or even any, **of** the latter hymns were actually later productions, as they might previously have formed part of the family collections, or might have been overlooked when the hymns were first collected. Other maṇḍalas (viz. i. viii. and x.) still contain four entire hymns addressed to Soma, consisting together of 58 verses, of which only a single one (x. 25, 1) is found in the Sāmaveda-saṃhitā, as also some 28 isolated verses to Soma, and four hymns addressed to Soma in conjunction with some other deity, which are entirely unrepre­sented in that collection.

Maṇḍala x. contains the same number of hymns (191) as the first, which it nearly equals in actual length. The hymns are ascribed to many ṛishis, of various families, some of whom appear already in the preceding maṇḍalas. The traditional record is, however, less to be depended upon as regards this book, many names of gods and fictitious personages appearing in the list of its ṛishis. In the latter half of the book the hymns are clearly arranged according to the number of verses, in decreasing order—occasional exceptions to this rule being easily adjusted by the removal of a few apparently added verses. A similar arrangement seems also to suggest itself in other portions of the book. This maṇḍala stands somewhat apart from the preceding books, both its language and the general character of many of its hymns betraying a more recent origin. In this respect it comes nearer to the level of the Atharvaveda- saṃhitā, with which it is otherwise closely connected. Of some 1350 Ṛik-verses found in the Atharvan, about 550, or rather more than 40%, occur in the tenth maṇḍala. In the latter we meet with the same tendencies as in the Atharvan to metaphysical specula­tion and abstract conceptions of the deity on the one hand, and to superstitious practices on the other. But, although in its general appearance the tenth maṇḍala is decidedly more modern than the other books, it contains not a few hymns which are little, if at all, inferior, both in respect oí age and poetic quality, to the generality of Vedic hymns, being perhaps such as had escaped the attentions oí the former collectors.

It has become the custom, after Roth’s example, to call the Rik- saṃhitā (as well as the Atharvan) an historical collection, as compared with the Saiphitãs put together for purely ritualistic purposes. And indeed, though the several family collections which make up the earlier maṇḍalas may originally have served ritual ends, as the hymnals of certain clans or tribal confederacies, and although the Sarphitã itself, in its oldest form, may have been intended as a common prayer-book, so to speak, for the whole of the Brāhmaṇical community, it is certain that in the stage in which it has been finally handed down it includes a certain portion of hymn material (and even some secular poetry) which could never have been used for purposes of religious service. It may, there­fore, be assumed that the Ṛik-saṃhitā contains all of the nature of popular lyrics that was accessible to the collectors, or seemed to them worthy of being preserved. The question as to the exact period when the hymns were collected cannot be answered with any approach

to accuracy. For many reasons, however, which cannot be detailed here, scholars have come to fix on the year 1000 b.c. as an approximate date for the collection of the Vedic hymns. From that time every means that human ingenuity could suggest was adopted to secure the sacred texts against the risks connected with . oral transmission. But, as there is abundant evidence to show that even then not only had the text of the hymns suffered corruption, but their language had become antiquated to a considerable extent, and was only partly understood, the period during which the great mass of the hymns were actually composed must have lain con­siderably farther back, and may very likely have extended over the earlier half of the second millenary, or from about 2000 to 1500 B.c.

As regards the people which raised for itself this imposing monument, the hymns exhibit it as settled in the regions watered by the mighty Sindhu (Indus), with its eastern and western tributaries, the land of the five rivers thus forming the central home of the Vedic people. But, while its advanced guard has already debouched upon the plains of the upper Gangā and Yamunā, those who bring up the rear are still found loitering far behind in the narrow glens of the Kubhā (Cabul) and Gomatī (Gomal). Scattered over this tract of land, in hamlets and villages, the Vedic Āryas are leading chiefly the life of herdsmen and husbandmen. The numerous clans and tribes, ruled over by chiefs and kings, have still constantly to vindicate their right to the land but lately wrung from an inferior race *of* darker hue; just as in these latter days their Aryan kinsmen in the Far West are ever on their guard against the fierce attacks of the dispossessed red-skin. Not unfrequently, too, the light-coloured Āryas wage internecine war with one another—as when the Bharatas, with allied tribes of the Panjab, goaded on by the royal sage Viśvāmitra, invade the country of the Tṛitsu king Sudãs, to be defeated in the “ ten kings’ battle,” through the inspired power of the priestly singer Vasishṭha. The priestly office has already become one of high social importance by the side of the political rulers, and to a large extent an hereditary profession; though it does not yet present the baneful features of an exclusive caste. The Aryan housewife shares with her husband the daily toil and joy, the privilege of worshipping the national gods and even the triumphs of song- craft, some of the finest hymns being attributed to female seers.

The religious belief of the people consists in a system of natural

symbolism, a worship of the elementary forces of nature, regarded as beings endowed with reason and power superior to those of man. In giving utterance to this simple belief, the priestly spokesman has, however, frequently worked into it his own speculative and mystic notions. Indra, the stout-hearted ruler of the cloud-region, receives by far the largest share of the devout attentions of the Vedic singer. His ever-renewed battle with the malicious demons of darkness and drought, for the recovery of the heavenly light and the rain-spending cows of the sky, forms an inexhaustible theme of spirited song. Next to him, in the affections of the people, stands Agni (ignis), the god of fire, invoked as the genial inmate of the Aryan household, and as the bearer of oblations, and mediator between gods and men. Indra and Agni are thus, as it were, the divine representatives of the king (or chief) and the priest of the Aryan community; and if, in the arrangement of the Saṃhitā, the Brāhmanical collectors gave precedence to Agni. It was but one of many avowals of their own hierarchical pretensions. Hence also the hymns to Indra are mostly followed, in the family collections, by those addressed to the Viśve Devāḥ (the "all-gods ”) or to the Maruts, the warlike storm-gods and faithful companions of lndra, as the divine impersonations of the Aryan freemen, the *viś* or clan. But, while Indra and Agni are undoubtedly the favourite figures of the Vedic pantheon, there is reason to believe that these gods had but lately supplanted another group of deities who play a less prominent part in the hymns, viz. Father Heaven (Dyaus Pitar, Zeis ***πατήρ,*** Jupiter); Varuna (probably *ol·pavòs),* the all-embracing (esp. nocturnal) heavens; Mitra (Zend. Mithra), the genial light of day; and Savitar, the quickener, and Sūrya (neλtos), the vivifying sun.

Of the Brāhmaṇas that were handed down in the schools of the *Bahvṛichas* (*i.e.* “ possessed of many verses ”), as the followers of the Ṛigveda are called, two have come down to us, viz. those of the Aitareyins and the Kaushītakins. The *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa@@*1 and the *Kaushītaki-@@*2 (or *Śān- khāyana-*) *brāhmaṇa* evidently have for their groundwork the same stock of traditional exegetic matter. They differ, however, considerably as regards both the arrangement of this matter and their stylistic handling of it, with the exception of the numerous legends common to both, in which the discrepancy is comparatively slight. There is also a certain amount of material peculiar to each of them. The Kaushïtaka is, upon the whole, far more concise in its style and more systematic in its arrangement—features which would lead one to infer that it is probably the more modern work of the two. It consists of thirty chapters (*adhyāya*); while the Aitareya has forty, divided into eight books (or pentads, *panchakā*), of five chapters each. The last ten adhyäyas of the latter work are, however, clearly a later addition—though they must have already formed part of it at the time of Pāṇini (c. 400 **B.c. ?),** if, as seems probable, one of his grammatical sūtras, regulating the formation of the names of Brāhmaṇas, consisting of thirty and forty adhyāyas, refers to these two works. In this last portion occurs the well-known legend (also found in the Sãnkhãyana-sütra, but not in the Kaushītaki-brāhmaṇa) of Śunaḥśepa, whom his father Ajīgarta sells and offers to slay, the recital of which formed part of the inauguration of kings. While the Aitareya deals almost exclusively with the Soma sacrifice, the Kaushïtaka, in its first six chapters, treats of the several kinds oí *haviryajña,* or offerings of rice, milk, ghee, &c., whereupon follows the Soma sacrifice in this way, that chapters 7-10 contain the practical ceremonial and 11-30 the recitations (*śastra*) of the hotar. Sāyaṇa, in the introduction to his commentary on the work, ascribes the Aitareya to the sage Mahidãsa Aitareya (*i.e.* son of Itarā), also mentioned elsewhere as a philosopher; and it seems likely enough that this person arranged the Brāhmaṇa and founded the school of the Aitareyins. Regarding the authorship of the sister work we have no information, except that the opinion of the sage Kaushîtaki is frequently referred to in it as authoritative, and generally in opposition to the Paingya—the Brāhmaṇa, it would seem, of a rival school, the Paingins. Probably, therefore, it is just what one of the manuscripts calls it—the Brāhmaṇa of Sānkhāyana (composed) in accordance with the views of Kaushītaki.

Each of these two Brāhmaṇas is supplemented by a “ forest- book,” or Āraṇyaka. The *Aitareyāraṇyaka@@3* is not a uniform production. It consists of five books (*āraṇyaka*)*,* three of which, the first and the last two, arc of a liturgical nature, treating of the ceremony called *mahāvrata,* or great vow. The last of these books, composed in sūtra form, is, however, doubtless of later origin, and is, indeed, ascribed by native authorities either to Śaunaka or to Āśvalāyana. The second and third books, on the other hand, are purely speculative, and are also styled the *Βahvṛicha-brāhmaṇa-upanishad.* Again, the last four chapters of the second book are usually singled

@@@1 Edited, with an English translation, by M. Haug (2 vols., Bombay, 1863). An edition in Roman transliteration, with extracts from the commentary, has been published by Th. Aufrecht (Bonn, 1879).

@@@2 Edited by B. Lindner (Jena, 1887).

@@@3Edited, with Sāyaṇa’s commentary, by Rājendralãla Mitra, in the *Bibliotheca Indica* (1875-1876). The first three books have been translated by F. Max Müller in *S.ΒJL* vol. i. A new edition of the work was published, with translation, by A. B. Keith (Oxford, 1909).