exchange for the silence of the Ṛṣi.<sup>27</sup> So, the Ṛṣi is not at all like a prophet in this story: he does not speak on behalf of the god, and the god does not ask him to do so. On the other hand, he receives the sacred word of the Stomabhāgas from a revelation made by the god, while the reference to the Bharatas appears as a divine election of this royal race, and Vasiṣṭha as the intermediary of the divine power of Indra. Moreover, the purpose of the Sāman is the union with Indra (*sendratva*), detail which suggests a kind of proto-Bhakti, undermining the general idea that the religion of the Brāhmaṇas is not interested in the gods but only in sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> The research of the union or association with Indra is so important that it creates a special abstract substantive to describe this union, and a special adjective (*sendra*) to designate the Sāman of Vasiṣṭha. This Ṛṣi, thanks to Indra's revelation, acquires a special value as Purohita, showing that it was important which Brahmin occupied that role, and that a Ṛṣi like Vasiṣṭha, credited with a personal relationship with Indra, was

<sup>27</sup> As is observed by Lévi 1898, p.148: "Impuissant à lutter contre la force supérieure qui le contraint à paraître, Indra n'a pas d'autre ressource que d'acheter la discrétion du ṛṣi."

Cf. KS XXXVII 17: *rṣayo vā indram pratyakṣam nāpaśyaṃs taṃ vasiṣṭha eva pratyakṣam apaśyat so 'bibhed itarebhyo marṣibhyaḥ pravakṣyatīti so 'bravīd brāhmaṇam te vakṣyāmi yathā tvatpurohitāḥ prajāḥ prajāsiyante 'tha metarebhya ṛṣibhyo ma pravoca iti* "The Ṛṣis did not see Indra face to face. Vasiṣṭha saw him face to face. He feared (thinking): «He will tell of me to the other Ṛṣis.» He said: «I will tell you a formula, so that the people with you as Purohita will multiply. But do not tell the other Ṛṣis of me.»"

<sup>28</sup> Cf. XII 12,10. *etena vai vasiṣṭha indrasya premāṇam agacchat premāṇam devatānām gacchati vāsiṣṭhena tuṣṭvānah* "By means of this (Sāman) Vasiṣṭha reached Indra's favour. One who lauds through the Vāsiṣṭha (Sāman) reaches the favour of the deities." About *sendratva*, cf. IX 2,22, where there is the story of Kutsa and Luśa contending in invoking Indra, and the impressive stratagem of Kutsa of tying Indra by the testicles. About the centrality of Indra, cf. also V 4,14, where Ṛṣya reaches the abode of Indra; IX 2,6, where Kaṇva achieves the covenant with Indra (*indrasya sāmvidya*); IX 4,14, where Jamadagni gains the attention of Indra against the other Ṛṣis; XIII 5,15, about the place 'Indrakrośa' where Indra called Viśvāmitra and Jamadagni indicating cows; XIV 4,7 (analyzed below); XIV 5,15, where 'all beings praised Indra', except Śarkara, a Śiśumāra-Ṛṣi (a Gangetic dolphin, one of the few cases of an animal Ṛṣi).



more effective for the prosperity of the family of the king. As we know from TS III.5.2, this effectiveness was attributed also to his descendants, since there it is declared that the Vāsiṣṭhas are to be assigned as Brahman priests in order to multiply or procreate.<sup>29</sup> The Brahman is seen as the equivalent of the Purohita in non-royal contexts, and in default of an actual R̥ṣi, also a descendant of a celebrated R̥ṣi could be good enough.

### The R̥ṣi and fecundity or prosperity

The connection of Vasiṣṭha with procreation and multiplication is also present in another tradition, which we find mentioned three times in the Pañcaviṃśa (IV 7,3; VIII 2,4; XXI 11,2). We cite here the first passage, IV 7,3:

*vasiṣṭho vā etaṃ putrahato 'paśyat sa prajayā paśubhiḥ  
prājāyata yad eṣa pragātho bhavati prajātyai*

“Vasiṣṭha saw this (Pragātha chant) after his son(s) had been slain, he multiplied in progeny and cattle. That is the reason why this Pragātha exists, for procreation.”

The story here implied is reported also in TS VII.4.7.1 and KB IV 8, where Vasiṣṭha not only desires to multiply in progeny and cattle, but also to overcome the Saudāsas, who are responsible for the death of his son(s).<sup>30</sup> A more detailed tale we find in JB II 392<sup>31</sup> and in the Anukramaṇikā on RV 7.32.26,<sup>32</sup> which tells that Vasiṣṭha's son Śakti was cast into a fire by the Saudāsas. Another version is that of BD VI 28 and VI 44, where

<sup>29</sup> *vasiṣṭhapurohitāḥ prajāḥ prājāyanta tasmād vasiṣṭho brahmā kāryaḥ praiva jāyate.*

<sup>30</sup> In both versions we find the same adjective *hataputra*, which can be used either for a single son or for a plurality of sons.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Oertel 1897a, pp.47-8 (= Hettrich-Oberlies 1994, pp.60-1), where it is presented as JB II 390.

<sup>32</sup> This stanza is the Pragātha here mentioned, see Caland 1931, p.60.

it is said that his hundred sons<sup>33</sup> were killed, because of the Saudāsas or of Sudāsa himself transformed into a demon due to a curse. According to epic and Purāṇic versions of the legend,<sup>34</sup> the killer is Kalmāṣapāda Saudāsa, king of Ayodhyā, who, being possessed by a Rākṣasa, becomes a cannibal and devours Śakti with the other sons of Vasiṣṭha. Then the Ṛṣi tries to kill himself in the waters of the rivers Vipāśā and Śatadru, without success. Pargiter, comparing the different versions and the traditions related to Śakti, asserts that this Ṛṣi lived at the time of Sudās Paijavana, and not in that of Kalmāṣapāda,<sup>35</sup> concluding that there are two occurrences: the madness of the king of Ayodhyā, who killed the sons of his priest ‘Vasiṣṭha’, and the killing of Śakti alone in Sudās’s reign. So, the Mahābhārata and Liṅga Purāṇa would have combined both occurrences into one story which deals with Kalmāṣapāda Saudāsa. Actually, the mention in the Vedic versions of the ‘Saudāsas’ in the plural, and also the traditions reported by the Mahābhārata about the attempts of suicide in the rivers of Pañjāb, do not harmonize with the legend of the Saudāsa of Ayodhyā, and it is also probable that the Vasiṣṭha of the Vedic versions lived in the environment of the Bhārata king Sudās, because that was the main Vedic historical context. We can also observe that there are not hymns of Vasiṣṭhas in praise of Sudās’s son Sahadeva or grandson Somaka,<sup>36</sup> and this can be due to the fact that the family of Vasiṣṭha was persecuted by the descendants of the king, maybe on instigation of a Viśvāmitra, who is described as magically attacked by Śakti Vasiṣṭha in BD IV 112-113,

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<sup>33</sup> In both strophes we find the phrase *hate putraśate*. This strange compound suggests the suspect that it comes from a confusion about the irregular compound *putrahata* that we find here in the PB (cf. KS XII 10:172.12).

<sup>34</sup> See Pargiter 1922, pp.207-210, who cites the LiP (I 63,83; 64,2-47) and MBh 1,176; 177; 182, 6891-6912 (corresponding to 1,166; 167 and 1,173.3-24 of the Pune edition).

<sup>35</sup> Kalmāṣapāda belongs to the generation no. 54 according to Pargiter’s genealogies, and Sudās Paijavana to no. 68.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Pargiter 1922, pp.236-7.

during a sacrifice of Sudās.<sup>37</sup> We are in the context of the feuds between Brahmanic Gotras (particularly between Vāsiṣṭhas and Viśvāmitras) typical of the early Vedic period, feuds in which apparently also royal families are involved.

Becoming victim of the Saudāsas and bereft of sons, the R̥ṣi Vasiṣṭha here seeks a way to get again offspring and wealth, and as a consequence he sees the Pragātha chant, and so he multiplies again, both in the human and in the animal realms. This shows that the power of fecundity created by the R̥ṣi through his sacred chant acts on both levels. The same result we find in VIII 2,4, but through the *janitra* (a Sāman bringing procreation) of Vasiṣṭha.<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, there is also a specific power limited to the animal realm. We find many passages presenting the R̥ṣis as desirous of cattle (*paśukāma*).<sup>39</sup> We can cite an example (VIII 5,12):

*athaitad āndhīgavam andhīgur vā etat paśukāmah  
sāmāpaśyat tena sahasraṃ paśūn asrjata yad etat sāma  
bhavati paśūnām puṣṭyai [...]*

<sup>37</sup> BD IV 112b-113a: *Sudāsaś ca mahāyajñe śaktinā gāthisūnave // nigr̥hītaṃ balāc cetaḥ so 'vasīdad vicetanaḥ /*

“In a great sacrifice of Sudās, to the son of Gāthi (Viśvāmitra) the consciousness was forcibly seized by Śakti, (so that) he fell senseless.”

<sup>38</sup> Differently, in XXI 11,2 Vasiṣṭha sees a four-day-rite, and the result is a social uplift from his condition of decay: *vasiṣṭhaḥ putrahato hīna ivāmanyata sa etam apaśyat so 'gram paryaid yo hīna iva manyeta sa etena yajeta* “Vasiṣṭha, after his sons had been slain, thought himself low (or bereft), he saw this (rite, practiced it), and he attained the summit. He who thinks himself low (or bereft) should sacrifice with this (rite).”

<sup>39</sup> Besides the passage here quoted, see also VIII 9,4 (Harivarṇa), XIII 11,15 (Karnaśravas), XV 5,14 (Dāvasu), all obtaining the result of generating a thousand head of cattle. In IX 2,18, the R̥ṣi Devātithi is not described as desirous of cattle, but only as wandering hungry with his sons in the wilderness, where he finds cucumbers which, by the Sāman, miraculously become spotted cows; then the Sāman is used for the flourishing of cattle (*devātithiḥ saputro 'śanāyamś carann araṇya urvārūṇy avindat tāny etena sāmnoṣāśdat tā asmai gāvaḥ pṛṣṇayo bhūtvodatiṣṭhan yad etat sāma bhavati paśūnām puṣṭyai*).

“Then (there is) this Āndhīgava(-sāman). Andhīgu,<sup>40</sup> desirous of cattle, saw this Sāman; by means of it he begot<sup>41</sup> a thousand head of cattle. That there is this Sāman, (is) for the flourishing of cattle.”

Andhīgu, through the Sāman that he sees, acquires an extraordinary proliferation of cattle, which is clearly the main kind of wealth in the Vedic society. The Ṛṣi is here in a pastoral context: like many Brahmins of his time, he keeps cattle and desires to multiply it. Agricultural wealth is not considered, even if obviously agricultural products were used for the offerings made of barley or rice. It is known that Brahmins were not normally allowed to be engaged in agriculture,<sup>42</sup> and we can say that in the mentality of the Brahmin<sup>43</sup> who redacted this Brāhmaṇa, only wealth made of cattle was important.<sup>44</sup> Here, we see that the way to increase this wealth is not only the gift of

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<sup>40</sup> This Andhīgu according to JB I 165 is a Śāktya, then a Vāsiṣṭha, but according to the Anukramaṇī is Andhīgu Śyāvāśvi (son of Śyāvāśva, thence an Ātreya), author of RV 9.101.1-3, which are exactly the verses employed for the Śyāvāśva and Āndhīgava Sāman. Therefore, he is a Ṛgvedic and Sāmavedic Ṛṣi at the same time. About his name, -gu is a typical second member of a compound, meaning ‘cow’, and *andhī-* means normally ‘blind’, in composition with verbs, coming from *andha* ‘blind, dark’: in this case, it would mean ‘one whose cows are blind or dark’. Otherwise, we propose to connect *andhī* with *andhas* ‘herb, juice, food’, and with *puramdhi*, ‘liberality, abundance’, term for which has been offered the etymology ‘bloom of plenty’ (see Mayrhofer 1996, p.146; Oberlies 1989, p.78, n.37): in this case *andhī-gu* could mean ‘having flourishing cows’, in perfect harmony with what is said in this Brāhmaṇa.

<sup>41</sup> Caland 1931, p.175, translates ‘created’, thus giving a more miraculous appearance to the story, but I think that ‘to beget’ or ‘to generate’ would be more suitable to the context, indicating that Andhīgu fostered the birth of many calves, not that he created them *ex nihilo*. The basic meaning of *srj* is ‘to let go, let flow’, so it should refer to an act which goes along with a natural process. Cf. also Varenne 1982, pp.60-62.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. BauDhS I 10,30: “Vedic study impedes agriculture, and agriculture impedes vedic study. A man who is able may pursue both, but if he is unable, he should give up agriculture.” (Olivelle 2000, p.219); GDhS 10.5: “A Brahmin may also engage in agriculture and trade if he does not do the work himself” (Olivelle 2000, p.143); MaS V 83-84.

<sup>43</sup> It is traditionally ascribed to a Tāṇḍya (see Caland 1931, p.XXVI), then the Brāhmaṇa is also known as Tāṇḍya Mahābrāhmaṇa. In the Vaṃśa Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda, we find a Vicakṣana Tāṇḍya, pupil of Gardhabhīmukhā Śāṇḍilyāyana. It is interesting that nine passages above in the genealogy of teachers we find also Dṛṭi Aindrota, who is mentioned in one of the stories of our Brāhmaṇa (XIV 1,12).

<sup>44</sup> In contrast with this, we can observe that the term employed for the prosperity of the cattle, *puṣṭi*, from the root *puṣ* ‘to be nourished, to thrive, flourish, prosper’, probably has to do with the vegetal realm, as *puṣpa* means ‘flower’.

a rich patron (as we know from the R̥gvedic Dānastutis), but also the reproduction of the animals: the result of this process, being always uncertain, is to be fostered through the magic-religious means of the Sāman. The R̥ṣi is here a herdsman, a priest, a poet-musician and a sort of shaman at the same time: he has the power to increase fecundity, but this power is always active only through the hymn or the chant, and the effective chant can be discovered only by a R̥ṣi. Also the full power of the Sāman can be displayed only by a R̥ṣi, but it is partially transmitted to those who can apply it properly, with faith and knowledge about his effect and origin.

On the other hand, we have an analogous effect related to human offspring in XXV 16,3:

*para āhñāras trasadasyuḥ paurukutso vītahavyaḥ  
śrāyasaḥ kakṣīvān auśijas ta etat prajātikāmāḥ  
satrāyaṇam upāyaṃs te sahasraṃ sahasraṃ putrān  
apuṣyann evaṃ vāva te sahasraṃ sahasraṃ putrān  
puṣyanti ya etad upayanti*

“Para, son of Ahñāra<sup>45</sup>, Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa<sup>46</sup>, Vītahavya, son of Śrēyas<sup>47</sup>, Kakṣīvant, son

<sup>45</sup> Para Āhñāra (more often Āṭñāra) is a famous king, mentioned in ŚB XIII.5.4.4 as Hairāyaṇābha, then as a descendant of the king of Ayodhyā Hirāyaṇābha (of the generation no. 83), and in ŚāŚS XVI.9.11 as Para Āhlāra Vaideha. It can be that he was a sovereign of Videha descending from the lineage of Hirāyaṇābha (cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.491).

<sup>46</sup> As already observed above in n.8, Trasadasyu son of Purukutsa is an important ancient king (and hymn-maker, then a Rājārṣi, see Pargiter 1922, p.246) of the Aikṣvāku genealogies, but there is also a Trasadasyu Paurukutsi or Paurukutsya in the R̥gveda (cf. 5.33.8; 7.19.3; 8.19.36), where he appears as a Pūru king. The fact that we find two kings with the same name and patronymic is not uncommon (see Pargiter 1922, pp.130-4), and in this context it can be significant that the Paurava king Suhotra (12 generations before the Purukutsa Paurava) married an Aikṣvāku princess (MBh 1,89.26): this alliance of the two royal races could have induced some Paurava kings to adopt traditional Aikṣvāku names.

<sup>47</sup> This Vītahavya Śrāyasa is present also in IX 1,9, where he is expelled from his dominion like a king, but Sāyaṇa defines him simply as a R̥ṣi and not as a Rājārṣi as in the other similar passages, viz. PB XII 12,6 (about Sindhuksit) and XV 3,25 (about Dirghaśravas), where the text itself speaks of a *rājanyarṣi* or *rājanya r̥ṣi*. Moreover, in TS

of Uśij<sup>48</sup>, these, desirous of procreation, undertook this ‘course’ of Sattras. They prospered in getting each a thousand sons. In the same manner, they who undertake this (rite) prosper in getting each a thousand sons.”

This passage refers to a Sattra of three years, and it reflects a tradition reported also in TS V.6.5.3 and KS XXII 3, where the same names (but in the Kāṭhaka Vītahavya is lacking, cf. n. 47) are present in the context of the Agnicayana, but always in relation with a three-years-sacrifice, and with the result of obtaining thousand sons. There, these famous sacrificers are styled as *prajākāma* ‘desirous of progeny’, here as *prajātikāma* ‘desirous of procreation or propagation’, which mirrors the epithet *paśukāma* ‘desirous of cattle’, found before. Here the effect obtained by the kings and Ṛṣis is assured also to the present sacrificers.

We find again Kakṣīvant in relation to fecundity in XIV 11,17, with a more generic formula:

*kakṣīvān vā etenaśijah prajātiṃ bhūmānam agacchat  
prajāyate bahur bhavati kākṣīvatena tuṣṭuvānah*

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V.4.7.5 and KS XXI 8 we find a Ṛṣi Kaṇva with the same patronymic *śrāyasa*. Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, pp.316-7, where it is said that Vītahavya Śrāyasa is a king in the Yajurvedic passages (TS V 6,5.3 and KS XXII 3), but this is not confirmed by the text, and in Schroeder’s edition of the Kāṭhaka (Schroeder 1900, p.59), the name of Vītahavya is lacking. Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.132, where it is acknowledged that the assumption that the names of these lists refer all to kings is ‘unnecessary’. Also in RV 6.15.2-3, the name Vītahavya seems referred to the Ṛṣi (apparently the same as Bharadvāja in st.3) and not to a king.

<sup>48</sup> This is a famous Ṛṣi Āṅgīrasa, belonging to the generation no. 43, the same as that of Duśyanta, the father of Bharata, according to Pargiter 1922, pp.161-164 and p.191. According to BD IV 24-25, ‘Auśija’ comes from the name of the mother, Uśij, a servant (*dāśī*) sent by the king of Aṅga to the father Dīrghatamas. However, Uśija is also a name of an ancestor of Dīrghatamas in the Brahmanic Vaṃśas (Pargiter 1922, pp.160-1), so that Kakṣīvant, being Dīrghatamas’s son, already had the patronymic Auśija, and the name of the mother in the Bṛhaddevatā can be a guess to explain the appellation. Cf. Schmidt 1968, pp. 58-60 who remarks the use of *uśij*, meaning ‘heischend’ to indicate the fire priest and Agni himself, then suggests that Kakṣīvant Auśija means ‘Sohn des Agni Uśij’. But he apparently ignores the existence of a Ṛṣi Uśija in the genealogies, since he cites only the tradition about the mother Uśij and affirms that “kein Vorfahr namens Uśij bekannt war”.

“Kakṣīvant, son of Uśij, through this (chant) reached procreation and abundance. One who lauds with the Kākṣīvata (Sāman) procreates, becomes rich.”

In this case, we have propagation in the human realm associated with abundance or wealth (*bhūman*); we find the same formula in relation to Udala Vaiśvāmitra in XIV 11,33 and to Kulmalabarhis in XV 3,21.

On the other hand, we have also the case of a R̥ṣi without offspring, in VIII 9,21:

*aṣṭādamṣṭro vairūpo 'putro 'prajā ajīryat sa imāml lokān  
vicicchidvām amanyata sa ete jarasi sāmānī apaśyat  
tayor aprayogād abibhet so 'bravīd r̥ḍhnavad yo me  
sāmabhyām stavatā iti 22. r̥ṣer vā etat prāśodbhūtam  
yad āṣṭādamṣṭre bhavata r̥ddhyā eva*

“Aṣṭādamṣṭra,<sup>49</sup> son of Virūpa, grew old without sons, without progeny. He thought to have broken (the continuity of) these worlds, he in his old age saw these two Sāmāns, (but) he feared that they would not be applied. He said: «He who will laud by these two Sāmāns of mine will prosper!» This is produced by the fervent wish of the R̥ṣi. That there are the two Aṣṭādamṣṭra (chants), (it is) for prosperity.”

Here we see a sort of anguish in the R̥ṣi for his lack of sons: the ascetic way of life of the *saṃnyāsīn* does not seem to be accepted,<sup>50</sup> the procreation of an offspring was apparently felt as the actuation of a cosmic law, for the continuity of the world. Being in a condition of distress, Aṣṭādamṣṭra searches for a

<sup>49</sup> This name means ‘with eight tusks’, and according to the Anukramaṇī he is author of RV 10.111, but his Sāmāns employ as *yoni* RV 10.11.1-3. The patronymic Vairūpa should refer to Virūpa Āngirasa, R̥ṣi of RV 8.43;44;75.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. BauDhS II 11,27-34, which, after having described the customs of the ascetics, asserts that there is only one order of life (the householder or *gr̥hastha*), because no offspring is produced in the others (*brahmacārin*, *vānaprastha*, *parivrājaka*) (II.11.27: *ekāśramyaṃ tvācāryā aprajanatvād itareṣām*); then it is cited TS VI.3.10.5, where the three debts of Brahmins are mentioned: of studentship the R̥ṣis, of sacrifice to the gods, and of offspring to the ancestors. Cf. also AB VII 33, where the R̥ṣi Nārada explains to the king Hariścandra the importance of having a son, explicitly criticizing asceticism.

solution and sees the Sāmans. In this case, we do not have an immediate result of fecundity, probably because of the old age of the R̥ṣi, but he desires at least to leave something useful to the posterity, therefore he proclaims the utility of the two Sāmans. According to Caland,<sup>51</sup> what is meant as produced by the fervent wish of the R̥ṣi (*prāśā-udbhūta*), are these Sāmans, but it can also be the prosperity which is wished as a blessing on the future sacrificers. In both cases, we have here a testimony of a faith in the effect of the R̥ṣi's wish on those who employ his sacred prayers.

The association of the R̥ṣis with prosperity (*r̥ddhi*) is so fundamental that we find it also related to the archetypal group of the seven R̥ṣis, in XXII 4:

XXII 4,2: *sapta r̥ṣaya etenārdhnuvaṃs tenarddhis  
tasmād etena yajanta r̥ddhyā eva*  
XXII 4,6: *pr̥ṣṭhyah śaḍaho bhavati pratyakṣam r̥dhyai 7.  
pratyakṣam hy etena sapta r̥ṣaya ārdhnuvann r̥ddhyā  
eva*

“2. The seven R̥ṣis prospered through this (seven-day-rite). Thereby, (there is) prosperity. Therefore, they sacrifice with it, for prosperity. 6. There is the six-day rite with the Pr̥ṣṭha (Sāmans), for prospering in a visible manner. In a visible manner prospered the seven R̥ṣis through this (rite, so it is) for prosperity.”

Clearly, the fact that the rite lasts seven days suggests the relation with the seven R̥ṣis, as with the seven vital airs (*prāṇāḥ*) or seven with domestic animals (*grāmyāḥ paśavas*) mentioned in XXII 4,3-4, but there are also other rites of seven days related to Prajāpati (XXII 5), Jamadagni (XXII 7)<sup>52</sup> or Indra (XXII 8). What is noteworthy here is the concept of ‘visible’ (*pratyakṣam*) prosperity: we have found the same word

<sup>51</sup> See Caland 1931, p.191.

<sup>52</sup> In XXII 7,2 we find another formula related to prosperity: *etena vai jamadagniḥ sarvān poṣān apuṣyat sarvān evaitena poṣān puṣyati* “By this (rite), Jamadagni increased all the prosperities. By this (rite) one increases all the prosperities.”



about the direct knowledge of Indra by Vasiṣṭha; here it is applied to the evidence of the prosperity, the visible proof (made probably of food, cattle and offspring) which was obtained by the seven R̥ṣis and that, following their example, can be obtained also by the present sacrificers.

### The R̥ṣi and the Muni

A particular figure associated with prosperity we find in XXV 14,5:

*etena vai turo devamuniḥ sarvām r̥ddhim ārdhnot  
sarvām r̥ddhim r̥dhnoti ya etad upaiti*

“Through this (Turāyaṇa rite) Tura the divine hermit increased every prosperity. Every prosperity increases one who undertakes this (rite).”

Tura should be the famous Kāvāṣeya, Purohita of Janamejaya Pāriḥṣita in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa,<sup>53</sup> founder of a lineage of teaching in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (X.6.5.9), where he is also described as engaged in the particular yajurvedic rite of the Agnicayana (IX.5.2.15). Here he is not called R̥ṣi, but *devamuni*, which should mean ‘divine hermit’<sup>54</sup> rather than ‘God-muni’ as translated by Caland<sup>55</sup> or ‘saint of the gods’ as translated by Keith and Macdonell,<sup>56</sup> unless we have here to do with a *medium* of the deities, a man possessed by the gods, but we have no allusions to that about Tura Kāvāṣeya. We have a close parallel of this compound in the epithet *devars̥i* ‘divine or celestial R̥ṣi’ given in the Mahābhārata to great seers like

<sup>53</sup> Cf. AB IV 27; VII 34; VIII 21. This is Janamejaya II in the classification of Pargiter, belonging to the generation no.74, in the first period of the Kurus (see Pargiter 1922, p.148 and p.173) and in the late R̥gvedic period. Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.314.

<sup>54</sup> The Böhlingk-Roth dictionary translates ‘*ein himmlischer, göttlicher Muni*’, and refers only to this passage of the PB, and to the name of the R̥ṣi (son of Irammada) of RV 10.146 according to the Anukramāṇī.

<sup>55</sup> Caland 1931, p.640.

<sup>56</sup> Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.314.

Nārada (also often called *muni*). Another interesting parallel is found in AV VII.74.1, where a root used to cure pustules is said “of the divine Muni or Muni-God” (*múner devásya mūlena*): in that case it is possible that a god like Rudra is meant, but also a Muni as a shamanistic healer.<sup>57</sup>

The oldest attestation of the term *muni* is in RV 7.56.8, in a hymn to the Maruts, where their noise (connected with wind and storm) is compared with that made by the Muni,<sup>58</sup> probably because this figure used to scream or make strong noises during his ecstatic *trance*. Another is in RV 8.17.14, where Indra is called ‘friend of the Munis’ (*indro múninām sakhā*), as often the hymns speak of his friendship (*sakhyā*, *sakhitvá*) with Ṛṣis.<sup>59</sup>

But most of all we have the important late hymn RV 10.136, where the Muni is characterized by long hair (*keśin*), by nakedness or a reddish (*piśāṅga*) dirty robe,<sup>60</sup> and by the

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. Hauer 1922, p.171, translating “die Wurzel des göttlichen Muni”, related to a “Zauberritus, was auf den ursprünglichen Zusammenhang des Muni mit der Zauberei und Heilkunst hinweist”; Hauer 1958, p.31, on the other hand, seems to have changed opinion, because he translates “Muni-Gott”, explaining that this god “kann ursprünglich kein anderer gewesen sein als Vāyu-Rudra, der ja auch uralter Zauberarzt ist.”

It is interesting that a god called ‘Moni’ is present in the Kalash pantheon, as the ‘prophet’ and the executor of the commands of ‘Imra’, the creator god; in a myth, he exterminates the devils (see Rose 1990, p.426, pp.428-9).

<sup>58</sup> RV 7.56.8b: *dhūniḥ mūniḥ iva śárdhasya dhṛṣṇóḥ* “The roaring of the bold troop (is) like (that of) the ecstatic.”

<sup>59</sup> See for instance RV 10.23.7, which speaks of the friendship of Indra with the Ṛṣi Vimada (v.7ab: *mākir na enā sakhyā vi yaṣus táva cendra vimadāsya ca fṣeḥ*, translated by Geldner 1951, vol.III, p.160 “Niemals soll sich darum unsere Freundschaft lösen zwischen dir, Indra, und dem Ṛṣi Vimada”). Cf. RV 6.45.17, where Indra is *gr̥natām... śiváh sakhā* ‘auspicious friend of the singers’.

<sup>60</sup> We have different interpretations of the v.2ab: *múnayo vātaraśanāḥ piśāṅgā vasate mālā*, translated by Geldner 1951, vol.III, p.369 “Die windgegürteten Verzückten kleiden sich in braune Schmutz(gewänder)”. Geldner himself, *ibidem*, n.2, explains *vātaraśanāḥ* ‘having the wind as girdle’ with ‘nackten’, but he interprets the *piśāṅgā... mālā* as related to “Die safranfarbener Gewänder des späteren Yogin”. He also cites the gloss of Sāyaṇa, speaking of *malināni valkalarūpāni vāsāmsi* “dirty garments formed of bark”, evidently alluding to the bark garment (*cīra*) worn by the Vānaprasthas (BauDhS II 11,15) or Vaikhānasas (BauDhS III 3,19). Differently, the Parivrājaka wears ochre clothes (*kāśāyavāsāḥ*: BauDhS II 11,21), but he also shaves his head, whereas the Vānaprastha has matted hair (*jaṭila*: BauDhS II 11,15). Probably Sāyaṇa identified the *keśin* of RV 10.136 as an ascetic of the Vānaprastha type. Deeg 1993, p.98 takes *piśāṅgā... mālā* as ‘brown mud’, indicating a ‘nude, loam-smearred ascetic’. Cf. also AB VII 13,7, where *malaṃ* ‘dirt’ is together with *ajinaṃ* ‘antelope skin’, *śmaśrūṇi* ‘moustache and beard’ and *tapah* as symbols of the ascetic.

ecstatic flight.<sup>61</sup> He is also friend of each god (4cd: *múnir devásya-devasya... sákhā*), and particularly of Vāyu (5a: *vāyóḥ sákhā*), but also ‘horse of Vāta’ (*vātasyāśvo*) and ‘by the gods impelled’ (5b: *devéṣito múnih*). So, it seems that, when he is in *trance*, he is possessed by the gods, an attitude which is not typical of the R̥ṣi.

We find the epithet *muni* also in AB VI 33, referred to Aitaśa,<sup>62</sup> who saw the ‘life of Agni’, ‘what is inexhaustible in the sacrifice’ and revealed it to the sons through nonsensical formulas (the *aitaśapralāpa* or ‘stammering of Aitaśa’<sup>63</sup>).

More explicitly, Munis are often mentioned in the Upaniṣads as those who embrace the ascetic life of hermits in search of spiritual deliverance and metaphysical knowledge.<sup>64</sup> So, the Munis emerge particularly in the late Vedic period, as persons following an ascetic way of life leading to a superior spiritual wisdom. Tura seems then to be depicted as a hermit, but at the same time as engaged in Vedic sacrifices in order to obtain prosperity.

We have also another reference to Munis in XIV 4,7:

*vaikhānasā vā r̥ṣaya indrasya priyā āsaṃs tān rahasyur  
devamalimluḍ munimarāṇe 'mārayat taṃ devā abruvan  
kva tar̥ṣayo 'bhūvann iti tān praiṣam aicchat tān  
nāvindat sa imān lokān ekadhāreṇāpunāt tān  
munimarāṇe 'vindat tān etena sāmṇā samārayat tad  
vāva sa tarhy akāmayata kāmasani sāma vaikhānasaṃ  
kāmam evaitenāvarundhe*

<sup>61</sup> st.3: *únmaditā mauneyena vātām á tasthimā vayám / sárīréd asmákam yūyám mártāso abhí paśyatha*, translated by Geldner 1951, vol.III, p.370, “Von Verzückung entgeistert haben wir die Winde (als unsere Rosse) bestiegen. Nur unsere Leiber sehst ihr Sterblichen vor euch.” The phrase *únmaditā mauneyena* is noteworthy, because it shows that the concept of *mauneya* (state of *muni*) is associated with ecstasy, and not with the vow of ‘silence’ (*maunam*) as in the post-Vedic literature. In v.7cd we find also an allusion to an intoxicating beverage, called ‘poison’, associated with Rudra (*keśí viśásya pātreṇa yád rudrēṇāpibat sahá*). Cf. Deeg 1993, pp.98-9.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. KB XXX 5, where he is called Etaśa and sees the ‘life of the sacrifice’ (*yajñasyāyur dadarśa*). It is interesting that Etaśa is listed among the seven ‘Vātaraśana’ regarded as authors of RV 10.136 in the Anukramaṇī.

<sup>63</sup> See AV XX.129-132 and RVKh V.15.

<sup>64</sup> See for instance BĀU III 5 (Kāṇva edition).

“The Vaikhānasas were Ṛṣis dear to Indra. Rahasyu Devamalimluc killed them at (a place named) ‘Death of the Munis’. The Gods said to him (Indra): «What has become of those Ṛṣis?» He went in search of them but did not find them. He clarified these worlds with one single stream, and he found them at ‘Death of the Munis’. He revived them through this Sāman. That, forsooth, had been his wish at that moment. The Vaikhānasa is a wish-fulfilling Sāman, by means of it one gets one’s wish.”

The Vaikhānasas are a group of Ṛṣis also mentioned in the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka (I 23,3) and in the Nirukta (III 17), but only *en passant*, in etymological contexts. The Nirukta connects this word with *vikhanana* ‘act of excavating’, and this is probably the true etymology, because of the custom of extracting roots practiced by these hermits. We find much information about Vaikhānasas in the Dharmasūtras. In BauDhS II 11,14, they are identified as *vānaprastha*, ‘abiding in the forest’, and their way of living is so described: “A Vaikhānasa (lives) in the forest, eating roots and fruits, given to austerities” (*vaikhānaso vane mūlaphalāśī tapaḥśīlah*). He bathes three times a day, kindles the fire and does not eat what is in the village. He pays homage to gods, ancestors, spirits, humans and Ṛṣis. He may also eat flesh of animals left by a predator, he should not step on plowed land or enter a village. He wears matted hair, garments of bark and skin (*jaṭiḷaścīrājinavāsā*) and he never eats anything that has been stored for more than a year. Actually, this kind of description is the typical appearance of Ṛṣis in the Mahābhārata, where they are also often called *muni*. Here we find the same kind of equivalence, because they are forest hermits.<sup>65</sup> It is noteworthy that they are dear to Indra, who, as we have seen, in RV 8.17.14 is called ‘friend of the Munis’. Also the other gods are interested in their fate, but it is Indra who seeks them and even revives them. So, it seems that Indra in this case sees the Sāman like a Ṛṣi, as is confirmed by JB III 190, where it is said

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. ĀpDhS II 21,21, where it is said of the Vānaprastha: “He should live as a Muni with a single fire, without house, shelter or protection” (*ekāgnir aniketah syād aśarmāśarano muniḥ*).

that this Sāman was seen by Indra, who is ‘Vikhānas’, even if at the beginning of the explanation, it was said that these Sāmans were seen by the Vaikhānasas.<sup>66</sup>

Here it is not explained why Rahasyu Devamalimluc (‘robber of the gods’) killed the Vaikhānasas, perhaps just because they were dear to Indra, since his name appears as that of a demon.<sup>67</sup> But it is clear that we have to do with a tradition connected with a place, called *munimaraṇa*, ‘death of the Munis’.

We find another Vaikhānasa, named Puruhanman, in XIV 9,29, as the R̥ṣi who, through the Pauruhanmana Sāman, beheld the heavenly world:<sup>68</sup> this can characterize the Vaikhānasa as an ascetic interested in the attainment of heaven, but we find the same formula for many other R̥ṣis, as we will see below.

## The R̥ṣi and the sacred Word

There is also another personage that has been connected with Muni-like ascetics: Keśin Dālbhya, present in XIII.10.8:

*keśine vā etad dālbhyāya sāmāvir abhavad tad enam  
abravīd agātāro mā gāyanti mā mayodgāsiṣur iti katham  
ta āgā bhagava ity abravīd āgeyam evāsmi āgāyann iva  
gāyet pratiṣṭhāyai tad alammaṃ pārijānataṃ  
paścādakṣaṃ śayānam etām āgāṃ gāyantam ajānāt tam  
abravīt puras tvā dadhā iti tam abruvan ko nv ayam  
kasmā alam ity alan nu vai mahyam iti tad  
alammasyālammatvam*

<sup>66</sup> JB III 190: *tāsu vaikhānasam / vaikhānasā vā etāni sāmāny apaśyann [...] tad indro ha vai vikhānāḥ / sa yad indra etat sāmāpaśyat, tasmād vaikhānasam ity ākhyāyate* / In this passage, the Vaikhānasas are defined as *r̥ṣika*, which is translated by Caland 1919, p.266, “Seher niederen Ranges”.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.376. In JB III 190, Rahasyu is rewarded by Indra for his sincerity in admitting his Brahmin-killing, and obtains to be the progenitor of a lineage of Brahmins, the Takṣus.

<sup>68</sup> PB XIV 9,28: *pauruhanmanaṃ bhavati 29. puruhanmā vā etena vaikhānaso 'ñjasā svargaṃ lokam apaśyat.*

“To Keśin, the son of Dalbha, this Sāman showed himself. It said to him: «Bad singers chant me, let them not chant me.» «How is your intonation, Reverend Sir?» he said. «I am to be intoned (in a low voice);<sup>69</sup> let him chant me, intonating (in a low voice), as it were, for a firm support.» Then (Keśin) perceived Alamma,<sup>70</sup> son of Parajānat, lying behind the axle (of the southern havirdhāna-cart) chanting this intonation. To him he said: «I will make you my Purohita.» To him they (the other Brahmins) said: «Who, forsooth, is this man? For what is he fit?» «Fit for me indeed» (Keśin answered). That is the reason of the name ‘Alamma’.”

The name Keśin (‘long-haired’) reminds of the Muni of RV 10.136,<sup>71</sup> whereas the patronymic Dālbhya (in other contexts Dārbhya) has induced Max Deeg to connect him with the use of Darbha grass as an intoxicating substance.<sup>72</sup> Actually, the proofs presented in his article in order to show this usage are not very convincing, and we have not found any confirmation of an intoxicating effect of Darbha grass (*Imperata cylindrica*).<sup>73</sup> So, the traditional identification of this name as a patronymic (given also by Sāyana in the commentary of this passage) from Dalbha or Darbha seems the most acceptable.<sup>74</sup> However, it is true that Keśin Dālbhya is a special personage.<sup>75</sup> In JB II 53 he appears as a king of the Pañcālas<sup>76</sup> before Yājñasena, and also in JUB III

<sup>69</sup> According to Caland 1931, p.340, n.1, the verb *ā-gā* probably “refers to the strength of tone, or to the pitch of tone in chanting”, adding that in JUB I.37 three kinds of *ā-gā* are distinguished, and that the same word occurs also in ŚB II.2.9-13.

<sup>70</sup> He is considered a Rṣi in the commentary of Sāyana, and he is mentioned also in PB XIII 4, 11, as receiving an explanation of the way of chanting by a Rajana son of Kuṇi. He is also present in the version of JB III 31, according to the reading of Caland 1931, p.340, n.2.

<sup>71</sup> But ŚB XI.8.4 shows us the ‘Kaiśina’ as a present race (*kaiśinīr evēmā āpyetārhi prajā jāyante*), descending from king Keśin. Cf. Witzel 2005, p.40.

<sup>72</sup> See Deeg 1993, pp.99-109.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.340, where only its use (attested in the Atharvaveda) for calming anger (*manyuśamana*) is cited; cf. Khare 2004, pp.261-2.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.354.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.187; Deeg 1993, pp.105-107.

<sup>76</sup> Witzel 1997, p.49, maintains the prominence of the Pañcālas in the later YV-Saṃhitā and the Brāhmaṇa period: “The political and cultural centre now had shifted from the Kuru to this tribe which lived farther East, in what is now Uttar Pradesh. The Pañcāla king Keśin Dālbhya and his successors are prominent in a later YV-Saṃhitā, TS, and beyond.” He also

29 he is clearly identified as a king of the Pañcālas (*keśī dārbhyaḥ pāñcālo rājā*), who looks for an Udgātr̥ for a twelve-day-sacrifice. Also in this context, he appoints a Purohita, then he should be a king. On the other hand, he is presented as an expert of ritual questions<sup>77</sup> and as receiving revelations,<sup>78</sup> like in this passage, where it is the Sāman itself that speaks to him, explaining how it should be recited. We have already found the case of Indra revealing formulas to Vasiṣṭha, but here no deity is implied: the relationship of the R̥ṣi with the sacred word is direct, without mediation. But we should not say that we have here to do with an eternal, substantial Veda revealing itself to the vision of the seer, because the Sāman is here individualized, addressed as a person, and described as explaining a technical detail about the way of chanting it. It is a case of personification typical of the mythopoetic thinking, which seems to show that even the sacred chants could be conceived as animate, autonomous entities.

A somewhat different personification or hypostatization of the sacred word is in XI 8,8:

*yuktāśvo va āṅgirasah śisū jātau viparyaharat tasmān  
mantra 'pākrāmat sa tapo 'tapyata sa etad yauktāśvam  
apaśyat tam mantra upāvarata tad vāva sa tarhy*

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remarks that according to JB II 278-9, Keśin was closely related to the Kurus, because his maternal uncle, Uccaiḥśravas, was son of the Kuru king (*kauravya rājā*) Kuvaya, adding this historical guess: “Apparently he simply took over when the Kuru line was in decline (or without heirs?), due to the Salva invasion.”

<sup>77</sup> Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.187, cites his ritual dispute with Ṣaṅḍika in MS I 4,12. Cf. Deeg 1993, p.107, n.97.

<sup>78</sup> In KB VII 5 he receives a revelation about the consecration (*dīkṣā*) by a golden bird (*hiraṇmaya śakuna*) who can be identified, according to the text, with one of three different personages, that appear as previous R̥ṣis. Among them, there is Śikhaṅḍin Yājñasena, who must be the same Yājñasena that in JB II 53 appears to him as a golden goose (*hamso hiraṇmayo*), but there the revelation is about the imperishableness of the merit of rites (*iṣṭāpūrtasya tvam akṣitiṃ vettha*). Actually, in both cases there is an exchange of knowledge, not a revelation only in one direction: this exchange is expressed by the verbs *saṃ-pra-brū* (JB II 53) and *saṃ-pra-vac* (KB VII 5,8) (cf. Deeg 1993, pp.105-6). Witzel 1997, p.49, cites also VādhB IV 37 for the ‘invention’ of the consecration to the Soma ritual by Keśin (*Kaiśinī dīkṣā*), and describes this king as “both the new political as well as ‘spiritual’ leader.”

*akāmayata kāmasani sāma yauktāśvaṃ kāmam  
evaitenāvarundhe*

“Yuktāśva Āṅgīrasa exchanged two young ones (just) born, from him the Mantra withdrew. He underwent austerities, he saw this Yauktāśva. To him the Mantra returned. That, forsooth, he had then desired. The Yauktāśva is a wish-fulfilling Sāman, through it one fulfils one’s wish.”

This story is more detailed in JB III 23, where Yuktāśva is the younger brother of Vasiṣṭha, who is Purohita of Sudās Paijavana.<sup>79</sup> Sudās entrusted his mares to Vasiṣṭha, who gave them to his brother. This one exchanged the young ones born from the king’s mares with those that belonged to himself, which were worse. When this deed was discovered, Yuktāśva was driven away as a thief and non-Rṣi (*anrṣir*). In order to find again trust and invitations, he saw the Sāman and applied it.<sup>80</sup>

So, the two stories are very different, but it is probable that young horses are meant also here.<sup>81</sup> actually, it is the name itself, Yuktāśva ‘having yoked horses’, which can be connected with this story. What is specific in our passage is the relationship of the Rṣi with the ‘Mantra’. Normally, we find the *mantra* as a particular formula or hymn seen by a Rṣi, here it seems that it is the sacred word in its totality, as is shown by the fact that the ‘Mantra’ returned after he had seen a particular Sāman. Caland<sup>82</sup> translates this word simply as ‘the veda’, following the gloss of Sāyana; actually, it can be that the relationship with all the Vedic corpus is implied. Another significant aspect, is the ascetic practice (*tapas*) adopted to find

<sup>79</sup> Sudās is here said to be king of the Aikṣvākus, which is really strange, because Sudās Paijavana is a Bharata king in Rgveda and belonging to the North Pañcāla branch of the Bhāratas according to the Purāṇic tradition (see Pargiter 1922, pp.115-7), which shows the scarce historical value of this Brāhmaṇa. It is possible that a confusion is made with the Sudāsa father of Kalmaṣapāda, who was actually an Aikṣvāku. Then, also the position of Yuktāśva as a Vasiṣṭha, instead of an Āṅgīrasa, is doubtful, but it can also be that the association with Sudās Paijavana is right, and we know that this king had a Vasiṣṭha as Purohita (cf. RV 7.18; Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, pp.274-5; Pargiter 1922, p.207).

<sup>80</sup> For more details, see Caland 1931, p.263.

<sup>81</sup> Sāyana, differently, speaks of children (*bālau stanandhayau*); cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.192.

<sup>82</sup> Caland 1931, p.263.



again this vital relationship. The fact that the vision of the Sāman is the final effect of an ascetic effort, is often repeated in the course of the Brāhmaṇa.<sup>83</sup> As usual, we find only the formula *tapo 'tapyata* (which can be translated 'he heated the heat'), without explanation of the actual practices implied. According to Oldenberg,<sup>84</sup> in the oldest times the most important aspect was heat as vehicle of penance, connected with fire and Sun, like in the late yogic practice of staying among four fires and under the Sun; he mentions also fasting, staying awake, and holding the breath. This last exercise is vividly described in BauDhS IV 1,23-4, telling that by doing the control of the breath (*prāṇāyāma*) one generates a supreme heat from the tips of the nails up to the end of the hair.<sup>85</sup> A similar effect is attributed in ŚB XI.5.7.4 to the personal recitation of the Veda (*svādhyāya*), which can also be regarded as a form of *tapas*.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Cf. PB XI 8,10; XII 11,25; XIII 6,10; XIII 11,10; XIV 12,5; XX 11,3.

<sup>84</sup> See Oldenberg 1917, pp.402-3. Cf. Oldenberg 1919, pp.146-9.

<sup>85</sup> BauDhS IV 1,23: *āvartayet sadā yuktaḥ prāṇāyāmān punaḥ punaḥ / ā keśāntān na-khāgrāc ca tapas tapyata uttamam* "Constantly practising Yoga, he should control his breath repeatedly, generating the most extreme heat of austerity up to the very tips of his hair and nails." (Translation by Olivelle 2000, p.329) Cf. MaS VI 70-71, where the *prāṇāyāma* associated with the recitation of Om and the *vyāhṛtis* is considered the supreme *tapas* (70: *prāṇāyāmā brāhmaṇasya trayo 'pi vidhivat kṛtāḥ / vyāhṛtipraṇavair yukta vijñeyam paramam tapaḥ*); by the suppression of breath, one burns away the faults of the organs (71cd: *tathaindriyānām dahyante doṣāḥ prāṇasya nigrahāt*).

It is clear that, of the three exercises of *prāṇāyāma* (*pūraka*, *recaka*, *kumbhaka*), the *kumbhaka* 'exercise of the pot', implying the suppression of breath, is the most important here: it is significant that this exercise is applied also in the Tibetan Tantric practice of *tummo* (sk. *caṇḍālī*), which is intended to develop inner heat to burn the obstructions of the 'subtle body' and acquire spiritual wisdom. Cf. Muses 1961, pp.186-196; Rai 1982, pp.71-2; 173-178, where is cited the commentary to YS II 52: "There is no purificatory action (*tapas*) higher than Prāṇāyāma; purity is secured by that, through the destruction of impurity; and the light of knowledge shines." (*tapo na param prāṇāyāmāt tato viśuddhir malānām dīptiś ca jñānasyeti*) (translation by Prasāda 1910, p.170). Cf. Kaelber 1989, pp.58-9, where is also cited JUB III 32,4-5, which defines the inner self (*antarātman*) of the *prāṇa* as heat (*tapas*), therefore the breath of one who is heated (who practices *tapas*) becomes hotter (*tasmāt tapyamānasyoṣṇataraḥ prāṇo bhavati*); then it is stated that the inner self of *tapas* is fire (*tapaso 'ntarātmāgnih*). Cf. Oertel 1896, pp.191-2.

<sup>86</sup> ŚB XI.5.7.4: *yādi ha vā āpyabhyāktāḥ ālamkṛtāḥ sūhitaḥ sukhe śāyane śāyānaḥ svādhyāyāmadhīta ā haiva sā nakhāgrēbhyaḥ tapyate yā evaṃ vidvāntsvādhyāyāmadhīte tāsmātsvādhyāyō 'dhyetavyaḥ* "And, verily, if he studies his lesson, even though lying on a soft couch, anointed, adorned and completely satisfied, he is burned (with holy fire) up to the tips of his nails, whosoever, knowing this, studies his lesson: therefore one's (daily) lesson should be studied." (translation by Eggeling 1900, vol.V, p.100). Cf. MaS II 166-7; TĀ II 14; Kaelber 1989, pp.59-60.

BauDhS III 10,13 gives us a list of the different practices of *tapas*: “Practising non-injury; speaking the truth; refraining from theft; bathing at dawn, noon, and dusk; obedience to elders; chastity; sleeping on the floor; wearing a single garment; and fasting – these are the austerities.”<sup>87</sup> Hauer<sup>88</sup> mentions also sitting silent in a dark hut or in an isolated place, contracted positions, tiring efforts in the performance of the sacrifice (brick-layering, wood-carrying, fire-lighting), and the holy silence during the execution of certain sacrifices. These practices had the purpose of developing an internal energy which would have given magical power and spiritual ‘vision’. They were also often intended to expiate sins: the previous citation of the Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra is in the context of expiation, and in BauDhS III 10,9 *tapas* is explicitly cited as one of the means of redemption (*niṣkrayaṇāni*).<sup>89</sup> Sāyana, commenting our passage, writes that this *tapas* had the character of expiation (*prāyaścittātmakam tapas tepe*), and, purified by this *tapas*, this Rṣi saw the Sāman (*tena ca tapasā viśuddhaḥ sa rṣiḥ etad yauktāśvaṃ sāmā paśyat*). Evidently, he sees a relation of cause and effect between the purification created by the *tapas* and the vision of the Sāman, and it is possible that this relation was conceived also in the times of the Brāhmaṇas: the spiritual vision as a natural consequence of the purification of body and mind (or of the ‘subtle body’ made of Prāṇas or vital

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<sup>87</sup> The translation is that of Olivelle 2000, p.325. Here is the original text: *ahiṃsā satyam astainyaṃ savaneṣūdakopasparśanam guruśuśrūṣā brahmacaryam adhaḥśayanam ekavastratānāśaka iti tapāṃsi*

According to Oldenberg 1919, p.146, n.3, this is “eine schon merklich modernisierte, abgeflaute Übersicht über Formen des Tapas”.

<sup>88</sup> See Hauer 1958, p.21; cf. Hauer 1922, pp.98-116.

<sup>89</sup> Olivelle 2000, p.325: “The expiations for such a man [who has committed wrong actions] are softly reciting prayers, austerity, ritual offering, fasting, and giving gifts.” (*tasya niṣkrayaṇāni japas tapo homa upavāso dānam*) Cf. VāDhS XX 47; MaS V 105-109; XI 242: “Whatever sin people commit through their mind, word, or body – with ascetic toil as their only wealth, they quickly burn off all that simply by ascetic toil.” (*yat kiṃcid enaḥ kurvanti manovānmūrtibhir janāḥ / tat sarvaṃ nirdahantyāśu tapasaiva tapodhanāḥ*) (translation and text from Olivelle 2005, p.228; p.882).

Cf. Kaelber 1989, pp.45-60, who connects the purification with *tapas* as a destructive force (like fire), and with the pain involved in the ascetic ‘mortifications’, since ‘to suffer or feel pain’ is one of the connotations of the root *tap*.

airs) realized by ascetic exercises. But in the Pañcaviṃśa *tapas* is not always subsequent to sin, it can also be a way of overcoming a difficult situation,<sup>90</sup> or a means of extending one's power,<sup>91</sup> nonetheless there is always the vision of the Sāman as the effect of *tapas*. This relationship between *tapas* and the sacred word is synthetically affirmed in TĀ V 6,7, where we find the phrase *tapojām vācam* 'word born from ascetic heat'. The same adjective *tapojā* in RV 10.154.5 is applied to the R̥ṣi,<sup>92</sup> and we can say that it is all related: the R̥ṣi is one who sees the sacred and effective word of Mantras, this vision is produced by *tapas*, then the R̥ṣi is born from *tapas*, from the ascetic practice of 'heat'.<sup>93</sup>

About the Mantra, we have another significant passage, XIII 3,24:

*śiśur vā āṅgirasō mantrakṛtām mantrakṛd āsīt sa pitṛṇ  
putrakā ity āmantrayata, taṃ pitaro 'bruvan na*

<sup>90</sup> As in XII 11,25, where Vatsapri lost the trust as a valid priest (cf. Lévi 1898, p.110); or XX 11,3, where Haviṣmat and Haviṣkṛt are left behind by the other Āṅgirasas on the way to the heavenly world. For the general concept of *tapas* as a means by which to overcome difficulties, cf. MaS XI 239: "What is difficult to cross, what is difficult to obtain, what is difficult to enter, what is difficult to do – all that is accomplished by ascetic toil, for it is difficult to prevail over ascetic toil." (*yaddustaram yaddurāpam yaddurgam yacca duṣkarām / tat sarvaṃ tapasā sādhyam tapo hi duratikramam*) (translation and text from Olivelle 2005, p.228; p.882).

<sup>91</sup> As in XIV 12,5, where Uśanas Kāvya desires the same dominion or space (*loka*) as the other Kāvya have.

<sup>92</sup> RV 10.154.5cd: *ṛṣīn tāpasvato yama tapojām āpi gacchatāt*, translated by Geldner 1951, vol.III, p.385 "zu den Kasteiung übenden R̥ṣi's, o Yama, zu den durch Kasteiung (neu)geborenen soll er gelangen!" The subject is the dead, who should reach the R̥ṣi of the past in heaven.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Kaelber 1989, pp.61-71, where the relationship is analyzed between *tapas*, knowledge and spiritual rebirth, also in connection with R̥ṣi. At p.64 we find this interesting interpretation: "The *ṛṣi*s are visionaries; they frequently see that which does not yet exist. Their *tapas* is therefore not only a heated effort but also a "meditative-brooding", a cognitive incubation. And from that cognitive, meditative incubation emerges the reality itself, hatching, as it were, from the egg of thought. The *ṛṣi*s see or meditate upon components of creation not yet in existence and by doing so they actually bring those components into being. Within the *tapas* of the *ṛṣi*s is thus reflected ascetic effort, cognitive brooding, and hatching heat." Surely, *tapas* is a practice involving concentration and striving for the realization of a particular purpose: in the case of R̥ṣi, what is distinctive is the search for the knowledge of the means of that realization, because they are not yet known. In the Brāhmaṇas, this knowledge has Mantras or rites as object, because those are the means of achievement of the different purposes, and naturally because the R̥ṣi were trained to compose sacred hymns and chants.

*dharmam karoṣi yo naḥ pitṛṇ sataḥ putrakā ity  
āmantrayasa iti, so 'bravīd aham vāva vaḥ pitāsmi yo  
mantrakṛd asmīti, te deveṣv apr̥cchanta te devā  
abruvann eṣa vāva pitā yo mantrakṛd iti tad vai sa  
udajayad ujjayati śaiśavena tuṣṭuvānaḥ*

“Śiśu<sup>94</sup> Āṅgīrasa was a Mantra-maker among the Mantra-makers. He used to address his Fathers with «little sons!», to him the Fathers said: «You do not do something right, you who address us, being your Fathers, with «little sons!». He said: «I am, forsooth, your Father, I who am a Mantra-maker» They interrogated the Gods, and the Gods said: «That indeed, is a Father, who (is) a Mantra-maker.» So then he was victorious. Becomes victorious one who lauds by the Śaiśava.”

Here we do not find the explicit identification of Śiśu Āṅgīrasa as a Ṛṣi, but Sāyaṇa obviously identifies him so. He has one of the typical epithets of Ṛṣis, *mantrakṛt* ‘creator of Mantras or sacred formulas’, that we find only once in the R̥gveda,<sup>95</sup> but in a few cases in the Brāhmaṇas,<sup>96</sup> regularly in connection with the term *ṛṣi*. So, one of the main characteristics of the Ṛṣis was the creation of Mantras, and not only the vision of them. Here the Mantra-maker has a status which allows him to be superior even to his Fathers or elders, with a reversal which shows that the creation of the sacred word gave a spiritual value more significant than the age and position in the family.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> The name means ‘baby, child’, so it is clearly a definition of his age, which is the matter here, but Sāyaṇa regards this as his name, and Caland 1931, p.316, follows him. Differently, Olivelle, in his translation of BauDhS I 3,47 translates *śaiśāvāṅgīrase* “in the story of the young Āṅgīrasa” (Olivelle 2000, p.203) and in his translation of MaS II 151-3 translates *śiśur āṅgīrasaḥ kavīḥ* as “the child sage, son of Āṅgīrasa” (Olivelle 2005, p.102).

<sup>95</sup> In RV 9.114.2: *mantrakṛtām stōmaiḥ* ‘through the (chanted) lauds of the Mantra-makers’, in the context of the celebration of Soma, and clearly with a Sāmavedic reference, since the *stoma* is the Sāmavedic hymn.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. AB VI 1,1; JB I 147,4; II 266,11; JUB I 45,2; TB II.8.8.5.6.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. BauDhS I 3,47, where the story of Śiśu Āṅgīrasa is indicated as an example for the inversion of the rules of respect connected with age, and MaS II 151-3, where we have another version of the story, according to which Śiśu Āṅgīrasa (called also with the epithet *kavi*) teaches to his Fathers, and calls them sons, having excelled them in knowledge (151: *adhyaṅyāmāsa pitṛṇ śiśurāṅgīrasaḥ kavīḥ / putrakā iti hauvāca jñānena parigr̥hya tān*).

About the vision or creation of the Sāman, we have a surprising story in VIII 2,2:

*kaṇvo vā etat sāma rte nidhanam apaśyat sa na  
pratyatiṣṭhat sa vṛṣadamśasyāṣiti kṣuvata upāśr̥ṇot sa  
tad eva nidhanam apaśyat tato vai sa pratyatiṣṭhad yad  
etat sāma bhavati pratiṣṭhityai*

“Kaṇva<sup>98</sup> saw this Sāman without (any) finale. He did not find stability. He heard (the noise) «āṣ» of a cat sneezing, he saw this as finale, then he found stability. The reason for which there is this Sāman, (is) for stability.”

The *nidhana* in the Sāmavedic chant is a concluding passage sung in chorus, but the literal meaning of the word is ‘settling down, residence’, then it is naturally associated with stability (*pratiṣṭhiti*),<sup>99</sup> a concept which is quite common in the Pañcaviṃśa as one of the main purposes of Sāmans.<sup>100</sup> This finale is the necessary completion of the Sāman, without which it is not ‘stable’, like a chariot or a hut not completed and fixed. So, we assist here to the process of creation of a Sāman, and in this context the problem of the R̥ṣi is purely related to this

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Also in this context, the Fathers interrogate the Gods, who reply that Śiśu had said correctly, because an ignorant is a child (153a: *ajño bhavati vai bālāḥ*), whereas one who imparts the Mantra is a Father (153b: *pitā bhavati mantradaḥ*). So, here the stress is placed on the teaching, and not on the creation, of the Mantra. This is not a slight difference, because it shows the different context: one of R̥ṣis composers of Vedic hymns and formulas in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, the other of teachers of the already canonized Veda in the *Manu Smṛti*.

<sup>98</sup> In JB III 46 he is named, more precisely, Kaṇva son of Nṛṣad (*nārṣada*), who is also mentioned in RV 1.117.8; AV IV 19,2 (cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.134). The *ṛcas* that he uses come from RV 8.33.1-3, a hymn which clearly mentions Medhyātithi (one of the Kāṇvas) as the singer in st.4, and the Anukramaṇī ascribes to him this hymn. According to Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.178, Medhātithi and Medhyātithi Kāṇva are the same R̥ṣi. According to Pargiter 1922, p.192 (cf. also pp.225-8), Medhātithi belongs to the generation no.56, after king Ajamīdha, who, according to a Purāṇic account, was the father of the first Kaṇva.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. PB VIII 5,12, where, after the reference to Andhīgu, it is said that by means of the *nidhana* ‘*aiḍa*’, the third pressing of Soma is established: *madhye nidhanam aiḍam bhavaty etena vai tr̥ṣṭyasavanam pratiṣṭhitam yan madhye nidhanam aiḍam na syād apratiṣṭhitam tr̥ṣṭyasavanam syāt*.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. PB VIII 5,9; VIII 8,22; IX 1,9; XII 12,6.

creation. The solution comes from an unexpected sound, the sneeze of a cat, which suggests to Kaṇva the ‘vision’ of the finale: there is nothing of supernatural or revelatory, it seems only the inspiration of a poet, using the sounds of nature for his composition. However, we have not here to do with a ‘normal’ poet, interested in creating a beautiful verse to express his feelings, but with a composer of sacred poetry (with a musical aspect), a Rṣi who has to find a chant fit for the ritual, complete and effective for a practical purpose. What is also noteworthy about the concept of the Rṣi’s vision is that there is not an eternal Veda, already complete from the beginning, as in the later dogma, but the inspiration of the moment and the search for completeness.

In another case, we have instead a primeval sacred Word which the gods divide (VII 10,10):

*devā vai brahma vyabhajanta tān nodhāḥ kākṣīvata  
āgacchat te 'bruvann ṛṣīr na āgamis tasmai brahma  
dadāmeti tasmā etat sāma prāyacchan yan nodhase  
prāyacchamś tasmān naudhasaṃ brahma vai nau-  
dhasam 11. brahmavarcasakāma etena stuvīta  
brahmavarcasī bhavati*

“The Gods divided among themselves the sacred Word (*brahman*); unto them came Nodhas Kākṣīvata.<sup>101</sup> They said: «A Rṣi has come unto us, let us give him the sacred Word.» They granted him this Sāman; in that they granted (it) to Nodhas, therefore (it is called) Naudhasa. The Naudhasa (chant) is sacred Word (*brahman*). One who is desirous of spiritual lustre (*brahmavarcasa*) should laud with this (chant), (thus) he becomes endowed with spiritual lustre.”

The central concept in this passage is *brahman*, which apparently designates here the totality of the Veda as in ŚB VI.1.1.8,

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<sup>101</sup> Nodhas is mentioned in RV 1.61.14; 62.13 (where he is also called *gotama*); 64.1; 124.4. The Anukramaṇī ascribes to him RV 1.58-64 (Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.461). The appellative *gotama* makes no problem, since Dīrghatamas, the father of Kākṣīvant, bears also the name Gotama, and the descendants of Kākṣīvant were called the Kuṣmāṇḍa Gautamas (Pargiter 1922, p.220).

where Prajāpati, through *tapas*, creates the Brahman, defined as the Triple Science (*trayī vidyā*), that is, the three Vedas. Perhaps also here we have, underlying, the same concept of a Brahman (Veda) created from Prajāpati, who just after this passage, in PB VII 10,13, is described as creating the animals and uttering over them a Sāman. Surely, this Brahman or sacred Word, endowed with magical power,<sup>102</sup> is already existing in its totality, since it is divided among the gods. The Rṣi, being the man who has a special relation with this sacred word, can receive from the gods a part of this Brahman, a Sāman that is then neither created nor seen by the Rṣi.

About the same division of the sacred Word among the gods is told in PB V 7,1:

*devā vai vācam vyabhajanta tasyā yo raso 'tyaricyata  
tad gaurīvitam abhavad anuṣṭubham anu pariplavate  
vāg anuṣṭub vāco raso gaurīvitam*

“The Gods divided among themselves the Word, what pith of it was left over, that became the Gaurīvita (Sāman). It revolves along with the Anuṣṭubh;<sup>103</sup> the Anuṣṭubh is Word, the Gaurīvita is the pith of the Word.”

Here we find, instead of *brahman*, *vāc*, which is ‘voice’,<sup>104</sup> ‘speech’ and ‘word’ in a general sense, but already in the Rgveda employed to indicate the deified sacred Word.<sup>105</sup> It

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Oldenberg 1917, p.479: “Eine solche Wesenheit ist das Brahman, die heilig-unheimliche Substanz oder Kraft des Vedaworts, die den Kenner und Besitzer dieses Worts, den Brahmanen, über den profanen Menschen erhebt.” Oldenberg specifies in n.2 that the original meaning was “das heilige Wort (die heilige Formel oder der Hymnus)” then hypostatized as such abstract force. Cf. Oldenberg 1916; Thieme 1952; Mayrhofer 1963, pp.452-6; Mayrhofer 1996, pp.236-8. Gonda 1950, on the other hand, supports the identification of *brahman* with ‘power’, in analogy with similar concepts of a magical force which can manifest itself in different objects, present in many ‘primitive’ cultures, like the often mentioned Melanesian-Polynesian *mana*. Cf. also Keith 1925, vol. II, pp.445-450, where this identification is already looked upon favourably.

<sup>103</sup> Caland 1931, p.89, n.2, explains that “the gaurīvita occurs on each day of the whole year’s session *viz.* in the anuṣṭubh part of the ārbhavapavamāna laud”.

<sup>104</sup> Caland 1931, p.89, translates it always as ‘the Voice’. We prefer here the use of ‘Word’ with a religious connotation, as in the biblical language, also because the term ‘voice’ can hardly suggest a corpus of texts.

<sup>105</sup> See RV 8.100.11a: *devīm vācam ajanayanta devās* “The Gods generated the divine Word”. RV 10.125 is a hymn entirely dedicated to the goddess Vāk, who speaks in the first

seems that the Gaurīvita Sāman is like a juice (*rasa*) left as a surplus after the division of the Word. In PB IX 2,3 we read:

*brahma yad devā vyakurvata tato yad atyaricyata tad  
gaurīvitam abhavat*

“When the Gods divided the sacred Word, that which was left over from it became the Gaurīvita.”

Thus, *brahman* and *vāc* appear as equivalent in this myth. Here there is no more mention of the pith or juice of the Word, but only of what is left from the division. Finally, we find also the Rṣi who has given the name to the Sāman, in XI 5,13-14:

*gaurīvitam bhavati / gaurīvitir vā etac chāktyo  
brahmaṇo 'tiriktam<sup>106</sup> apaśyat tad gaurīvitam abhavat*

“There is the Gaurīvita (Sāman). Gaurīviti Śāktya<sup>107</sup> saw this (Sāman) as it was left over from the sacred Word; that became the Gaurīvita (Sāman).”

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person: in st.3c she is distributed by the gods in many places (*tām mā devā vy ādadhuḥ purutrā*) and in st.5cd she says that he whom she loves is made by her a Brahman (the highest priest, supervisor of the sacrifice) or a Rṣi (*yām kāmāye tām-tam ugrām kṛṇomi tām brahmāṇam tām ṛṣim tām sumedhām*).

<sup>106</sup> Cf. TS VI.3.4.8, which speaks of the *yajñāśyātiriktam* ‘leftover or superabundant part of the sacrifice’.

<sup>107</sup> The Śāktya is a Vasiṣṭha Gotra, descending from Vasiṣṭha’s son Śakti, that we have already mentioned about the story of his killing, at the time of Sudās Paijavana. ‘Gaurīviti Śāktya’ is the author of RV 5.29 according to the Anukramaṇī, whereas RV 10.73 and 74 are attributed to ‘Gaurīviti’ without specification of the Gotra (cf. Pargiter 1922, p.212, n.1; p.249). The same Gaurīviti Śāktya in PB XXV 7,2 is described as practicing a Sattrā of six years using sacrificial cakes made of meat (*tarasapuroḍāśa*) on the bank of the Yavyāvati (‘rich in fields of barley’). This river is also mentioned in RV 6.27.6, in the context of the battle of Abhyāvartin against the Vṛcivats, which was fought also on the river Hariyūpīya. This river was identified by Brunnhofer with the modern Ariōb or Haliāb, a tributary of the Kurum, which is now in Afghanistan. The Yavyāvati according to Sāyaṇa is the same as the Hariyūpīya. Otherwise, it has been connected with the Zhob river which is more on the south, but the name ‘Zhob’ in Pashto means ‘oozing water’ (cf. Hillebrandt 1913, pp.49-50). In JB III 18 it is also said that the Śāktyas used meat-cakes in the Sattrā, and that they shot a deer to obtain the meat. Then, the bird Tārksya Suparṇa came flying, and when Gaurīviti aimed at him with the bow Tārksya promised to reveal that which has relation to the tomorrow, that is, the Gaurīvita Sāman. Then, the story of the origin of this Sāman is very



Here we do not have the division, probably because it was already mentioned twice, but only the reference to the leftover of the Brahman, the sacred Vedic Word. In this case the gods have nothing to do with the knowledge of the Sāman, because it is the R̥ṣi who sees it, apparently once the gods have finished their division.

In another story in XII 5,14, we find Vāk herself revealing the Sāman:

*niṣkirīyāḥ sattram āsata te tr̥ṣṭyam ahar na prājānaṃs  
tān etat sāma gāyamānā vāg upāplavat tena tr̥ṣṭyam  
ahaḥ prājānaṃs te 'bruvann iyaṃ vāva nas tr̥ṣṭyam ahar  
adīdr̥śad iti tr̥ṣṭyasyaivaivaiṣāhno dr̥ṣṭiḥ*

“The Niṣkirīyas<sup>108</sup> performed a Sattra. They did not know (the ritual of the) third day. The Word inundated them singing this Sāman,<sup>109</sup> through it they knew the third day. They said: «She forsooth, has let us see the third day!» This (chant) is the vision of the third day.”

This group of Brahmins, performing a sacrificial session of twelve days, cannot proceed, because they do not know the proper ritual for the third day.<sup>110</sup> We have the image of an experimental period of the Vedic sacrifice, when the complex

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different in the Jaiminīya tradition, and it has nothing of the theological context that we find in the Kauthuma tradition.

<sup>108</sup> This name can indicate a Śākhā or a Gotra according to Sāyaṇa. In the corresponding passage of JB III 52 the *niṣkaryā devās* occur, which seems to indicate that they were conceived as a category of gods. In JB II 357, on the other hand, we read: *niṣkaraṇīyā iti brāhmaṇāḥ pūrviṇas satram niṣeduh* “the ancestral Brahmins (called) ‘Niṣkaraṇīya’ performed a Sattra.”

<sup>109</sup> In PB XII 5,12 it is called *vācaḥ sāma* “melody of the Word”.

<sup>110</sup> In the version of JB III 52, they ignore not only the third day, but also the heavenly world, according to a usual expression (*te svargam lokam na prājānann etat tr̥ṣṭyam ahaḥ*). Cf. AB IV 32, where the Ṇgirases become confused (*muhyanti*) on the second day of the twelve-day-rite, and Śāryāta Mānava makes them recite a hymn which stimulates in them the knowledge of the sacrifice and of the heavenly world (*pra yajñam ajānan pra svargam lokam*). In AB V 14, the Ṇgirases become confused on the sixth day, in that case Nābhānediṣṭha makes them recite two hymns, causing, again, the knowledge of the sacrifice and of the heavenly world.

rituals had still to be built in their entirety.<sup>111</sup> But the Vedic tradition could not represent the R̥ṣis as inventing new rites: the underlying concept is that the third day has an ideal form which should be discovered; since the Niṣkirīyas could not yet achieve a ‘vision’ of that form, they had to receive a kind of revelation, conferring authority to the new elements introduced. In this case, the revealer is Vāk, the ‘Word’ itself, not in a female human form, as in other stories,<sup>112</sup> but as an immaterial voice, inundating, that is, pervading the space around the Niṣkirīyas with the sounds of the Sāman.<sup>113</sup> This chant stimulates in them the vision of the third day’s ritual: thus, we find that the Sāman can have the function of stimulating knowledge, and not only of producing some external effect. This function remains in this Sāman, defined as the ‘vision’ (*dr̥ṣṭi*) of the third day.

In XII 11,10-12, we have another kind of revelation:

10. *aṅgirasō vai sattram āsata teṣām āptaḥ spr̥taḥ svargo loka āsīt panthānaṃ tu devayānaṃ na prājānaṃ teṣān kalyāṇa āṅgirasō 'dhyāyam udavrajat sa ūrṇāyūṃ gandharvam apsarasām madhye preṅkhayamāṇam upait sa iyām iti yām yām abhyadīsat sainam akāmayata tam abhyavadat kalyāṇā<sup>3</sup> ity āpto vai vaḥ spr̥taḥ svargo lokaḥ panthānaṃ tu devayānaṃ na prajānūthedaṃ sāma svargyaṃ tena stutvā svargaṃ lokam eṣyatha mā tu vocoḥam adarśam iti 11. sa ait kalyāṇaḥ so 'bravīd āpto vai naḥ spr̥taḥ svargo lokaḥ panthānaṃ tu devayānaṃ na prajānīma idaṃ sāma svargyaṃ tena stutvā svargaṃ lokam eṣyāma iti kas te 'vocad ity aham evādarśam iti tena stutvā svargaṃ lokam āyann ahīyata kalyāṇo 'nr̥taṃ hi so 'vadat sa eṣaḥ śvitraḥ 12. svargyaṃ vā etat*

<sup>111</sup> Cf. the preceding note and ŚB XI.2.3.7, where the Gandharvas correct the R̥ṣis after they have performed the sacrifice, explaining what was defective and what exceeding.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. AB I 27; ŚB III.2.4.3-6; BD V 97-101. On the other hand, TB III.10.9.11 speaks of an invisible voice (*vāg adr̥ṣyamānā*) that reveals to Devabhāga Śrautar̥ṣa the knowledge of Agni Sāvitra.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. PB XII 5,10-11, where Paṣṭhavāḥ Āṅgirasā hears “the voice (or Word) of the fourth day” that speaks through the Pāṣṭhauha Sāman (*pāṣṭhauhaṃ bhavati / paṣṭhavād vā etenāṅgirasāś caturthasyāhno vācam vadantīm upāśr̥ṇot*).

*sāma svargalokaḥ punyaloko bhavaty aurnāyavena  
tuṣṭuvānaḥ*

“The Aṅgirasas performed a Sattrā, the heavenly world was obtained and won by them, but they did not know the path leading to the Gods. One of them, Kalyāṇa Āṅgirasa, went out to study. He came upon the Gandharva Ūṇāyu,<sup>114</sup> who was swinging amidst the Apsarases. Whichever one (of them) he indicated (saying) “this one”, she loved him. He (Ūṇāyu) addressed him: «Kalyāṇa, the heavenly world is obtained and won by you, but you do not know the path leading to the Gods. This Sāman is leading to Heaven, having lauded with it you will go to the heavenly world. But do not say: “I have seen (it).”» Kalyāṇa returned and said (to the other Aṅgirasas): «The heavenly world is obtained and won by us, but we do not know the path leading to the Gods. This Sāman is leading to Heaven, having lauded with it we will go to the heavenly world.» «Who has revealed to you (that Sāman)?» «I have seen it myself.» Lauding with it, they went to the heavenly world, (but) Kalyāṇa was left behind, for he had told untruth. He is the white snake<sup>115</sup> in this world.

<sup>114</sup> The name Ūṇāyu comes from *ūrṇā* ‘wool’, and means ‘woolly’ (cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. I, p.106, n.1; VS XIII 50). A Gandharva with this name is also mentioned in MBh 1,114.44, in the context of the birth celebration of Arjuna. This Gandharva sits singing on the chariot of the Sun in the month of Pauṣa, according to VP II 8 (see Mani 1975, p.770, p.811). According to Pargiter 1922, p.297, Gandharvas were associated in the Purāṇic tradition with the central Himalayan regions, which were probably characterized by sheep-keeping and wool production as they are today. On the other hand, woolly ewes were especially associated with the Gandhāris (cf. RV 1.126.7), and we can remind that one of the notes of the classical Indian scale is called Gāndhāra, and that there are also a Gāndhāra Grāma a Gāndhārī Rāgiṇī, since the region of Gāndhāra (in Northwestern Pañjāb) had a particular musical tradition.

<sup>115</sup> Sāyaṇa glosses *śvitraḥ* with *śvetakuṣṭhī* ‘suffering from white leprosy or vitiligo’, and Caland 1931, p.299, follows him, but he also observes that in JB III 77 *śvitra* is identified as a snake (*ahi*). In AV III 27,6 and X 4,5, TS V.5.10.2 *śvitra* is a kind of serpent. In VS XXIV 39 the *śvitra* is among the animals, belonging to the Ādityas. Moreover, it seems more probable that an animal might be regarded as a metamorphosis of an ancient personage, rather than a man who has contracted an illness. It could be also significant that the snake is typically connected with the earth, therefore it represents the opposite of a heavenly being. We should also observe that the meaning of *śvitra* as an adjective identifying the man who has contracted white leprosy is attributed only to this passage of the PB in Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol.II, p.408, in all the other cases in the Vedas it is associated

This Sāman is leading to Heaven, one who lauds with the Aurnāyava (Sāman) shares the heavenly world, the auspicious world.<sup>116</sup>”

Here we have the usual image of the Ṇgirases performing a sacrificial session (*sattra*) for the achievement of Heaven,<sup>117</sup> but there is a specific difficulty: it seems that they, through the ritual, have already gained sufficient merit to go to Heaven,<sup>118</sup> but this is not enough, because they must know the way for reaching the gods (*panthan devayāna*),<sup>119</sup> and they do not. In this stalemate situation, Kalyāṇa goes out to study, as is the normal duty for Brahmins, who should practice every day *svādhyāya*, the personal recitation of the Vedas.<sup>120</sup> According to TĀ II 11 this recitation has to be done outside the town or village, north or north-east, until the roofs cease to be seen.<sup>121</sup>

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with ‘the name of a species of serpent’: we can suppose that Sāyaṇa has followed the medical meaning of the noun *śvitra* because it was more common, and probably the only remained in his age.

<sup>116</sup> For *punya*loka, cf. PB XVIII 3,4 (*jyotiṣmantam punyam lokam jayati*); ChU II 23,1 (*punya*lokā bhavanti); MuU I 2,6 (*punyaḥ sukṛto brahmalokaḥ*); AV IX 5,16 (*lokam puṇyam*). Gonda 1966, p.81, n.41, translates our text “shares the ‘world’ of heaven, the ‘world of virtue’ (or ‘holy world’), i.e. the world of merit.” However, this last translation is not justified, because of the adjectival use of *punya* that we find in the other analogous phrases, even if a late commentator can gloss *punyaṇ lokān* as *punya*karmabhir arjitān lokān “the worlds acquired by meritorious (good, virtuous, pure) deeds” (Gonda 1966, p.149). For the older meaning of *punya*, which is ‘auspicious’ (“mit Glück, Wohlsein, Gedeihen begabt”) rather than ‘merit’ or ‘meritorious’, see Oldenberg 1919, pp.195-7.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. AB IV 32; V 14; PB XVI 12,1; XX 11,3; XXV 2,2; XXV 16,2; ŚB IV.1.5.1.

<sup>118</sup> This is also the interpretation of Sāyaṇa, which comments: *teṣām āṅgirasām tadyāgaphalabhūtaḥ svargākhya loka*. The translation of Lévi 1898, p.67 “il désiraient avec une ardeur impatiente le monde céleste”, seems totally unjustified.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. AV VIII 10,19-20; XV 12,5 and 9, where we find the same verb *pra-jñā* referred to the path leading to the Fathers and to the path leading to the gods (e.g. XV.12.5: *prā pitryānam pānthām jānāti prā devayānam*). According to Gonda 1966, pp.86-7, in this passage of the PB there is a distinction between the ‘world of heaven’ and the abode of the gods, but it is clear from what follows that it is not so: the Sāman revealed is *svargya* ‘leading to Heaven’, and the Ṇgirases at the end go to the heavenly world. Then, the ‘path leading to the gods’ leads to the *svarga loka* and not elsewhere.

<sup>120</sup> This is also called *brahmayajña* ‘sacrifice to the sacred Word’, cf. ŚB XI.5.6-7, where the beneficial effects of this daily practice are listed.

<sup>121</sup> See Mookerji 1947, p.88. Cf. BauDhS III 9,4.

In ŚB IV.6.9.7, the custom is mentioned of going away to recite the Vedas or to take fuel during the Sattrā.<sup>122</sup> Actually, in the Jaiminīya version (JB III 77) the protagonist (there called Śvitra Āṅgīrasa) meets the Gandharva Ūrṇāyu when he had gone to seek fuel (*samidhāraḥ parait*). In both cases, we have a movement out of the human environment towards the unknown, inhabited by non-human beings.<sup>123</sup> We find a phrase analogous to that of our passage in PB XV 5,20, where the R̥ṣi Viśvamanas, when he had gone out to recite the Vedas, was seized by a demon (*viśvamanasaṃ vā r̥ṣim adhyāyam udvrajitaṃ rakṣo 'grhṇāt*). But also in ChU I 12,1 we find a similar phrase, where Baka Dālbhya went out for his personal recitation (*bako dālbhya glāvo vā maitreyaḥ svādhyāyam udvavrāja*), and he found speaking dogs, acting as priests. Thus, going out to recite the Vedas was traditionally associated with the meeting with supernatural beings, source of danger or revelation. In this case, we have a Gandharva, typically engaged in love with the Apsarases, but also typically able to reveal secrets.<sup>124</sup> Not only, the Gandharvas in later tradition are associated with singing and music, and the Gandharvaveda is an Upaveda of the Sāmaveda.<sup>125</sup>

After the revelation from the Gandharva, Kalyāṇa, who has no merit in the discovering of the Sāman, coming back to his fellows in the human realm, pretends to have seen it personally, like a R̥ṣi. Actually, we have no sure grounds to define Kalyāṇa as a R̥ṣi,<sup>126</sup> because the real R̥ṣi, who has given the name to the

<sup>122</sup> *tadvā etāt daśamē 'hantsattrotthānaṃ kriyate tēṣāmēkaika evā vācamyamā āste vācam āpyāyāms tayāpīnayāyātayāmyōttaram āhas tanvate 'thētare viśrjyante samiddhārā vā svādhyāyāṃ vā tatrāpyāsnanti* “This, then, is done at the Sattrotthāna (rising from the session) on the tenth day. Each of them sits speechless, strengthening his voice: with that (voice) strengthened and reinvigorated they perform the last day. Then the others are dismissed, either (for) fetching fuel or to their day's reading of the scriptures. Now also they take food.” (translation by Eggeling 1882-1900, vol.II, pp.447-8).

<sup>123</sup> For the opposition between village and wilderness (*grāma/aranya*) see Sprockhoff 1981, pp.32-43.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. RV 10.139.5-6; AV II 1,2; XX 128,3; VS XXXII 9; ŚB XI.2.3.7; XI.5.1.13-16.

<sup>125</sup> See Böthlingk-Roth's dictionary, at the entry *gandharvaveda*.

<sup>126</sup> The only reason might be that he is one of the Āṅgīrasas, who were the ancient R̥ṣis *par excellence* and also Sāyana, in his commentary to this passage, glosses them collectively as R̥ṣis.

Sāman, is rather Ūṛṇāyu,<sup>127</sup> and from this story it seems that much importance was given to the actual person who has ‘seen’ a Mantra: a sort of defence of the authorship. Probably, lying about one’s vision of the sacred Word and about one’s condition of R̥ṣi was regarded as a heavy sin, which in this case makes Kalyāṇa unworthy of heaven, and even transforms him into a sort of snake, if we accept the interpretation of *śvitra* given in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa. From this conclusion, it appears clear that the origin of the story is related to an etiological myth intended to explain the existence of this animal, and to impart a moral lesson.

### The R̥ṣi and guilt

We have already seen two stories related to a bad deed: that of Yuktāśva in PB XI 8,8, who exchanged the young horses (or children) and this of Kalyāṇa. In the first case, the redemption was accomplished through *tapas*, in the second, there is only failure and a sort of punishment through metamorphosis (or illness). We have also other stories dealing with sins, guilt and redemption, showing that moral sense was not so unknown to the Brāhmaṇa culture as it was asserted by Sylvain Lévi.<sup>128</sup> Certainly it was different from a modern concept of ethics, being inserted in a ritualistic way of thinking, but we cannot reduce it only to ritual behaviours. The most expressive passage which depicts remorse and redemption is that of XIII 6,9:

*dīrghajihvī vā idaṃ rakṣo yajñahā yajñiyān avalihaty  
acarat tām indraḥ kayācana māyayā hantuṃ  
nāśamsatātha ha sumitraḥ kutsaḥ kalyāṇa āsa tam  
abravīd imām acchā brūṣveti tām acchābrūta sainam*

<sup>127</sup> In JB III 76 there is a story, preceding that of Śvitra, explaining how Ūṛṇāyu came to see this Sāman.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. Lévi 1898, p.9: “La morale n’a pas trouvé de place dans ce système”; p.100: “[...] les termes de morale ne doivent jamais faire illusion dans les Brāhmaṇas. Les auteurs de ces compilations sacerdotales ne voient et ne mesurent les faits que sous l’angle rituel. L’acte bon est l’acte conforme aux prescriptions du culte; l’acte mauvais est l’acte qui transgresse ces prescriptions.”

*abravān nāhaitan na śuśruva priyam iva tu me  
hr̥dayasyeti tām ajñāpayat tām saṃskṛte 'hatām tad vāva  
tau tarhy akāmayetām kāmasani sāma saumitraṃ  
kāmam evaitenāvarundhe 10. sumitraḥ san krūrām akar  
ity<sup>129</sup> enaṃ vāg abhyavadat taṃ śug ārcchat sa tapo  
'tapyata sa etat saumitram apaśyat tena śucam  
apāhatāpaśucam hate saumitreṇa tuṣṭuvānaḥ*

“Dīrghajihvī, this demon destroyer of sacrifices, wandered licking at the objects of sacrifices. Indra could not tell by which stratagem to kill her. Sumitra Kutsa<sup>130</sup> was a handsome (young man). To him (Indra) said: «Call her to you.» He called her to himself, she told him: «I have never heard this indeed, but it is rather pleasant to my heart.» He announced her (the meeting-place), and at the arranged place they killed her. That, forsooth, they had desired at that moment. The Saumitra is a wish-granting chant. Through it (one) fulfils (one's) wish.

«Being Sumitra ('good friend') you have done a bloody deed!» a voice said to him. Grief came upon him, he performed austerities, he saw this Saumitra (chant), through it he drove away the grief. Drives away the grief one who lauds with the Saumitra (chant).”

Sumitra obeys the command of Indra, who wants to kill a noxious demon, but his name implies a friendly attitude, which should apparently be universal. Violence is here not justified even against a demon, but besides violence, there is also deviation from truth: the name is not a convention, it indicates the ideal attitude of the person named, and not following this moral meaning is an infraction of the adherence to truth which is a fundamental moral value of the Brāhmaṇas. In the Jaiminīya

<sup>129</sup> Cf. TS VI.4.8.1: *mitrāḥ sán krūrām akar iti*, where it is the god Mitra who slays Soma, requested by the gods, albeit initially he refuses, being the friend of all (*sárvasya... mitrām*).

<sup>130</sup> According to Sāyaṇa, Kutsa is the actual name of the R̥ṣi, and *sumitra* an epithet (*sumitraḥ śobhanena maitrībhāvena yuktaḥ kalyānaḥ praśastaḥ kutsākhyā r̥ṣiḥ*). In JB I 161, we find *sumitraḥ kautso*, thus showing that he was son of Kutsa or member of the Gotra of Kutsa. A Sumitra Kautsa is the R̥ṣi of RV 10.105 according to the Anukramaṇī, and in the last stanza of that hymn he actually calls himself *sumitra* (but also *durmitra*) and *kutsaputra*. Cf. Oertel 1897b, p.227, n.3, p.229, n.9 (= Hettrich-Oberlies 1994, p.93 and p.95).

version (JB I 161-163) the way of dealing with this problem is very different: Dīrghajihvī, being violently seized by Sumitra, is astonished, remarking the contradiction of his behaviour with his name meaning ‘good friend’. But he replies that he is a good friend to a good friend, a bad friend to a bad friend.<sup>131</sup> Here there is not this distinction: the immaterial voice (that we are tempted to interpret as a manifestation of the subconscious guilt-feeling<sup>132</sup>) accuses him for a bloody deed (*krūra*), that is, for an act of violence, independently from the object of this violence. As a consequence, Sumitra is seized by grief (*śuc*). This word recurs in two other passages (XI 8,10; XIII 11,10) with the same formulas using the verbs *ārch*<sup>133</sup> and *apa-han*.<sup>134</sup> In XI 8,10, it is referred to Ayāsyā Āṅgīrasa who eats the food of the Ādityas while they were consecrated,<sup>135</sup> therefore in a context of ‘ritual ethics’. In XIII 11,10 Vidanvat Bhārgava is

<sup>131</sup> JB I 163: [...] *sumitra evāha sumitrāyāsmi durmitro durmitrāyeti* // Cf. Caland 1931, pp.328-9; Oertel 1897b (= Hettrich-Oberlies 1994, pp.91-105).

<sup>132</sup> Cf. PB XIV 11,28; XIX 4,7, where it is Indra who, having given the Yatis (a kind of ascetics) to the hyenas, is reproached by an inauspicious or blaming voice (*āstīlā vāg abhyavadat*).

<sup>133</sup> The same verb is used in two other passages of this Brāhmaṇa: in PB VII 5,6 we read *makhaṃ yaśa ārcchat*, “to Makha came the glory”; in PB VII 8,1 *apo vā ṛṣyam ārcchat* “to the Waters came the seasonal period (favourable for conception)”. In both cases, differently from the case of *śuc*, we have a positive entity as subject of the verb, but similarly, it is always an abstract, impersonal force. In TS VI.4.1.4 and VII.2.7.5, we find *śuc* as a subject of *ṛchatī*: in the first case, it is the pain which reaches the heart of the victim; in the second one, the pain which reaches the vital airs (*prāṇān*) of one who is ill and of the people when there is no rain. In those contexts, the pain is physical, but this should not exclude that in our text we have to do with a pain coming from remorse.

<sup>134</sup> The same verb *apa-han* is also used (with *pāpman* ‘evil’ as object) in TS VII.4.2.1; AB IV 4,5; IV 22,6; IV 25,3; V 1,6; VI 1,1, etc.; PB IV 9,22; V 5,13; XIV 8,6, etc.; JB I 8,5; I 54,15, etc. In AB XIX 3,3 we find the compound *apahatāpāpman*, which we have also in ŚB II.1.4.9.

<sup>135</sup> *ayāsyo vā āṅgīrasa ādityānām dīkṣitānām annam āśnāt tamī śug ārcchat sa tapo 'tapyata sa ete āyāsye apaśyat tābhyām śucam apāhatāpa śucam' hata āyāsyābhyām tuṣṭuvānaḥ* “Ayāsyā Āṅgīrasa had eaten food of the Ādityas, who had been consecrated (by the *dīkṣā*). Grief came upon him, he performed austerities, he saw these Vaidanvata (chants). By means of them he removed his grief. Removes his grief one who lauds through the Vaidanvata (chants).” In this case Caland 1931, p.262, translates *śuc* by ‘sickness’, whereas in the other two cases he translates ‘grief’ (p.238) and ‘remorse’ (p.343), without justifying the difference. For the same error of Ayāsyā, but with a different effect, cf. PB XIV 3,22.



seized by remorse for having struck at Indra,<sup>136</sup> that is, for an act of violence towards a god. Thus, on three cases, we have only one dealing with ritualism and two with violence, which pertains to morals in a general sense. In the anthropological division between guilt-culture and shame-culture<sup>137</sup> the Brahmanic culture appears as mainly guilt-centered, with the concepts of *enas*, *pāpman* and *pāpa*<sup>138</sup> recurring in the Brāhmaṇas and Dharmasūtras, even if moral misdeed and ritualistic impurity are mixed in these concepts. Here, with *śuc* ‘grief, remorse’, we have also the psychological correlate of these sins.<sup>139</sup> In the Manu Smṛti (XI 234) we find an interesting prescription that seems to have to do with the same idea of a regret which assails the sinner and which is eliminated by a certain practice: “If someone’s mind is not at ease with respect to a particular act he has committed, he should practice ascetic toil for it until his mind is assuaged.”<sup>140</sup> In the Pañcaviṃśa, the R̥ṣi practices *tapas* to purify himself and overcome the condition of moral anguish into which he has fallen, but it is the Sāmān which finally relieves him. Then, chanting with the Sāmāns discovered by R̥ṣis seems here to be a sort of therapeutic method for eliminating the uneasiness of guilt, and

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<sup>136</sup> *vidanvān vai bhārgava indrasya pratyahaṃ tam śug ārcchat sa tapo ‘tapyata sa etāni vaidanvatāny apaśyat taiḥ śucam apāhatāpaśucam hate vaidanvatais tuṣṭuvānaḥ* “Vidanvat Bhārgava struck at Indra. Grief came upon him, he performed austerities, he saw these Vaidanvata (chants). By means of them he removed his grief. Removes his grief one who lauds through the Vaidanvata (chants).” Cf. JB III.159-160; JAOS XXVI, p.63 ff.

<sup>137</sup> See Dodds 1951, pp.17-18, pp.28-63.

<sup>138</sup> For *enas* see Bodewitz 2006, particularly pp.241-269. At p.266 he remarks that this term is mainly used in Yajurvedic texts, whereas it is totally missing in several Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas, for instance in all the Sāmavedic texts, with the exception of PB I 6,10, where it is repeated in a ritual formula in connection with Soma as means of purification (*avayajana*) of the evil created by many sources. At p.270 he asserts that *enas* originally meant evil caused by sin or by other influences and subsequently it denoted sometimes committed sin.

<sup>139</sup> A similar psychological allusion is in ŚB IV.4.5.5: *tād enaṃ sārvasmād dhṛḍyād énaṣaḥ pāpmānaḥ pramuñcati*, translated by Eggeling (1882-1900, vol.II, p.380) with “thus he frees him from every guilt and evil of the heart” (cf. Bodewitz 2006, p.267). This is a comment to RV 1.24.8, where Varuṇa is described as “he who repels by the word all that wounds the heart” (*utāpavaktā hr̥dayāvīdhaś cit*).

<sup>140</sup> Translation by Olivelle 2005, p.227. Here is the text (ibidem, p.881): *yasmin karmanyasya kṛte manasaḥ syād alāghavam / tasmīṃs tāvat tapaḥ kuryād yāvat tuṣṭikaram bhavet*.

the Ṛṣis serve as models also through their path to redemption (or to deliverance from guilt-feelings).

### The Ṛṣi and Heaven

We have already seen the Aṅgirasas striving for the heavenly world, and finally reaching it. Surely, it was a common and fundamental belief that the Ṛṣis of the past went to heaven after death, already in the R̥gveda.<sup>141</sup> In the Pañcaviṃśa we have many other instances of the Aṅgirasas ascending to Heaven, although apparently during their life.<sup>142</sup> But even more often, we find that the Ṛṣis ‘see’ or ‘know’ the heavenly world.

In VIII 5,7, we read:

*purojitī vo andhasa iti padyā cākṣaryā ca virājau  
bhavataḥ padyayā vai devāḥ svargaṃl lokam āyann  
akṣaryayā ṛṣayo nu prājānan yad ete padyā cākṣaryā ca  
virājau bhavataḥ svargasya lokasya prajñātyai*

“(The three stanzas, beginning): ‘By fore-conquest of your juice (of Soma)’ are (both) a Padyā Virāj and an Akṣaryā Virāj.<sup>143</sup> By means of the Padyā (Virāj) the Gods went to the heavenly world, by means of the Akṣaryā (Virāj) the Ṛṣis knew (the way to it). The reason for which there are these Padyā and Akṣaryā Virāj (stanzas), (is) for the knowledge of (the way to) the heavenly world.”

Here, the Vedic verses, with their secret numerical structure, are the means for reaching or at least knowing heaven, in order to go there after death. We have here the same verb, *pra-jñā*, that we have found in XII 11,10 referred to the *panthan*

<sup>141</sup> Cf. the funerary hymn RV 10.154.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. VII 7,18; VIII 9,5; XII 6,12; XIV 9,32 (where Dvīgat goes even twice to heaven, cf. JB III 216); XX 11,3; XXV 2,2; XXV 16,2. In PB VII 7,18, it is Vasīṣṭha who goes to heaven.

<sup>143</sup> As explained by Caland 1951, p.174, n.1, these three stanzas (RV 9.101.1-3) are a Padyā Virāj because the Virāj is made of 10 syllables, and they comprehend 10 Padas; and they are an Akṣaryā Virāj, because they contain 80 syllables (*akṣara*), and 80 is a multiple of 10.

*devayāna* ‘the path leading to the gods’. According to Böhlingk-Roth’s dictionary,<sup>144</sup> *pra-jñā* means “erkennen, verstehen: insbes. den Weg oder die Richtung oder auch die Art und Weise eines Verfahrens erkennen, Etwas zu finden wissen, sich zurechtfinden, Bescheid wissen, sich orientieren”. Therefore, Caland<sup>145</sup> translates here *prājānan* “came to know the way to it”. This meaning in relation to heaven is apparent in ŚB XIII.2.8.1, where, in the context of the Aśvamedha, it is said that “the Gods, going upwards, did not know (the way to) heaven, but the horse knew it” (*devā vā ūdañcaḥ svargāṃ lokāṃ na prājānaṃ tam āśvaḥ prājānād*). However, a few lines above, in ŚB XIII.2.3.1, we find a different meaning: “the Gods did not know the Pavamāna (Stotra)<sup>146</sup> at the Aśvamedha to be the heavenly world, but the horse knew it” (*devā vā āśvamedhe pāvamānaṃ svargāṃ lokāṃ na prājānaṃ tam āśvaḥ prājānād*). Here, an element of the sacrifice is seen as the heavenly world, as in ŚB III.2.8.5 the place where they immolate the victim is heaven, or in ŚB IX.3.4.12 the Āhavanīya fire is heaven, or in KB XIV 1 the sacrifice *tout court* is the heavenly world (*svargo vai loko yajñah*).<sup>147</sup> In AB II 1,1, the R̥ṣis, thanks to the sacrificial post, knew the sacrifice and the heavenly world (*te pra yajñam ajānan pra svargāṃ lokāṃ*). And in AB I 8,15-16 we find an epistemological reflection: “by the eye the Gods discerned the sacrifice, by the eye is discerned that which is not discernable; therefore even after wandering confused, when one actually perceives with the eye, then he discerns indeed.”<sup>148</sup> Actually, we find here an orientation, but not through a theoretical knowledge of the way, rather through the direct vision. We can also compare the already cited ŚB XIII.2.3.1, where we learn that “the man does

<sup>144</sup> Böhlingk-Roth 1855-1875, vol. III, p.143.

<sup>145</sup> See Caland 1951, p.174.

<sup>146</sup> For a detailed explication, see Eggeling 1882-1900, vol. V, p.304, n.2.

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Gonda 1966, pp.89-90.

<sup>148</sup> *caḥṣuṣā vai devā yajñam prājānaṃś, caḥṣuṣā vā etat prajñāyate yad aprajñeyam; tasmād api mugdhaś caritva yadaivānuṣṭhyā caḥṣuṣā prajānāty atha prajānāti.*

For the translation of *anuṣṭhyā* ‘actually’, i.e. “really, in accordance with the facts or the truth”, see Bodewitz 1974, p.11. Keith 1920, p.112, translates the same adverb ‘immediately’, and observes in n.2 that it is rendered by Haug with ‘successively’.

not know directly the heavenly world, the horse does directly know it” (*na vai manuṣyāḥ svargāṃ lokam añjasā vedāśvo vai svargāṃ lokam añjasā veda*). It is true that the horse knows the way, but the verb *vid* denotes generally the knowledge, and not the knowledge of the way. Then, the verb *pra-jñā* seems to denote rather the direct and correct knowledge of an object, which, when it is the case, allows to reach it. The adverb *añjasā* in the passage of the Śatapatha appears as an equivalent of the preposition *pra-* in the sense of ‘directly’,<sup>149</sup> and we find it again in the most typical formula of the Pañcaviṃśa related to heaven. The first instance is in XI 8,14:

*vasiṣṭho vā etena vaidavaḥ stutvāñjasā svargāṃ lokam  
apaśyat svargasya lokasyānukhyātyai svargāl lokān na  
cyavate tuṣṭuvānaḥ*

“Vasiṣṭha, son of Vīḍu, having lauded with this (Vāsiṣṭha Sāman), saw directly the heavenly world; (so it serves) for beholding the heavenly world. He who lauds (with this chant) does not fall from the heavenly world.”

We find the same phrase for many different Ṛṣis (often from the Āṅgīrasa Gotra<sup>150</sup>), as a stereotyped description of their achievement. The phrase *añjasā paś* appears to be the same as *añjasā vid* of the Śatapatha and as *pra-jñā* that we have already found in the Pañcaviṃśa and elsewhere, and also in *svargasya lokasya prajñātyai* of VIII 5,7,<sup>151</sup> which, in turn, appears as

<sup>149</sup> Only in AB I 8,15-16 we have found *pra-jñā* intensified by the adverb *anuṣṭhyā* (see the previous note).

<sup>150</sup> XII 5,16 (Śukti Āṅgīrasa); XIII 9,18 (Ukṣṇorandhra Kāvya); XIII 11,22 (Śnuṣṭi Āṅgīrasa); XIV 5,25 (Suhavis Āṅgīrasa); XIV 9,15 (Iṭan Kāvya); XIV 9,29 (Puruhanman Vaikhānasa); XIV 10,9 (Vyaśva Āṅgīrasa); XV 3,13 (Babhru Kaumbhya); XV 5,11 (Śammad Āṅgīrasa). So, on ten cases, we have five Āṅgīrasas, two Kāvya (Bhārgavas), one Vaikhānasa (an ascetic, as already said above), one Vāsiṣṭha and one Kaumbhya, who is apparently not known elsewhere, even if in the Rgveda there is a Ṛṣi named Babhru (cf. Keith-Macdonell 1912, vol. II, p.60).

<sup>151</sup> Cf. VIII 2,6: *atharvāṇo vā etal lokakāmāḥ sāmāpaśyaṃ tenāmartyamḥ lokam apaśyan yad etat sāmā bhavati svargasya lokasya prajñātyai* “The Atharvans saw together this Sāman, (being) desirous of the (immortal) world, through it they saw the immortal world. The reason for which there is this Sāman, (is) for the knowledge of the heavenly

equivalent to *svargasya lokasyānukhyātyai*.<sup>152</sup> What is significant in this formula, is that the Sāman stimulates knowledge in the R̥ṣi (as in XII 5,14 Vāk stimulated the knowledge of the third day of the rite), more precisely the direct knowledge of the supreme world of the cosmology of the Brāhmaṇas,<sup>153</sup> as well as last goal of their eschatology. This knowledge certainly serves for reaching the heavenly world after death, but it arises here and now for the R̥ṣi, and, through the Sāman by him discovered, it seems that it can be realized again in the present, albeit probably not with the same clearness or intensity. Actually, the idea of a present experience of heaven is already alluded in some Vedic hymns: in RV 8.48.3, the priests who have drunk the Soma have reached the light and found the gods;<sup>154</sup> in AV XVIII 3,64, in a funerary hymn, we find this invite, addressed again to the priests during the Soma sacrifice: “Ascend to highest heaven, O R̥ṣis: do not be afraid. Soma-drinkers, for you is performed this Soma-drinker’s oblation. We have come to the highest light.”<sup>155</sup> In TS V.1.8.6, in the context of the Agnicayana, we read: “«We have come to the highest light», he says; the highest light is that sun; verily he attains unity with the sun. The year does not halt, his luck does not halt, for whom these are performed. The last he recites with the word ‘light’ in it; verily he bestows on him light above, for beholding the world of heaven.”<sup>156</sup>

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world.” Here we find mentioned both the vision of the Sāman and of the immortal or heavenly world.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. TS V.1.8.6; VI.5.4.1 (*svargāsya lokasyānukhyātyai*); VI.3.4.8 (*svargāsya lokāsya prajñātyai*); II.5.11.3; VI.3.7.2 (*yajñāsyaanukhyātyai*); AB I 8,16; II 1,2; IV 32,7 (*yajñāsya prajñātyai svargasya lokasyānukhyātyai*).

<sup>153</sup> According to AB VI 9,10, the *svarga loka* is the fourth world (after earth, intermediate space, and sky); cf. ŚB I.2.1.12; I.2.4.12; I.2.4.21; Gonda 1966, p.91; Lévi 1898, pp.91-93.

<sup>154</sup> RV 8.43ab: *āpāma sōmam amṛtā abhūmāganma jyōtir āvidāma devān.*

<sup>155</sup> AV XVIII.3.64: *ā rohata dīvam uttamām ṛṣayo mā bibhūta / sōmapāḥ sōmapāyina idām vaḥ kriyate havir āganma jyōtir uttamām.*

<sup>156</sup> *āganma jyōtir uttamām ity āha / asāu vā ādityō jyōtir uttamām ādityāsyaivā sāyujyaḥ gachati nā samvatsarās tiṣṭhati nāsya śrīs tiṣṭhati yāsya itāḥ kriyānte jyōtiṣmatīm uttamām ānv āha jyōtir evāsmā upariṣṭād dadhāti svargāsya lokasyānukhyātyai.*

Often in the Vedic sacrifices, there is a symbolic ascension to heaven,<sup>157</sup> and from the stanzas related to Soma we find that this ascension was made possible, in the R̥sis, by the drinking of the sacred beverage, which stimulated an ecstatic journey like that of the shaman.<sup>158</sup> In the Pañcaviṃśa, it seems that the chant of the Sāman is used to induce the ecstatic knowledge of the heavenly world, or at least an ideal orientation towards heaven. About the ‘falling’ from heaven, we can think to the fall, after death, into an inferior world, but the fact that it is in the present, suggests that it can be an allusion to a sort of spiritual level which is attained, and which will allow to reach heaven in the future. Another interpretation can result from PB X 4,5, where the performer of the twelve-day rite, having reached the heavenly world by means of the lustre of the Gāyatrī ‘with wings of light’ (*jyotiḥpakṣā*), eats, resplendent, food suitable for Brahmins until old age.<sup>159</sup> In note, Caland<sup>160</sup> observes: “From the words: ‘till old age’ it appears that the author has not in mind a description of heavenly bliss, but of material welfare, after the Sacrificer has reached (mentally and ideally) the world of heaven through the sacrifice and returned to the world of the living.” Actually, we can see that the reaching of the heavenly world is here a passage to a higher level of existence which brings also material prosperity, but for the purpose of eating food suitable for Brahmins (*brahmādyā*) and in association with images of light which can also allude to a spiritual bliss. According to this meaning of ‘reaching the heavenly world’, the phrase ‘not falling from the heavenly world’ would mean ‘not losing an elevated state of material and spiritual welfare’, which will also bring to heaven after death. Material and spiritual are not clearly separated in the worldview of the Brāhmaṇas, and a cosmic level is not separated from an existential level: the ritual

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. PB IV 7,10 (Gavām ayana); XVIII 10,10 (Rājasūya); XXI 8,2-6 (Parāka rite). In PB XXI 4,3, the performer of the Aśvamedha joins the celestial world ‘with his body’: *eṣa vāva saśarīraḥ sambhavaty amuṣmai lokāya yo ’śvamedhī*. Cf. Gonda 1966, p.89.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. Deeg 1993, pp.117-137.

<sup>159</sup> *gāyatrīm vā etām jyotiḥpakṣām āsate yad etaṃ dvādaśāham aṣṭau madhya ukthā agniṣṭomāv abhito bhāsā svargaṃ lokam etyājaraṣaṃ brahmādyam annam atti dīpyamānaḥ*.

<sup>160</sup> Caland 1931, p.235, n.2.

ascension allows to reach symbolically (spiritually or ‘ideally’) the cosmic heaven, but in this way it should actually bring a beneficial transformation or stabilization in the sacrificer’s existence.

In all this, the R̥ṣi is the discoverer of this higher level of being called *svarga loka*, the finder of the way to it, and the revealer of a method to know and reach it, which, as usual in the Vedas, is connected with sacrifice and with the sacred Word.

## Conclusions

After this analysis of the different contexts and ways of presenting the R̥ṣis in the Pañcaviṃśa, we can conclude that we have here all the four aspects presented at the beginning. The first, the priestly function, is present every time a R̥ṣi acts as a model of a present sacrificer, and has often the particular character of the function of Purohita, the king’s priest and spiritual protector of the kingdom. The second, the creation of sacred poetry and connection with the sacred Word (*vāc*, *mantra* or *brahman*), is evident (as in the epithet *mantrakṛt* ‘mantra-maker’) and takes various forms, from the sudden inspiration provoked by a sneezing cat in the case of Kaṇva to the self-revelation of the personified Sāman in the case of Keśin Dālbhya or of the personified Vāk in the case of the Niṣkirīyas, to the revelation of the *brahman* by the gods in the case of Nodhas, or to the simple vision in many other cases. And so we arrive at the third aspect, that of vision and inspiration. We know that the R̥ṣis are those who see the Mantras, and in the Pañcaviṃśa there are numerous instances of this vision, sometimes also of vision of parts of the ritual as in the case of the Niṣkirīyas seeing the ‘third day’ of the twelve-day rite.<sup>161</sup> There is also the vision of the god Indra, in the case of Vasiṣṭha, and the vision of heaven as we have just seen. There is also the

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. also PB XIV 11,26, where Kutsa sees ‘the separate drinking of the (two) juice(s)’ (see Caland 1931, pp.384-5); XXI 9,2, where Atri sees his four-day rite; XXI 11,2, where Vasiṣṭha sees his four-day rite; XXI 12,2, where Viśvāmītra sees his four-day rite.

case, in PB XIV 11, 19, of the vision of the three worlds (*trayāṇām lokānām dṛṣṭi*) seen by an important late Ṛṣi, Asita Daivala.

These special visions are generally made possible, in the Sāmavedic context of the Pañcaviṃśa, by the previous vision of a Sāman. This primary vision sometimes seems to be produced simply by desire, as in the case of the Ṛṣis ‘desirous of cattle’ (*paśukāma*) like Andhīgu in VIII 5,12 (cf. n.39), or of Vasiṣṭha desirous of seeing Indra in XV 5,24, or of the Atharvans desirous of the immortal world (*lokakāma*) in VIII 2,6 (cf. n.151). In some cases, the vision seems to be provoked by urgency or necessity, as for the royal Ṛṣi Dīrghaśravas, who, being exiled and wandering hungry, sees a chant procuring food (XV 3,25). Analogous is the case of Śyāvāśva, who, brought to the desert in order to kill him, sees a Sāman which creates rain (VIII 5,9). Or of Śarkara, the dolphin-Ṛṣi, that, abandoned on the dry land by Indra for his disrespect, through the chant attains again to the water (XIV 5,15). Another instance is that of Vasiṣṭha after the killing of his sons, who in IV 7,3 and VIII 2,4 sees a chant which makes him have again progeny and cattle, whereas in XXI 11,2 he sees a particular rite which permits him to ‘reach the summit’.<sup>162</sup> Agastya, in XXI 14,5, is assailed by the Maruts, but seeing a hymn is able to appease them.

A different kind of urgency is the condition of impurity or sin of Gauṣūkti and Āśvasūkti, who, having accepted many forbidden gifts, thought to have swallowed poison,<sup>163</sup> which is eliminated through the chant seen by them (XIX 4,10). Similar is the case of XIV 3,22, where Ayāsya Āṅgīrasa had eaten food of the Ādityas, who had undergone the consecration: through the chant seen by him in that occasion, he ‘redressed himself’ (*ātmānam samaśrīṇād*). But in a parallel passage, XI 8,10, we find that Ayāsya is taken by grief after this mistake and practices *tapas*, then he sees the two Sāmans able to free him

<sup>162</sup> PB XXI 11,2: *vasiṣṭhaḥ putrahato hīna ivāmanyata sa etam apaśyat so ‘graṃ paryaid yo hīna iva manyeta sa etena yajeta*.

<sup>163</sup> Interpreted as moral or ritual impurity by Caland 1931, p.506, based on JB III 250, which also describes the desire of the two Ṛṣis to expel the ‘poison’, preceding the vision of the Sāmans.



from grief. So, we can also suppose that *tapas*, the ascetic ‘heat’, is always implied before the vision of a R̥ṣi. We also find that the practice of *tapas* follows the desire, as in XIV 12,5, where Uśanas Kāvya desires to obtain as much ‘world’ as the other Kāvya possess, then he ‘heats the heat’ (*tapo 'tapyata*) and sees the appropriate Sāman. The desire to solve a problem or to get a particular result stimulates a search for vision which normally requires the practice of *tapas*, that is also a practice of concentration. Even when the vision is sudden and there is no time to practice austerities, it is obvious that the R̥ṣi is able to see because he is a *tapasvin*, a man who has cultivated the inner energy of *tapas*. So, although there is no explicit description of the process of becoming a R̥ṣi, we can say that *tapas* is the force which brings a person (generally a Brahmin, sometimes a Kṣatriya) to the status of R̥ṣi, of one who sees the Mantras. And so we arrive to the fourth aspect, the ethical and ascetic traits: the practice of *tapas* is the main ascetic feature of the R̥ṣis, and it is connected with ethics because it could be used to expiate particular misdeeds, as in the stories of Sumitra Kutsa deceiving and killing the demoness, of Ayāsya eating the food of the Ādityas, of Vidanvat Bhārgava striking at Indra and of Yuktāśva exchanging the young horses. These stories show that the R̥ṣis were supposed to follow a particular ideal of ethical conduct, and any deviation from it required an expiation through austerities, but also that they were not idealized; actually, their deeds and purposes appear often as quite selfish. When it is not a mere matter of survival, their aims are generally personal wealth or power, victory over the rivals in gaining the divine favour, at the highest level the personal salvation of the heavenly world. On the other hand, their vision of chants and rites is something which brings benefits to descendants or posterity, as is explicit in the case of Aṣṭādamṣṭra in VIII 9,21, where the old R̥ṣi assures that a person who will use his Sāmans will prosper. Moreover, the function of the R̥ṣi as Purohita is to protect the king and the kingdom. In the case of Vasiṣṭha receiving from Indra the Stomabhāgas, the result is that “the Bharatas with Vasiṣṭha as Purohita were multiplied” (XV 5,24). The power of the R̥ṣi to bring prosperity is not limited to his

person, but is extended to those who employ him as a priest, and also to his descendants and to all those who apply his Mantras or Sāmans. We can say that the R̥ṣi increased and supported life in all his forms: food, rain, animals, children, health, wealth, and, generally, ‘prosperity’ (*puṣṭi*, *ṛddhi*). He could even restore life after death, as in the cases of Vṛṣa reviving the young Brahmin, or of Suśravas reviving his son. This on the earthly plane, in an horizontal dimension; on the other side, there is the vertical dimension of his striving after and knowledge of the heavenly world, which can coincide with earthly welfare as we have seen in X 4,5, but is essentially a transcendent level of being, the supreme goal of the religion of the Brāhmaṇas.

To sum up, the R̥ṣi is the person who, through his practice of *tapas*, his privileged relation with the gods (especially Indra) and his vision and ritual application of the sacred word, could overcome every obstacle and achieve every positive aim of the Brahmanic worldview, assuring prosperity and stability in this life and immortal heavenly bliss in the afterlife. Then, it is following the example of the R̥ṣis through the repetition of their powerful words, melodies and rituals, and also observing the same norms of purity and practices of purification, that one can achieve the same goals, according to the faith of the author(s) of the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, which is in harmony with the general faith of the Vedic culture of the Brāhmaṇas. The R̥ṣis are, therefore, the founders and the models of this Vedic culture, resulting from the synthesis and preservation of the multiple traditions which traced in them their origin. At the same time, they were the ancestors of the persons in charge of this synthesis and preservation, the Brahmins belonging to the different Gotras which had in those remote figures their progenitors, and whose continuity is still alive in contemporary India.

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