of the age would have to be admitted, such as the functions of
the main priests and some festivals or ritual practices. Again,
certain names of perhaps purely mythological figures might
have to be mentioned. The evidence is occasionally insufficient
to show whether a name represents an actual historical person-
age: a demon or a mythical hero or priest may be meant. An
undoubted demon may even have to be included, such as the
one that is supposed to cause eclipses, because he belongs to
the domain of primitive astronomy.

Chronological Limits.—The period which the book was
intended to embrace had been decided at the outset as that
of the Vedas and Brāhmaṇas. The upper limit here is the date
of the oldest hymns of the Rigveda. That date is uncertain, but
my conviction (set forth in my *History of Sanskrit Literature*,
pp. 11-12) that it is not much earlier than 1200 B.C. still remains
unshaken. It does not appear to me to be in the slightest degree
invalidated by Professor Hugo Winckler's discoveries at Bo-
ghaz-köi, in Asia Minor, in the year 1907. That scholar has
deciphered, in an inscription of about 1400 B.C. found there, the
names of certain deities as *mi-it-ra, uru-w-na, in-da-ra*, and *na-
ša-at-ti-ia*, which correspond to those of the important Vedic
gods Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, and Nāsatya. Three inferences may
be drawn from the occurrence of these names. They may have
been derived from Vedic India; in that case the Vedic religion
must have flourished in India considerably before 1400 B.C.,
even though the hymns that have come down to us may not
have been composed before that date. But that these names
should have travelled all the way from India to Asia Minor
is a hypothesis so highly improbable that it may be dismissed.
Secondly, the names may belong to the early Iranian period
after the Iranians had separated from the Indians, but before
their language had reached the phonetic stage of the Avesta.
This seems the most probable theory, both chronologically and
geographically. It implies only that the Indian branch had
separated from the Iranian, not that it had already entered