

composition of hymns appears to have fallen into disuse,<sup>4</sup> though poetry was still produced, for example, in the form of **Gāthās**, which the priests were required to compose themselves<sup>5</sup> and sing to the accompaniment of the lute at the sacrifice. The Ṛṣi was the most exalted of Brāhmaṇas,<sup>6</sup> and his skill, which is often compared with that of a carpenter,<sup>7</sup> was regarded as heaven-sent.<sup>8</sup> The Purohita, whether as Hotr or as Brahman (see **Ṛtviḥ**), was a singer.<sup>9</sup> No doubt the Ṛṣis were normally<sup>10</sup> attached to the houses of the great, the petty kings of Vedic times, or the nobles of the royal household. Nor need it be doubted that occasionally<sup>11</sup> the princes themselves essayed poetry: a Rājanyarṣi, the prototype of the later Rājarṣi or 'royal seer,' who appears in the Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa,<sup>12</sup> though he must be mythical as Oldenberg<sup>13</sup> points out, indicates that kings cultivated poetry<sup>14</sup> just as later they engaged in philosophic disputations.<sup>15</sup> Normally, however, the poetical function is Brahminical, Viśāmitra and others not being kings, but merely Brāhmaṇas, in the Rigveda.

In the later literature the Ṛṣis are the poets of the hymns preserved in the Saṃhitās, a Ṛṣi being regularly<sup>16</sup> cited when a Vedic Saṃhitā is quoted. Moreover, the Ṛṣis become the representatives of a sacred past, and are regarded as holy sages,

<sup>4</sup> Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 151.

<sup>5</sup> Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, xiii. 4, 2, 8;

3, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Rv. ix. 96, 6, etc. Cf. Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, xii. 4, 4, 6, where pre-eminence is assigned to a Brāhmaṇa descended from a Ṛṣi.

<sup>7</sup> Rv. i. 130, 6; v. 2, 11; 29, 15; 73, 10; x. 39, 14. So a poet is a Kāru (if from *kr*, 'make,' but usually derived from *kr*, 'commemorate'), and makes (*kr*, Rv. ii. 39, 8; viii. 62, 4) as well as creates (*jan*, Rv. vii. 15, 4; viii. 88, 4) hymns.

<sup>8</sup> Rv. i. 37, 4; vii. 36, 1, 9; viii. 32, 27; 57, 6, etc.

<sup>9</sup> Rv. i. 151, 7; Geldner, *op. cit.*, 2, 153; Oldenberg, *Religion des Veda*, 380.

<sup>10</sup> Geldner, *op. cit.*, 2, 154, cites the Dānastutis as characteristic of princes

in the tradition of the Bṛhaddevatā, etc.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>12</sup> xii. 12, 6, etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 45, 235, n. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Later on it was deemed quite normal and natural. See the story of Rathavīti Dār̥bhya, or Dāl̥bhya, himself a royal seer, and Taranta and Purumīl̥ha, seers and also kings, in Bṛhaddevata, v. 50 et seq.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Garbe, *Philosophy of Ancient India*, 73 et seq.; Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, 16 et seq.; Keith, *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, 50.

<sup>16</sup> Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, ii. 25; viii. 26; Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, i. 7, 4, 4; ii. 2, 3, 6; 5, 1, 4; vi. 1, 1, 1, etc.; Nirukta, vii. 3, etc.