

In the fifth verse the names of the performing priests are mentioned. They are only six in number, viz. *Hotar*, *Adhvaryu*, *Avayâj*, *Agnimindha*, *Grâvagrâbha*, and *S'âñstar*. Four of these names are quite uncommon or obsolete. *Avayâj* is the *Pratiprasthâtar*, *Agnimindha* (the fire-kindler) the *Agnîdhra*, *Grâvagrâbha* the *Grâvastut*, and *S'âñstar* the *Maitrâvaruṇa* of the *Brâhmaṇas*. The small number of priests at the horse sacrifice (*as'vamedha*), which was at later times, as we may learn from descriptions given of it in the epic poems, the greatest, most complicated and costly which the Brahmans used to perform, must surprise, principally if we consider, that the *Agnishṭoma*, which was the most simple Soma sacrifice, required for its performance already at the time of the *Brâhmaṇas*, and even anterior to it, sixteen officiating priests.

There can be no doubt that in the most ancient times a comparatively small number of priests was sufficient for the performance of a simple animal or Soma sacrifice. The two most ancient offices were those of the *Hotar* and *Adhvaryu*; they were known already when the ancient Iranians separated from the ancestors of the Hindus; for we easily recognise them by the names *Zota* and *Rathwi* (now corrupted to *Raspi*) in the *Zend-Avesta*.

The *Pratiprasthâtar* appears to have been an assistant of the *Adhvaryu* from a very remote time; for we find the two *As'vins* called the two *Adhvaryus* (*Ait. Br.* 1, 18), by which expression we can only understand the *Adhvaryu* and