

Ṛtu-parṇa appears in a Brāhmaṇa-like passage of the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra¹ as son of Bhaṅgāśvina and king of Śaphāla. In the Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra² are mentioned Ṛtuparṇa-Kayovadhī Bhaṅgyaśvinau.

¹ xx. 12.

² xxi. 20, 3.

| Cf. Caland, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 57, 745.

Ṛtv-ij is the regular term for 'sacrificial priest,' covering all the different kinds of priests employed at the sacrifice. It appears certain that all the priests were Brāhmaṇas.¹ The number of priests officiating at a sacrifice with different functions was almost certainly seven. The oldest list, occurring in one passage of the Rigveda,² enumerates their names as Hotṛ, Potṛ, Neṣṭṛ, Agnīdh, Praśāṣṭṛ, Adhvaryu, Brahman, besides the institutor of the sacrifice. The number of seven probably explains the phrase 'seven Hotṛs' occurring so frequently in the Rigveda, and is most likely connected with that of the mythical 'seven Ṛsis.' It may be compared with the eight of Iran.³ The chief of the seven priests was the Hotṛ, who was the singer of the hymns, and in the early times their composer also. The Adhvaryu performed the practical work of the sacrifice, and accompanied his performance with muttered formulas of prayer and deprecation of evil. His chief assistance was derived from the Agnīdh, the two performing the smaller sacrifices without other help in practical matters. The Praśāṣṭṛ, Upavakṛ, or Maitrāvaruṇa, as he was variously called, appeared only in the greater sacrifices as giving instructions to the Hotṛ, and as entrusted with certain litanies. The Potṛ, Neṣṭṛ, and Brahman belonged to the ritual of the Soma sacrifice, the latter being later styled Brāhmaṇācchaṃsin to distinguish him from the priest who in the later

¹ This is assumed throughout the Vedic texts, and is accompanied by the rule that no Kṣatriya can eat of the sacrificial offering (cf. Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, vii. 26): no doubt because only the Brāhmaṇas were sufficiently holy to receive the divine essence of

the sacrifice into which, by partaking of it, the deity has entered in part.

² ii. 1, 2. Cf. Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 383.

³ Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, I, lxx et seq.