

who chants the response. Their recitations must be very ancient, as we have seen; for they are by the name *uktha* (exactly corresponding to *ukhdhem* in the Zend language) frequently mentioned in the *Saṁhitâ*. A closer examination of them will throw much light on the history of the composition of the Vedic hymns. As ancient as the *Shastras* are the *Stomas*, the exposition of which forms one of the topics of the *Sāmaveda Brâhmaṇas* (see note 18 on page 237-38). The word *stoma* is in the form *stoma* also known in the *Zend-Avesta*. The *Parsi* priests understand by it a particular sacrificial ceremony of minor importance, which consists in consecrating a meal (meat is at this occasion indispensable) in the honour of an angel or a deceased person, to be enjoyed afterwards by the whole party assembled. That the idea of "sacrificial rite" was attached also by the *Brahmans* to the word, clearly follows from the terms, *Agnishṭoma* and *Jyotishṭoma*. The musical performance which was originally alone called a *Stoma*, formed a necessary part of certain sacrifices, and was then, as *pars pro toto*, applied to the whole rite.

The universal character of the *Agnishṭoma* and its meaning is treated especially in the fourth chapter of the third book. In its last chapter, and in the two first of the fourth, the principal modifications of the *Agnishṭoma* are mentioned, and briefly described, viz. the *Ukthya*, *Shoḷas'î*, and *Atirâtra*, along with the *As'vina Shashtra*.

The *Atirâtra* sacrifice introduces, however, the