

sea either after union with the Indus or not, being the 'iron citadel,' as the last boundary on the west, a frontier of the Panjab against the rest of India. There is no conclusive evidence of there having been any great change in the size or course of the Sarasvatī, though it would be impossible to deny that the river may easily have diminished in size. But there are strong reasons to accept the identification of the later and the earlier Sarasvatī throughout. The insistence on the divine character of the river is seen in the very hymn¹⁷ which refers to it as the support of the five tribes, and corresponds well with its later sacredness. Moreover, that hymn alludes to the **Pārāvatas**, a people shown by the later evidence of the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*¹⁸ to have been in the east, a very long way from their original home, if Sarasvatī means the Indus. Again, the **Pūrus**, who were settled on the Sarasvatī,¹⁹ could with great difficulty be located in the far west. Moreover, the five tribes might easily be held to be on the Sarasvatī, when they were, as they seem to have been, the western neighbours of the **Bharatas** in **Kurukṣetra**, and the Sarasvatī could easily be regarded as the boundary of the Panjab in that sense. Again, the 'seven rivers' in one passage²⁰ clearly designate a district: it is most probable that they are not the five rivers with the Indus and the **Kubhā** (Cabul river), but the five rivers, the Indus and the Sarasvatī. Nor is it difficult to see why the river is said to flow to the sea: either the Vedic poet had never followed the course of the river to its end, or the river did actually penetrate the désert either completely or for a long distance, and only in the *Brāhmaṇa* period was its disappear-

¹⁷ Rv. ii. 41, 16 (*devitame*).

¹⁸ See **Pārāvata**, and cf. **Brāhmya**.

¹⁹ Rv. vii. 95, 96. Ludwig, *op. cit.*, 3, 175, admits that the Indus cannot be meant here. See Hillebrandt. *Vedische Mythologie*, I, 115.

²⁰ Rv. viii. 24, 27. The connexion of Sarasvatī and the seven rivers is rather vague. In Rv. viii. 54, 4, Sarasvatī and the seven rivers are separately invoked, and in vi. 61, 10, 12, she is referred to as 'seven-sistered' (*saptu-*

svasā). In vii. 36, 6, she is called the 'seventh,' which makes the Sarasvatī one of the rivers. If the former passages are to be treated as precise, then *sapta-svasā* may be considered to show that the Sarasvatī was outside the river system (which would then be Indus, Kubhā, and the five rivers of the Panjab; see **Sapta Sindhavah**); but the expression may be loosely meant for one of seven sisters.